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OFFICIAL GERMAN DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE WORLD WAR

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Division of International Law

VOLUME I

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The Reports of the First and Second Sub-
committees of the Committee appointed
by the National Constituent Assembly to
inquire into the responsibility for the war,
together with the stenographic minutes of
the Second Subcommittee and Supple-
ments thereto

VOLUME I

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Since the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace published, in 1916, two volumes of *Diplomatic Documents relating to the Outbreak of the European War*, a number of additional German documents have appeared which throw a flood of light upon the outbreak of the war and its termination. The documents relating to the responsibility for the war and its continuance have been put into English under the direction of the Endowment's Division of International Law, and it is believed that their publication renders a distinct service to persons interested in the causes of the war and the diplomatic maneuvers which were made to end it.

By a resolution of August 20, 1919, the German National Constituent Assembly created a Committee of Inquiry to investigate the responsibility for the war. This Committee was divided into four subcommittees: the First was to ascertain the responsibility for causing the war, the Second, the responsibility for not ending it sooner, the Third, acts of disobedience or disloyalty to responsible political authorities, and the Fourth, acts of cruel or harsh conduct of the war. At the present writing no reports have been published by the Third or Fourth Subcommittee. The Fourth has, however, published three supplements to the stenographic reports of its public hearings, which contain the expert opinions of Colonel Schwertfeger, retired, General v. Kuhl, and Privy Councilor Professor Hans Delbrück, on the causes of the German collapse.

The two volumes which are now published under the title of *Official German Documents relating to the World War* contain the reports of the First and Second Subcommittees. They contain in addition the stenographic minutes of the Second Subcommittee and supplements thereto consisting wholly of official correspondence.

The references in the text to the *German Documents relating to the Outbreak of the War* are to Karl Kautsky's collection which, with various additions, was edited and published by Count Montgelas and Professor Walther Schücking, at Charlottenburg, in 1919. References are also made to the German White Book, the Austrian Red Book, and the many motley-colored publications of this character, rather than to the cumbersome official titles which they bear.

In order to avoid the discrepancies unhappily resulting from retranslation, the German translations of English texts have been superseded by the original English whenever it has been accessible. In all such cases, however, variations between the English original and the German translation have been indicated in the footnotes.

For the convenience of the reader, the Endowment has supplied a Digest of the official correspondence contained in the Supplements to the Stenographic Minutes, and for the same reason a Table of Official Positions of Principal Persons mentioned in the documents has been placed at the beginning of Volumes I and II. For the reader's further convenience the pagination of the two volumes is continuous. The Index appears at the end of Volume II.

JAMES BROWN SCOTT,
Director of the Division of International Law.

WASHINGTON, D. C.,
February 28, 1923.

OFFICIAL POSITIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL PERSONS MENTIONED
IN THE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

ALBERT, MR.	Under-Secretary of State.
BALLIN, MR. ALBERT.	General Manager of the Hamburg-American Line.
BARTENBACH, CAPTAIN KARL.	German U-Boat Commander; Chief of Flotilla in Flanders.
BASSEWITZ-LEVETZOW, COUNT V.	German Minister of State; Member of the former Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Council.
BEHNCKE, VICE ADMIRAL.	Acting Chief of the German Admiralty Staff.
BENECKENDORFF, V.	General Field Marshal in the German Army.
BERNHARD, MR. GEORG.	German journalist.
BERNSTEIN, MR. EDUARD.	Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
BERNSTORFF, COUNT V.	German Ambassador at Washington.
BERTRAB, V.	General in the German Army.
BETHMANN-HOLLWEG, V.	German Imperial Chancellor.
BOHM-SCHUCH, MRS.	Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry; Member of the German National Assembly.
BONN, DR. M. J.	Member of the Second Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
BROCKDORFF-RANTZAU, COUNT.	German Minister at Copenhagen.
BRÜNINGHAUS, FRANZ W.	Rear Admiral in the German Navy.
BÜLOW, V.	German Consul to America; Representative of the Foreign Office.
BÜLOW, V.	Rear Admiral in the German Navy.
BURIAN, BARON.	Austro-Hungarian Privy Councilor.
CAPELLE, ADMIRAL V.	Acting Secretary of State in the German Im- perial Naval Office.
COHN, DR. OSCAR.	Member of the Second Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry; Member of the German National Assembly.
CZERNIN, COUNT.	Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs.
DAVID, DR.	Minister of State.
DELBRÜCK, PROFESSOR V.	Former Secretary of State; Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
DOHNA, COUNT ZU.	Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry; Member of the German National Assembly.
DUSCH, BARON V.	Former Minister of State; Member of the Former Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Council.

- ECKHARDT, MR. German Minister to Mexico.
- EICHHORN, MR. Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry; Member of the German National Assembly.
- EISWALDT, DR. German Consul General at Vienna.
- FALKENHAYN, GENERAL V. German Minister of War; Chief of the Supreme High Command of the Army.
- FISCHER, DR. Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry; Member of the German National Assembly.
- FRANZ FERDINAND. Archduke of Austria-Hungary.
- FRANZ JOSEPH. Emperor of Austria-Hungary.
- FREYBERG, BARON V. Naval Attaché of the German Embassy at Vienna.
- GANZ, DR. HUGO. Vienna representative of the *Frankfurter-Zeitung*.
- GERARD, MR. JAMES W. American Ambassador at Berlin.
- GOTHEIN, DR. Privy Councilor; Chairman of the Second Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
- GREW, MR. American Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin.
- GRÜNAU, V. Counselor of Legation at the German Headquarters.
- GWINNER, A. V. Manager of the Deutsche Bank.
- HALE, MR. BAYARD. Correspondent of the *New York American*.
- HANIEL, V. Counselor of the German Embassy at Washington; Under-Secretary of State.
- HARMS, PROFESSOR. Rector of the University at Kiel.
- HATZFELD, PRINCE. Second Counsel of the German Embassy at Washington.
- HAVENSTEIN, MR. RUDOLF. President of Reichsbank of Germany.
- HEILE, MR. Member of the German National Assembly.
- HELFFERICH, DR. Director of the Deutsche Bank; German Secretary of State of the Interior.
- HINDENBURG, V. General Field Marshal of the German Army; Chief of the General Staff.
- HOETZSCH, PROFESSOR DR. OTTO. Member of the Second Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
- HOHENBORN, WILD V. Lieutenant General in the German Army; Minister of War.
- HOHENLOHE, PRINCE. Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at Berlin.
- HOLTZENDORFF, V. Chief of the Admiralty Staff of the German Navy.
- HÖNIGER, PROFESSOR. Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
- HOUSE, COLONEL. Confidential adviser to President Wilson.
- JAECKH, PROFESSOR. Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
- JAGOW, V. German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

KAEMPF, DR.	President of the Reichstag.
KAGENECK, COUNT.	Military Attaché of the German Embassy at Vienna.
KARL I.	Emperor of Austria-Hungary.
KATZENSTEIN, MR.	Member of the German National Assembly.
KAUTSKY, MR. KARL.	Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
KOCH, REINHARD.	Admiral in the German Navy.
KRESS, BARON V.	Colonel General; Bavarian Minister of War.
KRUPP, BOHLEN-HALBACH V.	Director of the Krupp Iron Works.
KÜHLMANN, V.	German Ambassador at Constantinople.
KÜHN, DR.	German Secretary of State of the Imperial Treasury.
LANCKEN, V. D.	German Minister at Brussels.
LANSING, MR. ROBERT.	Secretary of State of the United States.
LEBSNER, V.	Secretary of Legation at German Headquarters.
LICHNOWSKY, PRINCE.	German Ambassador at London.
LÖSSL, V.	Councilor of State for Munich.
LUCIUS, V.	German Minister at Stockholm.
LUDENDORFF, V.	General in the German Army.
LYNCKER, BARON V.	Chief of the German Military Cabinet.
MAXEN, MR.	Member of the Second Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
MEERFELD, DR.	Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry; Member of the German National Assembly.
MERIZ, V.	Colonel in the German Army; Representative of the German War Department.
MEYDENBAUER, DR.	Ministerial Director of the Prussian Ministry of Finance.
MEYER, CAPTAIN.	Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
MONTGELAS, COUNT.	Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry; General in the German Army; Privy Counselor of Legation at Berlin.
MUEHLON, DR. W.	Director of the firm of Krupp.
MÜLLER, V.	Chief of the German Naval Cabinet; Admiral in the Navy.
MÜLLER, MR.	German Consul.
NAUMANN, DR. VICTOR.	German Minister at Vienna.
OVEN, V.	Lieutenant General; Director of Department of Army Administration of the German Ministry of War.

- PACHNICKE, DR. Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry; Member of German National Assembly.
- PAPEN, V. Major in the Army; Military Attaché to the German Embassy at Washington.
- PETERSEN, DR. Member of the German National Assembly.
- PFÜLF, ANTONIE Member of the Second Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
- QUARCK, DR. Chairman of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry; Member of German National Assembly.
- RENNER, COLONEL German Military Attaché at The Hague.
- RITTER, DR. PAUL Swiss Minister at Washington.
- ROMBERG, BARON V. German Minister at Berne; Member of the Second Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
- ROSEN, MR. German Minister at The Hague.
- SCHAEFER, PROFESSOR DR. DIETRICH Privy Councilor; Member of the Second Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
- SCHMITZ, MRS. Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry; Member of the German National Assembly.
- SCHÜCKING, DR. WALTHER Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry; Member of the German National Assembly.
- SCHULTZ-BROMBERG. Privy Councilor; Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry; Reporter of the Second Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry; Member of the German National Assembly.
- SIMMERN, V. LANGWERTH German Privy Councilor.
- SINZHEIMER, DR. Deputy; Recording Secretary of the Second Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
- SOLF, DR. German Secretary of State.
- SPAHN, PROFESSOR Member of the First Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry.
- STINNES, MR. HUGO German industrial leader.
- STOLBERG, PRINCE ZU Counselor to the German Embassy at Vienna.
- STRUVE, DR. WILHELM Member of the Prussian Assembly.
- STUMM, BARON V. German Under-Secretary of State.
- TAPPEN Major General in the German Army.
- TIESCHOWITZ, V. Colonel in the German Army.
- TIRPITZ, GRAND ADMIRAL V. Secretary of State for the German Navy.
- TREUTLER, V. Minister at German General Headquarters.
- TSCHIRSCHKY, V. German Ambassador at Vienna.
- TUCHER, BARON V. Bavarian Minister at Vienna.

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- WAHNSCHAFFE, MR.Under-Secretary of State of the Imperial Chancelry at Berlin.
- WALDERSEE, COUNT.....Lieutenant General; Acting Chief of the General Staff of the German Army.
- WARBURG, MR. MAX M.Banker at Hamburg.
- WARMUTH, MR.Chairman of Second Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry; Member of the German National Assembly.
- WEDEL, COUNT V.German Ambassador at Vienna.
- WEIZSÄCKER, DR. V.German Minister of State; Member of the former Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Council.
- WILLIAM II.German Emperor.
- WILSON, WOODROW.....President of the United States.
- ZENKER.....Captain in the German Navy.
- ZIMMERMANN, MR.German Secretary of State of the Foreign Office.

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REPORT OF THE FIRST SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY

THE PRELIMINARY HISTORY OF THE WORLD WAR
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INTRODUCTION

The Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry established under the authority of the new republican national constitution by the German National Assembly on August 21, 1919, committed, in accordance with its working plan,¹ to its first subcommittee the inquiry into the preliminary history of the war (including its ante-preliminary history). This subcommittee is composed at the present time of the following members:

(a) Parliamentary members:

Dr. Quarck, Chairman	}	Representatives
Mrs. Bohm-Schuch		
Professor Count zu Dohna		
Editor Eichhorn		
Dr. Meerfeld		
Dr. Pachnicke		
Mrs. Schmitz		
Dr. Schücking		
Privy Councilor Schultz (Bromberg)		

(b) Experts consulted:

Eduard Bernstein (temporarily substituting for Karl Kautsky)	}	Berlin
Professor v. Delbrück		
Professor Hoetzsch		
Professor Höniger		
Professor Jaeckh		
Captain Meyer, Retired		
General Count Montgelas		
Professor Spahn		

(c) Special Commissioner: Dr. Fischer, Berlin

The working plan and method were determined by the following resolutions of the main committee:²

1. Every committee of inquiry shall proceed with its work in the following order:

- (a) By procuring records and professional opinions (official documents, literature, and similar data);
- (b) By the taking of testimony at public hearings in stenographic form;
- (c) By consultation concerning the facts developed and by making a judicial report thereon to the main committee.

¹ See Bulletin No. 1187 of the German National Assembly of October 14, 1919, p. 5.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 4 and 5.

The conduct of the business under (a) and (c) shall be at private sittings.

The committee may also deliberate behind closed doors during the taking of testimony, suspending the hearings during that time.

2. The examination of records shall include domestic and foreign material. It may be supplemented, if necessary, by publicly calling upon the possessors of such material to hand it over to the committee.

3. The witnesses shall be notified to attend on a specified day, being briefly informed of the matter about which they are to testify.

The subcommittees shall exchange their lists of witnesses either through the main committee or in writing, in order to avoid the repeated summoning of witnesses at different times.

4. Witnesses shall receive suitable compensation.

5. The date of every open hearing shall be made public by a notice plainly posted at the entrance of the place of the hearing, and through the public press.

6. The stenographic report of every public hearing shall be completed and printed soon enough to be put into the hands of the witnesses who have been heard within eight days of their hearing, and shall be sent to the press of every party and sold publicly at cost.

7. Every committee of inquiry may, upon a majority vote, visit the scene of any act or fact to be established by it, and there take evidence.

8. The taking of evidence may be conducted by the chairman or by a specially appointed commissioner, who must be a member of parliament. Every member of the main committee shall have unrestricted authority to ask questions. The chairman shall have parliamentary authority at all public hearings.

With the assistance of thorough cooperation on the part of its experts and of constant representation from the Foreign Office, the First Subcommittee discussed and investigated in ten sittings the documentary preliminary history of the war, from the murder at Serajevo to the serving of the Serbian ultimatum. The examination of many separate subjects was kindly undertaken by individual experts and members of parliament, and all of the documents concerning this period were collected and investigated. Important fundamentals of the work of inquiry were especially the well-known pre-war documents from the archives of the German Foreign Office, the *German Documentary History concerning the Outbreak of the War*, which had been prepared for publication by Karl Kautsky and the undersigned chairman by order of the People's Commissaries of 1918 and which had been protected against unauthorized and partial publication. The similar Austrian and foreign documents also served the same purpose.

In order to thoroughly prepare for the subsequent verbal testimony, it was decided to circulate among the German statesmen who had been principal participants, a written *questionnaire* supplementary to the German war documents. This *questionnaire* was founded on the following "Resolution of Evidence":

I. It must be determined what the political attitude of Mr. v. Tschirschky was in Vienna after the murder at Serajevo and in what manner he was influenced by the political and military heads of the German Administration.

Witnesses:

The then Bavarian Minister at Vienna;
 Messrs. the Baron v. Freyberg, then naval attaché of the German Embassy at Vienna;
 Ganz, then representative of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in Vienna;
 Count Kageneck, then military attaché of the German Embassy at Vienna;
 Prince Lichnowsky, then German Ambassador in London;
 Minister Victor Naumann, Vienna;
 Prince zu Stolberg, then counselor to the Embassy at Vienna;
 Botho Count v. Wedel, after v. Tschirschky, Ambassador at Vienna;

The records of the Grand General Staff and of the Prussian Ministry of War.

II. It must be determined what political and military transactions took place at Berlin or Potsdam on the 5th and the 6th of July, respectively.

Witnesses:

Messrs. Vice Admiral Behncke, temporary chief of the Admiralty Staff;
 Secretary of State v. Capelle;
 War Minister v. Falkenhayn;
 Former Chief of the Military Cabinet v. Lyncker;
 Former Chief of the Naval Cabinet v. Müller;
 Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz;
 Banker Max Warburg, Hamburg;
 Captain Zenker;
 General v. Bertrab;
 Lieutenant General Count Waldersee.

III. It must be determined whether and what measures Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann and Secretary of State v. Jagow took to keep in touch with the progress of the inquiry at Serajevo after the 5th of July.

IV. It must be determined whether any military preparations or movements took place before the delivery of the ultimatum to Serbia.

Witnesses:

The then Bavarian Minister of War;
 The then Chief of the Admiralty Staff;
 The then Chief of the Imperial Naval Department;
 Messrs. the Minister of War v. Falkenhayn;
 Major General Tappen;
 Colonel v. Tieschowitz;
 Lieutenant General Count Waldersee;

The records of the General Staff as well as of the Ministries of War.

V. It must be determined whether any financial or economic preparations were made before the delivery of the ultimatum.

Witnesses:

Messrs. Secretary of State Dr. Helfferich;
 Krupp v. Bohlen-Halbach;
 Dr. Muehlon;
 Secretary of State Dr. v. Delbrück;
 Director v. Gwinner of the German Bank,
 President Havenstein of the Reichsbank,
 Secretary of the Imperial Treasury Kühn,
 Privy Councilor Meydenbauer,
 Lieutenant General v. Oven,
 Hugo Stinnes.

VI. It must be determined how much about the presumptive contents of the ultimatum was known to the political leaders of the German Empire during the time between the 5th and the 22d of July.

Witness: Under-Secretary of State Baron v. Stumm.

VII. The following facts must be determined:

When was the ultimatum handed to Mr. v. Tschirschky in Vienna?
 When was it sent to Berlin by him?
 When did it reach the Foreign Office in Berlin?
 When and how did the German Government adopt its attitude toward the Austro-Hungarian Government in relation to the ultimatum?

Witnesses:

Messrs. Legation Councilor Prince zu Stolberg,
 Under-Secretary of State Baron v. Stumm.

VIII. It must be determined:

When and how did the ultimatum become known to the governments at Munich and Dresden?

Witnesses:

Messrs. State Councilor Ritter und Edler v. Lössl for Munich,
 Count Vitzthum v. Eckstädt for Dresden.

IX. It must be determined:

Why did the Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Council hold no meeting between the murder at Serajevo and the outbreak of the war?

Was a suggestion to call it together not complied with or was it opposed?

Witnesses:

As members of the former Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Council:

Messrs. Count v. Bassewitz-Levetzow,
 Dr. Baron v. Dusch,
 Count Vitzthum v. Eckstädt,
 Dr. Baron v. Weizsäcker.

As witnesses on these questions in general:

Messrs. Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg;
 Secretary of State v. Jagow;
 Secretary of State Zimmermann.

BERLIN, December 6, 1919.

The transmission of this Resolution of Evidence to the various persons named in it as witnesses was accompanied by the following letter:

The First Subcommittee of the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry proposes to commence to hold its open hearings in January, 1920. In order to provide as far as possible against the difficulties which accompanied the reading aloud of long written documents at its recent oral hearings, the committee has decided not only to send to the gentlemen invited to testify, the questions which it is hoped to clear up by means of their testimony, but also to ask them to send in beforehand a written compilation of such information as might not be framable in oral answers to specific questions. The committee would greatly appreciate it if each one of them, without lending himself to any other consideration, would devote his powers to the establishment of the truth. The conviction that from a frank recognition of the truth good must ultimately come, among our own people as well as among foreign nations, even if for a while it should be misused for purposes of nationalistic agitation, guides the committee throughout its wearisome labors. In the name of the German people and in the interest of truth, it appeals for the assistance of the invited witnesses, in the hope that they will not refuse their cooperation.

The replies received to this communication are here published. They will serve as formal premise and complement to the declarations which their authors will later make at the oral hearings, postponed beyond January by the preliminary work already described but now very soon to be resumed. The chairman of the Subcommittee held the view that only such written statements should be published as contained actual contributions to the historical knowledge of the period under investigation, and that all arguments should be omitted. The committee, however, decided on the unedited publication of all the material received, in order not to lay itself open to the charge of unfair or biased selection. Those gentlemen who by their replies have apparently exhausted the matter of the questions, will be relieved from the necessity of appearance by the committee.

The following compilation of the written statements, which is considered as a first White Book of the First Subcommittee, may perhaps lay claim to individual worth as a record of pre-war history, at least in connection with the meritorious German publication of official documents concerning the same fateful period of history, a truly accurate judgment regarding which can only be formed when our former enemies finally open their own archives.

DR. MAX QUARCK,
Chairman of the First Parliamentary Subcommittee.

BERLIN, *March 18, 1920.*

I. IMPERIAL CHANCELOR v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG

As to No. I of the Resolution of Evidence:

It must be determined what the political attitude of Mr. v. Tschirschky was in Vienna after the murder at Serajevo, and in what manner he was influenced by the political and military heads of the German administration.

The instructions imparted to Ambassador v. Tschirschky are given in the records. To clarify them I take the liberty of making reference to the explanation in the annex hereto.¹

As to No. II:

It must be determined what political and military transactions took place at Berlin or Potsdam on the 5th and the 6th of July, respectively.

About the military transactions of the 5th and 6th of July I am able to give no information. What I know about the political transactions of that day, I have given in my *Aspects of the World War*.² My explanation therein reads:

On the 5th of July the Austro-Hungarian ambassador, Count Szögnyeny, after breakfast at the imperial table, handed to the Emperor a holograph of the Emperor Franz Joseph, together with a memorandum from his government. The memorandum unfolded a full and far-sighted Balkan program, which was to oppose the Russian plans with powerful diplomatic action. Its policy was to depend on Bulgaria and Turkey as against an inimical Serbia and a Roumania which had become uncertain. Its object was a Balkan alliance, omitting Serbia, under the aegis of the Central Powers. The occurrence at Serajevo was offered as proof that the breach between Austria-Hungary and Serbia had become insuperable, and that the Monarchy had henceforth to reckon with Serbia's stubborn, implacable and aggressive enmity. The Emperor Franz Joseph's personal letter briefly brought together the considerations outlined in the memorandum and pointed out that the peaceful policy of the Powers was threatened, if the agitation in Belgrade should continue undisturbed. The Emperor accepted both documents with the remark that he could only reply to them after consultation with his chancellor. On the afternoon of that same 5th of July, the Emperor received me and Under-Secretary of State Zimmermann, then substituting for Secretary of State v. Jagow, who was on leave, in the park of the New Palace at Potsdam. No other person was present. I was already cognizant of the tenor of the Austrian documents, copies of which had been given to Mr. Zimmermann. After I had made a report upon their contents, the Emperor declared that he could not deceive himself concerning the gravity of the situation which had been brought about in the Danube Monarchy by the Greater-Serbia propaganda. But that it was not our business to

¹ *Post*, p. 12.

² Vol. I, pp. 134 *et seq.*

instruct our ally what to do in regard to the Serajevo crime. That matter Austria-Hungary must decide for itself. That we should withhold ourselves from instigating or advising any action, all the more that we ought to strive by every means to prevent the Austro-Serbian difficulty from growing to the proportions of an international European conflict. But that Emperor Franz Joseph must understand, however, that we would not desert Austria-Hungary in time of need. That the interests of our own existence demanded the unmutilated survival of Austria. To draw Bulgaria into closer relationship seemed to him advisable, though Roumania must not be affronted by such action.

These views of the Emperor were in line with my own opinions. After returning to Berlin I received Count Szögyeny and informed him that the Emperor was not unaware of the dangerous character of the Pan-Slavic and Greater-Serbia propaganda. In view of the attitude of Roumania, and of the efforts that were being made to form a new Balkan alliance against Austria-Hungary, we should support any Austrian steps toward winning Bulgaria for the triple alliance. We should exert ourselves in Bucharest to lead the policy of Roumania into channels friendly to the Alliance. With regard to the question now dividing Austria-Hungary and Serbia, the Emperor could take no present stand, as it was beyond his competence. But that the Emperor Franz Joseph might rely on the Emperor's standing by Austria, true to the old friendship and in accordance with the obligations of the alliance.

As to No. III:

It must be determined whether and what measures Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann and Secretary of State v. Jagow took to keep in touch with the progress of the inquiry at Serajevo after the 5th of July.

The Foreign Office was intrusted, as was appropriate, with the duty of seeking information concerning the procedure of inquiry in Serajevo. I may therefore refer to the report which will be made by Secretary of State v. Jagow on the subject.

As to No. IV:

It must be determined whether any military preparations or movements took place before the delivery of the ultimatum to Serbia.

Whether any such preparations or movements took place is not within my knowledge. Orders to undertake any such did not emanate from me.

As to No. V:

It must be determined whether any financial or economic preparations were made before delivery of the ultimatum.

Neither did I give instructions addressed to the appropriate sources for any special financial or economic preparations before the delivery of the ultimatum. The financial preparations for a mobilization were of long standing, and were kept up all the time without regard to the international situation at a specific time. Arrangements for economic preparation had been at that critical time long under way, having no connection with the

Austro-Serbian conflict. I assume that the then Secretary of State of the Interior, Mr. v. Delbrück, who has also been summoned as a witness, has given information on the subject.

As to No. VI:

It must be determined how much about the presumptive contents of the ultimatum was known to the political leaders of the German Empire during the time between the 5th and the 22d of July.

What I know of the matter can be found in the records.

As to No. VII:

The following facts must be determined:

When was the ultimatum handed to Mr. v. Tschirschky in Vienna?

When was it sent to Berlin by him?

When did it reach the Foreign Office in Berlin?

When and how did the German Government adopt its position toward the Austro-Hungarian Government in relation to the ultimatum?

To the three first questions I can make no answer. In regard to the fourth I will refer to the contents of the records, and state in addition that I agreed with Secretary of State v. Jagow's criticism of the ultimatum as expressed to the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador—that it was too severe.

As to No. VIII:

It must be determined:

When and how did the ultimatum become known to the governments at Munich and Dresden?

In answer to that question I have nothing to offer.

As to No. IX.

It must be determined:

Why did the Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Council hold no meeting between the murder at Serajevo and the outbreak of the war?

Was a suggestion to call it together not complied with or was it opposed?

I do not remember that the Bavarian Prime Minister, whose duty it would have been to call together the Committee, expressed any such desire to me. I should have had no reason to oppose such a wish, if one had been directed to me.

VON BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

ANNEX

Any judgment to be expressed concerning our reception of the Austrian proposals of July 5, 1914, would depend materially on the value that was to be placed on the maintenance of Austria-Hungary as one of the Great Powers. The necessity for a powerful Austria has been so often and so earnestly asserted by German statesmen, that it must be recognized as a firm basis of our foreign policy. Prince Bismarck, even at the time when, at the con-

clusion of the Reinsurance Agreement, he met half-way the Russian wishes concerning the Balkans, did not depart from the opinion that "the existence of Austria-Hungary as a strong and independent Great Power" was "for Germany a necessity," yes, "a necessity of the very highest order,"¹ which would compel us to act, even by force of arms, for the preservation of this condition. The successors of Prince Bismarck depended the more on an Austria worthy of alliance, the more the inimical coalition, the source of apprehension of the founder of the Empire, developed and consolidated. When Prince Bülow, during the annexation crisis of 1908-9, "threw the German sword into the scales of European decision"²—when I, during the Balkan crisis of 1912-13, announced our determination to stand by our ally in the prosecution of his legitimate interests,³ it was because of this principle established by Prince Bismarck. Any threat to the independence of Austria endangered our own position in the world, and forced our political course upon us.

It can not be shown that the preservation of Austria's position as a World Power was for us of less importance in the year 1914 than it had been before. The opinion that Austria-Hungary was a state condemned to die, was, in fact, already a corpse, and that it was a duty which Germany should regard in the light of one of self-preservation to separate her fate from that of her old ally, was an opinion adopted in various quarters, but was one which left various decisive factors out of consideration. Turning aside from Austria would have brought us no new friends. The hint of Sazonoff, "*Lâchez l'Autriche et nous lâcherons la France*" possessed only the value of an opportune *aperçu* without the possibility of political consequences. Austria, however, would have been in the position to choose new friends; would have found open arms among the western Powers. The supposedly dying Austria would have shown herself vital enough for the purposes of a policy of isolation, and the isolation of the German Empire would have been completed. The idea of a German-Russian partition of Austria-Hungary, which has occasionally appeared, would not only have been impracticable in the face of German public opinion, but its execution would have postponed politically the solution of the Slavic problems in a manner intolerable to Germany, and would undoubtedly have put off the possibility of peace with Russia. Germany had no possible choice. The condition of the political world had become inflexible and, since the two last Balkan crises, had only so far developed along its general and unchangeable lines as to give the coalition of Germany's enemies, after England joined the Franco-Russian alliance, a diplomatically and militarily interwoven coherence in its conferences and preparations. A retreat from our position, up to that time firmly held in the

¹ Letter to Lord Salisbury, November 22, 1887.

² Prince v. Bülow, *Deutsche Politik*, p. 60.

³ Speech in the Reichstag, December 3, 1912.

face of the menace of war—a retreat at the sacrifice of Austria-Hungary,—would have meant our being torn down without a struggle from our own position in the world. When we assured Austria of our faithful conduct in the new crisis, we were observing a German interest, the acknowledged interest of upholding Austria-Hungary as a Power fit for our alliance.

Was Austria's place as a World Power threatened? From 1902 until 1908 Austria was still able to act in the Macedonian question as a partner of Russia among the Balkans. That was at the time of the general plans for Macedonian reform, of the Mürzsteg program of 1903—the time when Russia, chiefly because of her eastern Asiatic plans, desired to keep the fire in the Balkans unfanned, seeking and finding the means thereto in the not particularly active Balkan policy of Count Goluchowsky. Although it is true that throughout these years Russia was not entirely quiet in the Balkans, Austria was able to hold her own there during the Count Lambsdorff-Count Goluchowsky period. 1908 saw the development of a lively activity in the Balkans on the part of both Iswolski and Ährenthal, when Iswolski raised the Dardanelles question in Buchlau, and Ährenthal took advantage of the opportunity to bring about a clarification of Austria's position in Bosnia, made necessary by a political upset in Turkey. For awhile the Austrian policy was in the lead, thanks to the continued military entanglement of Russia. The general Macedonian affair came to an end, after Baron v. Ährenthal had announced the plan for the construction of the Sanjac railroad in January, 1908. This evidence of Austrian activity was greeted in Serbia by a tremendous uproar. But Mr. v. Iswolski came to an understanding with the English statesmen, in Reval, about a Macedonian program. And when, on the 5th of October, 1908, the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was declared, England stepped openly into the lists against Austria. The Entente had extended itself to the Balkans. Its power to strike was, however, still restrained by many considerations. Iswolski permitted the Panslavic chorus to rave unchecked, it is true, but he was not in a position himself to take any political action. Russia's military situation compelled her to step softly. England, though not ready to accede to Iswolski's wishes in the matter of the Dardanelles, blew the fire so hard, nevertheless, that warnings were issued even in Paris.

So the crisis finally ended, as Germany and Austria stood shoulder to shoulder, with a distinct diplomatic success for Austria and the personal downfall of Iswolski. Nevertheless, as a result of the crisis the balance was perceptibly weighted to the disadvantage of the Central Powers. The Balkans again became the chief object of European attention. It had become evident that in the Balkans the Entente still faced an uncovered front. The supposition that the policy of isolation had gone to pieces on the rocks of fact, proved, as matters took their course, to be a mistake. The Entente applied a new lever, rather, by mixing ever increasingly into the relations

resulting from the proximity of Serbia to Austria. The Greater-Serbia scheme found open support on the part of Russia, and on the part of the western Powers, at least no plain repulse. The southern-Slav question became the subject of active Entente politics. One of its busiest promoters was, from this time on, Iswolski. His diplomatic fall made him an implacable foe of Austria-Hungary, and finally one of the authors of the World War. The declaration attributed to him, "*C'est ma petite guerre*," may be true or false, but it agrees exactly with his Paris report of those most crucial days, of which we acquired information through the Bolshevist publications.

I return to the development of the relations between Austria and Serbia. The year 1903, that of the removal of the Obrenovitch and the elevation of the Karageorgevitch dynasty to the Serbian throne, marks in this development a radical step. Even on Austrian soil, while on his way to Belgrade, King Peter was greeted with the significant cry: "Hail to the King of Croatia!" The continuous radical growth of the southern-Slav movement can be measured by countless indications. A copious amount of literature has been written about it, which explains how far the danger had progressed up to the time of the annexation crisis in 1909. The Serbian Government avowed a program the accomplishment of which indicated the destruction of Austria. As early as 1904, the principal aim of the program declared in a memorandum prepared at the instigation of Pashitch was: "Agitation in Bosnia in the interest of annexation to Serbia; the discrediting of the Austro-Hungarian administration there by systematic publicist propaganda; and the nurturing of discontent among the orthodox and Mohammedan population of Bosnia and Herzegovina."¹ At New Year's, 1909, the then Foreign Minister of Serbia, Milovanovitch, had the presumption to assert in the Skupshtina: "Austria must cease to be one of the Balkan States." The leader of the Old Radicals, Protitch, went even farther: "There can only be peace and neighborliness between Austria-Hungary and us, if Austria-Hungary will renounce all claim to being one of the Great Powers."² The national aspirations of the Serbs did not content themselves with Bosnia; they reached out after Croatia and Dalmatia, even to the inclusion of Carniola. The behavior of the Serbs became so wild that even the Paris *Temps* spoke of "intolerable" provocations. It was only with reluctance that Serbia submitted to the Powers, who at that time were unwilling to go to extremes, when she pledged herself to Austria-Hungary (March 31, 1909) "to alter her present policy toward Austria-Hungary and from then on to live with the latter on the basis of friendly and neighborly relations." But this declaration did not alter the actual behavior of Serbia in the slightest; on the contrary, the political agitations in the Slav provinces of Austria-Hungary continued as unchecked as ever.

¹ For particulars, see Mandl, *Österreich-Ungarn und Serbien*, pp. 15 *et seq.*

² Quoted by Th. v. Sosnosky, *Die Balkanpolitik Österreich-Ungarns*, vol. II, pp. 204 *et seq.*

The organs of the Greater-Serbia propaganda were, as is well known, centered in the Narodna Odbrana, which had the closest understanding with the Serbian administration, and, in connection with a whole network of unions and confidential agents, carried on the work of revolutionizing the southern Slav provinces of Austria with every means provided by secret organization. The work was prosecuted particularly among the student bodies and in the intermediate schools. The Young Men's Association of the Omladina was of older origin. The hotbed of all these activities lay in Belgrade. The Serbian Government has itself admitted that since 1903 it held in its own hands all the threads of the unification movement in Austria-Hungary.¹ Within these organizations, political assassination was preached as a permitted means towards attaining Serbian unity. From 1910 on, attacks on prominent and particularly hated personages succeeded each other with but brief interruptions.² The assailants were young fanatics who were in unquestionable association with the center at Belgrade. It was members of the same circles to which these young men belonged who in 1914 perpetrated the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand with Serbian bombs. It is worth noting that during the war a French author stated in a book on Serbia: "Mr. Pashitch attempted secretly to inform the Ballplatz that the Archduke would expose himself to danger during his journey to Bosnia. On the 21st of June the Serbian Minister in Vienna notified the ministry in Vienna that a rebellion had been organized in Bosnia. The Chancellor attached no weight to this hint." It has been later shown through Count Berchtold that the Serbian Minister in Vienna never took this step, which naturally leaves it open to question, whether or not he had received and ignored instructions from Pashitch to do so.³ Whether Pashitch had foreknowledge of the Serajevo attempt or not, he did nothing in the way of offering atonement to Austria after the murder until the presentation of the Austrian note. The Serbian press broke out in badly concealed jubilation at the death of the heir to the Austrian throne.

How little the Entente intended to permit Austria to enjoy in peace the success won in the annexation crisis has been taught us by the documents found in the state archives of Serbia.⁴ Evidence has come to light from every capital of the Entente to show how, together with the admonitions as to calmness that the circumstances called for, the Serbian emissaries were sent home with consolations not to be misunderstood concerning a near and auspicious future. It is also noteworthy that the Serbian ministers could discuss with the statesmen of the Entente in open fashion the near necessity

¹ Cf. Mandl, *Die Habsburger und die serbische Frage*, p. 97.

² A list of the attacks on the Satraps of the Hapsburg Lords is given by Kossitsch, among others, in *Die Sudslawenfrage*, pp. 40 et seq.

³ More details are given by Mandl, *Die Habsburger und die serbische Frage*, pp. 150 et seq.

⁴ White Book concerning the Responsibility of the Authors of the War (large edition), pp. 73 et seq.

of war.¹ England had even sought, directly after the annexation crisis, to bring about an understanding between Serbia and Bulgaria.² But Iswolski had considered the formation of the Balkan Alliance to be his principal duty. The change in the Petersburg Foreign Office and the transfer of Iswolski to the Paris Embassy effected no alteration in these intentions. Paris and St. Petersburg worked only the better, hand in hand, especially from the day on which Poincaré moved to the Quai d'Orsay. To voice from the Serbian documents an echo of this more acute French public feeling, there may be cited a report from London dated September, 1911, according to which Paul Cambon then set the prospect of the great war for 1914 or 1915.³ For the whole fabric of Russian diplomacy it is significant that Russia had come to an understanding with Italy at Racconigi in the fall of 1909, which gave Italy a free hand in Tripoli in return for her consent to the opening of the Dardanelles. The character of this interview, as will be remembered, came to the knowledge of the Austrians through the fact that the Czar was made to travel to Racconigi by a wide detour to avoid crossing Austrian territory. Two years passed before Italy drew on this bill of exchange. In contrast to the behavior of the Entente in regard to the Austrian ultimatum, the fact is notable that at the opening of the Tripolitan War after a sharp 24-hour ultimatum, which did not conceal the predatory character of the war, not one of these same Powers took any exception. The Tripolitan War is of interest only in so far as it played the prelude to the Balkan War, at the conclusion of which the radical remodeling of the Balkan situation was completed to Austria's disadvantage.

The history of the Balkan Alliance plainly shows the growing menace to Austria. Russian diplomacy had at first conceived the Balkan confederation as a union of all the Balkan Powers, Turkey included, in opposition to Austria. Its development then took another road, and the first link in the confederation, the Serb-Bulgarian compact, was aimed at the appropriation of Turkish territory. But it bound Bulgaria to come to the help of Serbia with 200,000 men in case of an attack by Austria or an inroad into the Sanjac Novipazar. The strong defensive front provided by this compact against Austria, was, according to Serbian views, to be changed into an offensive front. The partition of Turkey was to be only the first step, after which the advance against Austria was to follow. It was attempted to keep this agreement a secret from the Central Powers, and Mr. Sazonoff failed to open his heart when Secretary of State v. Kiderlin, with knowledge of the proceedings, spoke to him about it at the time of his sojourn in Berlin. The English Minister at Sofia had immediately received confidential information

¹ White Book concerning the Responsibility of the Authors of the War (large edition), pp. 83 *et seq.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 97.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

of the arrangement from those concerned in it. And the French Government was initiated into the plans of the confederation from the beginning.

In the fall of the year 1912 Russia, urged by France, gave England official notice of the compact between Serbia and Bulgaria, and of her cooperation. It is not understood that England raised any objection to the tenor or object of this agreement. On the other hand it was just about this time that that episode took place at Balmoral Castle, of which Sazonoff informed the Czar in the words: "Grey declared, without flinching, that if the occurrences in question (i.e., the European War) should take place, England would make every effort to deal German power the most decided blow. And simultaneously came the remark of the king, reported by Sazonoff in the words: "We shall sink every single German merchant ship we get hold of!"¹ It is worth laying stress on the fact that England held out the prospect of her taking part in the war against Germany without any regard as to who might be responsible for the war. Of what salient importance, in case of a general collision, a diversion of the united Powers of the Balkans against Austria-Hungary would have been considered, appears from a report of Iswolski's of August 30/September 12, according to which Poincaré informed him that the French military experts, considering this case among others with reference to such a diversion, estimated Russia's chances "most optimistically."² The great danger of the Balkan combination, as it had been far-sightedly created by the Entente, is thus affirmed.

When the war in the Balkans broke out, France and Russia came out into the open with the formula of *désintéressement absolu*, in order to block any interference by Austria. The objective of the diplomatic battles which were carried on by and between the Great Powers contemporaneously with the armed quarrels of the Balkan peoples was twofold, one being Russia's successful striving, in view of her own Dardanelles plans, to keep the Balkan armies at a distance from Constantinople, the other being to eliminate Austria and Austrian influence from the Balkans. Against this effort Austria set her declaration to the effect "that the legitimate interests of the monarchy should suffer no damage through a reordering of affairs."³ And once more it was made possible, by the intervention of German aid, to safeguard to some extent Austrian interests in the settlement of the Adriatic coast questions. As contrasted with the other changes in the Balkan situation, this was, however, of small benefit. The result of the Balkan wars, as established at the London conference, was a strong repression of the influence of the Central Powers in the Balkans. At the time of the Second Balkan War the influence of Russia had, as deserves to be remarked, made itself felt in a manner that astonished Bulgaria; it was Russian advice, supported by that of France,

¹ White Book concerning the Responsibility for the War, pp. 175 *et seq.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 132.

³ Disclosure of Count Berchtold of Nov. 5, 1912.

which had determined Roumania to attack Bulgaria. Petersburg wanted to keep control of Serbia, the outpost toward Austria, and to strengthen her as much as possible. Serbia could only be satisfied, since she had lost her hold on Albania, at the cost of and through pressure on Bulgaria, with the provision of future restitution to Bulgaria when the Balkan confederation, strengthened if possible by the accession of Roumania, should be turned against Austria to find booty in the Slavic portions of the ruined monarchy. This was what Russia reckoned on. The following declaration is reported as having been made by the Russian Minister v. Hartwig: "We need a strong Serbia. After Turkey it is the turn of the Austrian problem, and Serbia will prove our best tool. You Bulgarians will get Macedonia on the day on which Serbia again gets possession of Bosnia and Herzegovina."¹ The Peace of Bucharest (August 10, 1913), was nowhere considered as a final settlement, but was accepted solely as a temporary armistice. Serbia, excited by her successes, listened only to the voice that called to further conquest and extension, and was certain of Russian assistance when she undertook the decisive move against Austria.

But what immeasurably increased the danger for Austria, was the fact, soon beginning to stand out clearly, that the Balkan wars had not merely moved the weight within the Slav world across the border of Austrian territory. By reason of her victorious rise and through the unconcealed patronage of the Entente, Serbia had won over the Slav elements of the Monarchy an influence which was bound seriously to damage the structure of the State. The idea of a Greater-Serbian realm became realizable, and the "Piedmont" of the Balkans hastened to meet its "historic destiny." The strengthened national buoyancy of Serbdom swayed now in full consciousness toward the Austro-Hungarian domain. "*La première manche est gagnée,*" said Pashitch after the signing of the Peace of Bucharest, "*maintenant il faut préparer la seconde manche contre l'Autriche.*"² At this same time Mr. Pashitch expressly acknowledged to the former Serbian agent in Berlin, Mr. Boghitschevitch, that even during the First Balkan War he could have brought about a major European war, in order to acquire Bosnia and Herzegovina. He had, however, preferred to assure for Serbia the possession of Macedonia, "in order then to be able to take steps for the securing of Bosnia and Herzegovina."³ With such plans in the heads of the Serbian leaders, the moment was imminent when Austria would have to fight, unless it wished to retire before its Serbian neighbors and accept dissolution as its fate. Should Serbia retreat in the face of Austrian determination, and could Austria preserve its position without war, so much the better. But, opposed to a people which considered an appeal to arms as a

¹ Quoted by Th. v. Sosnosky, *Die Balkanpolitik Österreich-Ungarns*, vol. II, p. 358.

² The first game is won; now it is necessary to prepare for the second game against Austria. Boghitschevitch, *Kriegsursachen*, p. 65.

³ *Ibid.*

lawful right and had of late twice made use of it, Austria could not hesitate before the contingency of war.

Now it appears from the memorandum transmitted on the 5th of July, 1914, that Austrian policy had by no means left out of consideration the possibility of a diplomatic restoration of Austrian influence in the Balkans. A far-sighted program had been evolved which underwent modification only on account of the occurrence at Serajevo.

After this murder the Austrian statesmen were necessarily brought face to face with the question whether they would, on the whole, have time to carry through their broadly concerted Balkan plans by diplomatic means, or whether the Serbian desire for action would destroy the scheme. Under pressure of circumstances not considered in the plan, they came to the weighty decision to commence the adjustment of the Balkan problems according to the Austrian conception, by the overthrow of Serbia. So strong a stroke against Austro-Hungarian authority demanded a sharp and immediate return. We agreed with our allies in this conception of the situation. The choice of means we left to them without thereby expressly precluding war with Serbia.

The murder of the heir to the Austrian throne was the point of explosion of the Greater-Serbia propaganda. There can be no doubt that the authors of the crime, wherever the outside and intellectual responsibility may lie, counted on and intended the rolling up of the curtain on the southern-Slav question. However Austria-Hungary might act in reply to this murder, the Serbs counted on an advantage for their cause. Should Austria-Hungary permit this political assassination to go unavenged, then the Slav element in the Monarchy would raise its head the higher and continue its conspiracies with the Serbians of the Kingdom with so much less embarrassment. Should Austria, however, arm to protect herself, then the Serbs counted on the outbreak of a European war, in which they risked much but also stood to win much.

How plainly the Serbian statesmen realized that they were the actual assailants, is further shown by a declaration made by Pashitch in the Serbian Skupshtina on the 12th of August. He stated: "We have struck at the most favorable moment for the realization of our ideals that could possibly have been conceived." Who could explain more creditably than the Serbian Prime Minister how seriously Austria was threatened by the aggressive Serbians, how exclusively she was on her guard in a position of self-defense?

Serbia drew strength for her defiant attitude not alone from her ideals but from the encouragement and support she found in Russia. A documentary example of the year 1913! The Serbian Minister reports in April: "Again and again he (Sazonoff) said to me that we must work for the future, when we shall acquire a great deal of territory from Austria-Hungary. I replied to him that we would give Monastir to the Bulgars, if we got Bosnia

and other territories."¹ See how openly the Serbs could speak of their aspirations in Petersburg, aspirations that reached out not only for Bosnia, but for "other territories," Croatia, Dalmatia, Carniola.

Of conclusive significance in this matter is the audience which Pashitch had on the 2d of February, 1914, with the Czar.² No monarch could speak more significantly to a minister in time of peace. After this audience Pashitch knew that Serbia would not be alone when the drums began to roll. The final words of the Czar were verily a solemn promise: "For Serbia we will do everything. Greet the King from me and tell him, 'For Serbia we will do everything!'" This occurrence is seen in its full importance when considered in connection with the fact that at the beginning of 1914 there were commenced in Petersburg the deliberations about the great Dardanelles plan, which, according to Sazonoff, could not be undertaken "without a European war, in which Serbia was to throw her whole might against Austria"; that on the 21st of February the plans for the "seizure and retention of the straits in the near future" were debated; that according to Sazonoff's instant report on this debate, it became the "task of the Foreign Office to work for this well-understood project" to lay a "favorable political foundation" for the straits program.³ To fire the Serbian impulse to unite all branches of the Serbian-speaking peoples against Austria was the principal preparatory task of Russian policy in working for the well-understood project. It was the preparation for the World War which the Russian rulers believed necessary in order to become masters of the Dardanelles. This was the situation into the midst of which the catastrophe of Serajevo fell on the 28th of June, 1914. The question of her existence being put up to her, Austria was compelled to answer it. Germany also was placed face to face with an unavoidable decision.

I shall add to my survey of this great and deadly danger which had developed for Austria on her Serbian border and had now suddenly risen to its full fearful height, a few words about the means chosen to combat it. The absolute faithlessness of the Serbian politicians was recognized in Vienna. From mild measures nothing more was to be expected. Promises were made with the intention of breaking them at the first favorable moment. Should Austria let herself be deceived by these commonly practised Serbian tactics, the moral disruption of the Austro-Hungarian State would be perfected. The last possible moment had arrived in which to restore Austrian authority over the world of the southern Slavs. If that moment was not to be irrevocably lost, it was necessary to take immediate and energetic action. War with Serbia was possible and even probable as a result. We did not exclude its possibility in our instructions, but we neither demanded nor urged it. However, we did advise quick action, because that appeared to offer the

¹ White Book concerning the Responsibility for the War, p. 110.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 114 *et seq.*

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 152 *et seq.*

best means of avoiding world complications. Only by allowing Austria a free hand in the choice of means, did we preserve the possibility of intervening to prevent the fray from growing into a European conflict.

Our policy of localization was not adopted without a purpose, however harshly it was later judged, however skeptically and ironically it was commented on, even while we were pursuing it, by a number of foreign statesmen and even by one German ambassador. If this policy was to remain possible, we had to have our hands free for purposes of mediation. We should have tied our hands, had we assented to and controlled Austria's proceedings against Serbia in all their details. Furthermore, it must not be overlooked that for our ally it concerned, to begin with, the question of her very existence. That Power must decide on ways and means whose life is in the balance. We could not relieve the Austrian Power of the responsibility for its decisions.

The unchaining of a European conflict was neither the intention of this policy nor its necessary consequence. Quite the contrary. World peace would have been served, would have been assured for a long time, if the Greater-Serbia machinations could have been thrown out of gear. The European conflict arose principally from the war spirit of Russia, which had decidedly helped to create the situation, eagerly seized the opportunity, was encouraged by France, and was not restrained by England.

This section of the picture of the state of the world, which I have drawn in the foregoing observations, was not as clear to me in every detail at the time when we had to decide on our action as it is today. Our knowledge of the Russian plans was not based on such demonstrable documentary foundations as the later revelations from the Russian archives have afforded. We knew only too well, by means of secret reports, about the Russian dealings in the Balkans; we also had knowledge of the Russian negotiations with England concerning a naval convention, which shed a particularly bright light on the ever-tightening union of the Entente. What we lacked knowledge of was the fact that the military-political plans of Russia had already crystallized into such complete and clear considerations regarding the violent freeing of the Dardanelles under cover of a European war. All knowledge acquired since the event has but filled out this picture, which had to be sketched in rough strokes from the facts that at the time had become known to us. It was the picture of a European situation growing ever more menacing, one which made a duty of our faithful affiliation with our ally, did we not wish to stand entirely alone in the openly threatening storm.

Even if our materially correct judgment of the situation had been completed by various details, the import of the decisions forced upon us in July would have remained the same. The compulsion of the situation in which we stood would only have evidenced itself so much the more clearly. Even then it would have been for us to decide whether it was best to attempt to

maintain the status of the Central Powers by repelling an attack perhaps possible at first to prevent, or whether it was already too late therefor, and that we must acquiesce in the ruin of Austria and in our own diminution as a result.

The pacifism of 1920 and a wide popular opinion which sees only the unfortunate outcome of the war, agree that a policy which includes the risk of a European war must be avoided at all costs. This view fails to realize that a policy of forbearance on the part of the Central Powers in no way obviated the warlike tendencies on the other side. If Austria, in default of German assistance, had retreated before Serbia, an Austro-Serbian war would, it is true, have been avoided for the moment, but the general situation in Europe would not have been one iota more peaceful, while it would have become infinitely more dangerous for Germany. What recipe would pacifism have had for this state of affairs? Certainly none which could have been accepted except at the cost of Germany's world status. While, in German pacifist circles, the 5th of July is represented as marking the boundary between two epochs—before this period crimes of thought, after it crimes of action, the crimes of thought laid to the Entente, the crimes of action, however, laid to the charge of the Central Powers,—the facts of history at hand constitute a palpable contradiction to this construction of history. It was with plain, provable acts that the Entente created the world's political situation of 1914. The Entente never courted pacifist ideals. All of our opponents in the war have considered and used war as a legitimate measure during a period in which Germany remained wholly peaceful. America conducted the Spanish War, England the Transvaal War, Russia the Japanese War, France countless colonial wars, Italy the war with Tripoli. Before none of these wars were any of the Great Powers given an opportunity to intervene for the purpose of adjusting differences; in none of these cases was it permitted to bring the dispute before a forum of the Great Powers; no one even ever tried it, for the reason that it was well known that England, America, Russia, Italy, would have refused all such efforts. None of these Great Powers has suffered pacifist doctrines to prevent it from using arms to effect what appeared to it a lawful right or was demanded by its interest. Even in 1914 war was not yet condemned as a legitimate means of national self-assertion. That war against Serbia was contemplated for the solution of the Austro-Serbian difficulties may be theoretically condemned by the adherents of pacifism, but, except by way of repudiation of their own history, can not be branded as a crime by those governments whose statesmen appended their signatures to the Treaty of Versailles.

v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

2. SECRETARY OF STATE v. JAGOW

I must preface my answer to the questions propounded by saying that I can only base my statements on my recollections as they remain fixed in my mind after five and a half years crowded with events and impressions, and in part as they have been refreshed by examination of the documents now published. I have no written record of my own of those days. Because of the time that has passed since then, as well as because of the strain of intensive work, both then and later, many details have become dim and obscure; others, on the contrary, depending on the importance and intensity of their impressiveness at the moment, have remained entirely clear.

I will remark first of all that I only returned to Berlin from my leave on July 6. His Majesty the Emperor had already left Berlin.

As to No. I. In order to reply to the questions, and particularly to the first question, it is desirable to throw a little light on the situation as it existed for Austria-Hungary and Germany at the beginning of July, when Vienna approached us with her request.

For years one Balkan crisis had followed another, seriously threatening the peace of Europe and allayed only with difficulty. Serbia and her relations to the Danube Monarchy had almost always been both cause and center of these disturbances. Though Serbia, who owed her establishment at the Congress of Berlin chiefly to the support of Austria-Hungary, had in the time of King Milan been on a friendly footing with the Hapsburg realm, and had been recognized even by Russia as belonging to the Austrian sphere of influence in the Balkans, this relation had undergone a fundamental change under Milan's successors, his son Alexander and Peter I Karageorgevitch, and with the rise of the radical party.

Even from the Austrian side, economic interests—chiefly Hungarian—had contributed to the change.

We had always advised our Vienna ally to pave the way for a more friendly relationship with Serbia and to strive for a community of interest. But the murder at Serajevo—the fruit of the Greater-Serbia propaganda—which threw a brilliant side-light on the intentions of the neighboring States, proved even to us the impossibility of such *rapprochement*.

The solemn promises which Serbia had made after the Bosnian crisis were in no wise adhered to. Even the satisfaction of the Serbian desires after the Peace of Bucharest only increased the greed and the arrogance of the Serbian nationalist politicians. The dispatches of the Serbian diplomats lay bare time and again the aims of the policy of expansion fostered at Belgrade. This policy was supported by Russian diplomacy, and the Russian Minister, Mr. v. Hartwig, was recognized as its most zealous abettor.¹

¹ Even from London Sazonoff was repeatedly warned of the "imprudent behavior" of this Russian representative (see Pokrowski, pp. 182-3 of the White Book concerning the Responsibility for the War). Sazonoff for his part wrote to Mr. v. Hartwig on April 23, 1913: "I hear from all sides that if any voice can have any real influence in Belgrade, it is yours."

Petersburg diplomacy had forged the Balkan Alliance, the designs of which were directed first against Turkey, but ultimately against Austria-Hungary. The above-mentioned dispatches offer also evidence to show how Russia constantly urged Serbia to arm and prepare for the coming reckoning with Austria. The Russians looked upon "a conflict with the German race as inevitable"; then it was the plan of Russia to unchain and loose the Serbian question. The Albanian crisis was to be "regarded merely as a stage; the end of the journey was to be Serbia." Serbia was to be "at least twice as large." Sazonoff said on the 12th of March, 1913, that Serbia must "work for the future, when it should receive much territory—Bosnia and other districts—from Austria-Hungary." And on the 23d of April he wrote to Hartwig: "Serbia's promised land lies in the realm of the present Austria-Hungary. It is of vital interest for Serbia to place herself in readiness for the inevitable future struggle." How the Belgrade statesmen received these admonitions is shown by the words of the Prime Minister, Pashitch, spoken on the 2d of February, 1914, to the Czar: If his daughter should marry the Serbian Crown Prince, "she could be the Czarina of the Southern-Slav, Serb-Croat people." "The Czar," reports Pashitch, "listened to these words with evident pleasure."

The object was the rearing of a Greater-Serbian realm by the disruption of portions of the Austrian dominion. The Greater-Serbia propaganda served as the means thereto. And to it the heir to the Austrian throne fell a victim. The murder at Serajevo had an effect that far exceeded the average significance of the murder of princes. The tie that bound together the peoples of Austria-Hungary, so various in their nationality, was the dynasty. This was expressed by the very term used to designate the united mixture of countries gathered under the Hapsburg scepter, "the Monarchy." The attack on the Grand Duke, the reliance of the future, threatened the continued existence of the realm itself. To the aged Emperor remained, in all human probability, but a few years more of life; the next in line after the heir to the throne was a youth who had scarcely stepped into the light of publicity, and who was wholly unpractised in affairs of State. The murdered Franz Ferdinand was known as a friend to the Slavs, and from him had been expected a solution on federative lines of the deeper problems that perplexed the Hapsburg body politic; at his death these expectations sank to earth.

In 1908 Iswolski remarked to the Serbian Minister Milovanovitch: "After Russia had settled her extra-European problems he was going to direct her again toward her European aims." What were these European aims?

An unimpeded outlet to the Mediterranean Sea could be viewed as of vital interest to the Russian nation; German policy never opposed it. But it was not the right of free passage through the Dardanelles that constituted

the design of Russian policy; its inherent principle was territorial expansion—it was directed toward the control of Constantinople and the straits. The papers made public since the Russian revolution have established this fact.

The protocol of the conference held on the 21st of February in Petersburg and the appurtenant report to the Czar describe "the mastery of the straits and the fight for Constantinople" as the "historic mission of Russia, which probably can only be accomplished at the time of a European war. . . . The possibility of the development of events which might affect the status of the straits, must perhaps be looked for in the near future." The preparation preceded the council.

Russia further sought to establish her hegemony over the Balkans with the aid of the local Slav or orthodox States and at the expense of Austria-Hungary. That meant the cutting off of the Central Powers to the southeast, the supreme domination of Russia as far as the Adriatic, and the destruction of the Monarchy of the Danube. "Serbia," said Iswolski, "would thereby become a weighty factor as the backbone of the southern Slavs." Belgrade was the hotbed of this Balkan policy directed against Austria.

Russia even sought to draw Roumania into the net. As was subsequently brought to light, Russian negotiations concerning an agreement were conducted with Bratianu (without the knowledge of King Carol) even before the outbreak of the World War.¹

In the spring of 1914 these aggressive tendencies were showing themselves more and more plainly in Russia. Persecution of Germany had commenced in the press. The Minister of War had published in the *Birschevija Wjedomosti* an article entitled: "Russia is ready." The French press seconded the molestation. In my address to the Reichstag on the 14th of May, 1914, I had directed a serious warning to the Russian press. The Belgian Minister in Berlin reported to his government on the 16th of May that diplomatic circles perceived therein a warning to the Russian cabinet itself. Russia had also, with the aid of French diplomacy, proposed a naval agreement to England, and negotiations had been entered upon, though the agreement had not yet been concluded.

The consideration of this situation necessarily guided the German Government in coming to a decision when Vienna imparted to us her intention of taking action against Serbia's disturbance of the peace, and appealed to us as her allies.

The alliance with Austria-Hungary had been from the time of Bismarck the main-spring of our policy. To be sure, it did not extend to entering the field in behalf of every Austro-Hungarian special interest in the Balkans. But in this case it was not a matter of some special Balkan problem of Aus-

¹ Confidential telegram of the Russian Minister at Bucharest, July 30, 1914, published in the *Pravda* of January 31, 1918.

tria's, not a matter of the extension of her power and sphere of influence there, but a matter of the status as a World Power of our ally herself, and of her defense against an aggressive Serbian policy that threatened the state of the realm and the security of her southern borders. It was an act of self-preservation to quench the fire that continuously threatened the home of a neighbor and all Europe with a conflagration; and for Austria it was a question of life itself. Security could only be attained when the necessary guarantees for future good behavior had been promptly and energetically extorted from Serbia, the hearth of all these firebrands. What the inevitable disruption of the Hapsburg Empire, brought about by the continuation of the Greater-Serbia insurrectional activities, would have meant for us and for Europe, has been shown by present events. "A permanently weakened and finally crumbling Austria could no longer have remained for us—as it is expressed in our White Book of 1914—an ally with whom we could reckon and on whom we could depend." Germany's isolation would then have been complete. We should have been delivered to the mercy of the Entente's political play: Russia's urge for expansion, France's passion for revenge, and the jealousy of England's rivalry. Thus were we, too, face to face with a question of *vital* interest.¹

In any case it was necessary to reckon with the possibility that Russia would not remain indifferent with regard to a war with Serbia. But in this case we could not refuse our help to Austria; the *casus foederis* was involved. Germany had no choice; not merely because of romantic loyalty, but out of consideration for her own position, she could not let Austria fall.

Such were the considerations that led to the decision of principle arrived at in Berlin.

We fully approved, for the reasons submitted, the spontaneous determination of Vienna to proceed against Serbia. We also deemed energetic measures and the enforcement of thoroughly adequate guarantees necessary, as simple promises had, after the experiences of 1909, shown themselves to be insufficient.

That the conflict might react upon the relations of the Powers was, it is true, to be feared. In order to prevent an aggravation and a general conflagration, which the European system of alliances seemed to make

¹ Bismarck wrote to Gortschakow in 1876 (before the alliance with Austria): "We could not allow it to come to the point where one of our friends should be so wounded or weakened that her position as an independent Power having a say in the affairs of Europe, should be endangered." In 1879 he stated in a memorial directed to Emperor William I: "The German Empire can not afford to let it come to the point where it will find itself left isolated on the continent of Europe between France and Russia and next to an Austria overthrown and deserted by Germany." And he wrote to Lord Salisbury in 1887: "We will avoid a war with Russia as long as is consistent with our honor and our safety, and as long as the independence of Austria, whose status as a World Power is for us a necessity of the utmost importance, is not threatened.

"When we consider that, were Austria conquered, weakened, or turned against us, we should stand isolated on the continent of Europe against Russia and France . . . the continuance of Austria as a strong, independent Great Power is a necessity for Germany."

possible, we made every effort to confine the conduct of the struggle to Austria and Serbia—to “localize” it.

We assumed this position from the first and clung to it, even by leaving it to Vienna to determine *what* measures she might find necessary to adopt against Serbia. It was an Austro-Serbian, not a German-Serbian quarrel; we did not wish to assume the responsibility for mixing in, either with regard to Austria or to the other Powers. To take part in the decision as to the Austrian procedure would have prejudiced our future stand and deprived us of freedom of action for an eventually necessary mediation between the Powers.

But we did advise our allies to *act quickly*, and at the same time to gather the *material evidence* to prove that the threads of the conspiracy centered in Serbia and make it known to the Powers in advance. Should the action of Austria then follow upon the fresh impression of the murder, which had filled all the world with horror, it would be so much the more reasonable to expect that the Powers, even Russia, would scarcely deny Austria's right to take steps, and would therefore refrain from intervening. The same holds with regard to the moral complicity of Serbia.

We also desired to be informed in advance of Austria's resolutions and of the measures she proposed to take.

The instructions sent to the Imperial Ambassador at Vienna were based on these views. The instructions will be found in the records. It is not within my knowledge that Mr. v. Tschirschky's attitude did not agree with his instructions, that—as was later asserted in certain quarters—he transcended them. In regard to this matter I may refer to the letter of Ambassador Count Wedel of September 5, 1917.¹

As to No. II. I returned to Berlin as I stated, only on the 6th of July, and was then informed by the Chancellor and by Under-Secretary of State Zimmermann, who represented me during my absence, of the state of affairs that had developed in the meantime.

I did not see Count Hoyos again in Berlin. Nor did I meet the Austrian Ambassador, so far as I can remember, on the day of my return. No military or political transactions, in which I took a part, occurred.

As to No. III. I repeatedly interrogated the Austrian Ambassador about the investigation and urged its acceleration. See also my telegram of July 11 to our Ambassador in Vienna and his telegram of July 13.² We were each repeatedly told that the investigation had not been completed, and also that it was developing plenty of material.

We had no knowledge of the contents of the telegram of Section Chief v. Wiesner of the 13th of July.³

As to No. IV. On the 20th of July His Majesty the Emperor issued an

¹ Appendix IX, vol. IV, German Documents.

² Nos. 31 and 40 of the Documents.

³ No. 17 of the Austrian Red Book.

order to hold together the fleet, which was on a cruise, so that it could speedily obey instructions to break off the cruise. The reason for this was to secure our fleet from a possible attack by the English fleet.¹ No other military preparations or movements took place before the presentation of the note, to my knowledge. The policy of the government was against such premature preparation, which could only compromise our effort to remain aloof from the conflict.

As to No. V. On the 20th of July the managing director of the Hamburg-American Line, Ballin, and the director of the North German Lloyd, v. Plettenberg, were informed, most confidentially, of the imminent presentation of the note in Belgrade, that they might make timely dispositions for steamers abroad, in view of the possible consequences.

Whether it was *before* or *after* the 23d of July that a conference on economic questions was held by the Chancellor with a few heads of departments, I can no longer remember. It was attended besides by the aforementioned, representative of the Department of the Interior (whether it was his Excellency Mr. Delbrück himself, I can not remember), the Secretary of State of the Treasury, the president of the Reichsbank, and myself. The immediate reason for the conference was, so far as I can remember, rumors and reports of extraordinarily heavy purchases of horses in East Prussia on the part of Russia, and a Russian prohibition against the export of horses.

Further discussion was had concerning our stocks of grain, particularly in Alsace and Lorraine, the possibility of increasing them, the condition of the Reichsbank and our gold reserve. To my knowledge, no other special economic or financial preparations were made.

As to No. VI. About the prospective substance of the ultimatum—Count Berchtold describes it as a *démarche* with a time limit,²—I knew only as much as appears in our records.

Of the events that transpired in the ministerial council in Vienna on the 7th of July we were informed only in so far as Mr. v. Tschirschky's telegrams of July 7 and 8³ contain accounts of it.

On the other hand, unofficial rumors from Vienna gave the impression that the people there were hesitating, unable to make up their minds, which, from previous experience, did not seem impossible.

Time and again I asked Count Szögyeny, who came to me almost daily, about the intentions of his government, and begged him for information. He appeared on the whole, to be only slightly informed. On the 9th of July he had promised me that we should immediately be informed of the decision that was to be made, that the time depended only on the outcome of the investigation at Serajevo.⁴ On the 10th of July Mr. v. Tschirschky

¹ Nos. 82, 101, 111, 115 of the Documents.

² Nos. 18 and 19 of the Documents.

³ No. 66 of the Austrian Red Book.

⁴ No. 23 of the Documents.

reported that Count Berchtold thought that, among others, certain definite demands, stated in the report, might be made on Serbia and a respite of 48 hours granted for the answer.¹

On the 14th of July our ambassador reported that Count Tisza had admitted the conviction that an energetic decision was demanded, and said that complete agreement and determination controlled the situation. That the note was not yet put into its final form, as great care had to be taken with its wording, inasmuch as it must be intelligible to the people at large, and to lay the blame clearly and definitely on Serbia.² A further telegram from the Ambassador received the same day contained similar expressions of Count Berchtold's. The Minister had also said that, after settling on the text and even before its submission to his Emperor, he would instantly transmit the note to the German Government.³

On the 19th of July, I telegraphed to Vienna and asked for an immediate communication of the note (after its terms were established). Preliminary enlightenment on the material points of the proposed procedure was desired.⁴

See further the telegrams and letters of Count Szögyeny of the 21st of July.⁵

As to No. VII. When the ultimatum was handed to Mr. v. Tschirschky in Vienna, I do not know. According to the telegrams of Count Berchtold of the 21st and 22d of July,⁶ it would appear that it did not actually occur until early on the 22d. Mr. v. Tschirschky's telegram of the 21st of July,⁷ however, and his report of the same day⁸ inform us that its presentation in and remittal from Vienna took place on the afternoon of the 21st, and that its receipt in Berlin followed on the afternoon of the 22d.

That Mr. v. Tschirschky did not send us the text by telegraph I attribute first to a cautious desire not to compromise our code, and next to the consideration that, in view of the length of the contents and the time it would take to put it in cipher and then decipher it, the note could scarcely have reached Berlin earlier, even by telegraphic transmission. It was late in the evening of the 22d, after the visit of the Austrian Ambassador, that I learned from the Under-Secretary of State of the arrival of the document from Vienna.

While the Secretary of State received for his information and disposal carbon copies of the incoming telegrams, after their deciphering, written reports were, according to the ordinary routine, laid before the Under-Secretary for his visé. Then they were brought to me with his appropriate annotations.

Count Szögyeny came to me on the evening of the 22d—as I remember

¹ No. 29 of the Documents.

² No. 50 of the Documents.

⁶ Nos. 39 and 41 of the Austrian Red Book.

⁷ No. 103 of the Documents.

³ No. 49 of the Documents.

⁴ No. 77 of the Documents.

⁵ Nos. 46 and 47 of the Austrian Red Book.

⁸ No. 106 of the Documents.

it, about 7 o'clock—to bring me the text of the Austrian note. (According to the instruction of No. 30 of the Austrian Red Book, this should have occurred early on the 24th.¹) After considering it I told the Ambassador that both the form and contents of the note appeared too severe to me. I believe I emphasized especially that there were *too many* demands. The Count replied that it was too late to do anything about that. The note had already been sent to Belgrade and would be delivered there the next day—tomorrow, as he mistakenly asserted. I expressed to the Ambassador my great surprise that the information arrived so late, that no opportunity was offered us to act upon it. After the Ambassador had left me, I learned, as I have already stated, from the Under-Secretary that the text had also come in from the Embassy at Vienna. The Chancellor also thought the note too severe. But we had to consider that it was in fact no longer possible to bring about reconsideration in Vienna, and that any steps taken for such purpose would be of no use.

It was now our duty to do everything to prevent the conflict from spreading to other Powers and from disturbing the peace of the world.

As to No. VIII. I know nothing about it.

As to No. IX. The calling together of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Council was the duty of the chairman, Count Hertling. To my knowledge, no motion for such a meeting was made.

Nor was any opposition to such a meeting manifested. The Berlin representatives of the federated States concerned were supplied according to their requests with complete information on the situation.

3. SECRETARY OF STATE ZIMMERMANN

As to No. I. According to my notes, I addressed a private communication to Mr. v. Tschirschky on July 6, 1914, the day on which Mr. v. Jagow returned from his leave of absence. I informed him in this letter that Count Szögyeny had asked my opinion regarding the demands Austria-Hungary was entitled to make of Serbia on account of the Serajevo assassination. I had declared myself disqualified to reply to this question and had confined myself during our discussion principally to the suggestion that, in view of the provocation, I conceived an energetic communication on the part of Austria-Hungary a matter of course; but I warned him against the making of humiliating demands on Serbia in order that his government might not forfeit a universal sympathy. His Majesty had, before the Chancellor and myself, and, in fact, of his own initiative, adopted the attitude, before the perfectly calm and matter-of-fact audience of

¹ And according to the book of Dr. Roderich Gooss (p. 140), Count Szögyeny appears to have reported to Vienna the making of his communication as having occurred not before the 23d.

July 5, 1914, that the questions in dispute between Austria-Hungary and Serbia were no business of ours. The Chancellor had expressed himself in a similar sense to Count Szögyeny, as Mr. v. Tschirschky had been officially informed. The maintenance of this attitude, already communicated to Ährenthal, was especially advisable in order that the government at Vienna might not later hold us and our counsel responsible, in case the Serbian difficulty attained a solution not conformable to their wishes.

Nevertheless I can not testify that this letter was sent to Vienna. For when I was clearing out my office desk, at the time of my leaving the service in August, 1917, I found in a drawer with other papers a letter written and directed by me to Mr. v. Tschirschky, which, according to my memory, was identical with the letter described. Evidently I had not at the time turned the letter in question over to the office for transmission to Vienna, but had accidentally left it lying in my desk.

I wrote no further private letters to Mr. v. Tschirschky during the period between the assassination at Serajevo and the outbreak of the war. I know or remember nothing regarding any private efforts to influence the Ambassador from other German political or military sources.

As to No. II. On the 5th of July Emperor William received the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador and accepted from him the holograph of the Emperor Franz Joseph. Neither the Chancellor nor any representative of the Foreign Office was present at this audience. About the same time Count Hoyos handed me a copy of this autograph letter. He told me when he did so, that this time his government was going to act energetically on the Serbian question. According to his view, Serbia must be destroyed. I replied to him that I, too, considered an energetic communication to Serbia on the part of his government a matter of course, in view of the provocation. That even the Entente Powers could scarcely avoid regarding the matter in the same light, considering the revolting character of the deed at Serajevo.

On the afternoon of the 5th of July the Emperor received the Chancellor and myself in the park of the New Palace at Potsdam. After Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg had briefly rehearsed to the Emperor the subject-matter of the Austro-Hungarian dispatches, already made known to the latter by Count Szögyeny, His Majesty spoke without waiting to hear the Chancellor's propositions. The Emperor stated quite calmly and positively that the great danger to Austria-Hungary arising from the Greater-Serbia propaganda was not to be under-estimated; that the proposal to attract Bulgaria toward the Triple Alliance had his approval, but that Roumania was under all circumstances to be retained as an ally. Whatever the measures taken by Austria-Hungary against Serbia as the result of the Serajevo crime might demand, we should refrain from all suggestion or incitement in this regard. It was Austria's affair for her to settle in her own way, and it was

not our business. But we must naturally express our intention of remaining faithful to our ally at this juncture.

Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg agreed with these pronouncements of the Kaiser. The audience was with the Chancellor and myself alone.

On the 6th of July Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg received in my presence the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador and Count Hoyos, and expressed himself to the Ambassador in similar terms. The instructions to Mr. v. Tschirschky prepared by me on the same day¹ again repeats substantially the same opinion.

To my knowledge, no further political transactions took place either in Berlin or Potsdam on the 5th and 6th of July. I know nothing about any military activities on these days.

As to No. III. I inquired regularly of Count Szögyeny at our frequent meetings for news of the investigation at Serajevo, and requested him to keep us in touch with its progress. I also gave frequent expression to the expectation that his government would not confront us with accomplished facts.

As to No. IV. I know nothing about any military preparations or movements before the presentation of the ultimatum to Serbia.

As to No. V. To my knowledge, no special financial or economic preparations were inaugurated by the Foreign Office, or were carried out.

As to No. VI. We heard through Mr. v. Tschirschky on the 10th of July that Count Berchtold was considering the establishment of an Austro-Hungarian agency in Belgrade to observe the Greater-Serbian intrigues, the dissolution of the unions and the discharge of several compromised officers. According to my recollection, no further or more particular information concerning the probable contents of the ultimatum reached us during the time up to the 22d of July.

As to No. VII. The ultimatum was communicated to Mr. v. Jagow by Count Szögyeny late in the evening of the 22d of July. At the same time the ultimatum reached us through a report from Mr. v. Tschirschky. Mr. v. Jagow called on me as I was reading this report just brought to me from the Central Bureau, and told me that Count Szögyeny had just communicated the ultimatum to him. He had found its terms excessively severe—in this I could only agree with him—and had stated this opinion to the Ambassador at once, receiving, however, the reply that any alteration was impossible as the ultimatum would be delivered the very next morning in Belgrade and published officially at the same time in Vienna. Mr. v. Jagow was of the opinion that under these circumstances we could unfortunately accomplish nothing more in Vienna.

As to No. VIII. The Foreign Office did not notify the governments at Munich and Dresden directly. The representatives of both governments,

¹ Telegram No. 113—Vienna.

nevertheless, made regular appearance at the Foreign Office and were kept in touch with affairs.¹

As to No. IX. I do not remember that a convention of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Council was proposed from any quarter.

ZIMMERMANN.

4. PRINCE LICHNOWSKY

At the time of the outbreak of the war, German Ambassador in London

Replying to your kind favor of the 5th instant I have the honor to remark in connection with No. I of the *questionnaire* that the attitude in Vienna of Ambassador v. Tschirschky, who pressed Count Berchtold to energetic measures against Serbia, appears inexplicable to me in the absence of corresponding instructions from the Foreign Office. I have known Mr. v. Tschirschky since his entrance into the diplomatic service, and considered him to be a most conscientious, perhaps even a rather timid and pedantic official, who would certainly never have adopted a truculent attitude of his own initiative or have placed himself out of agreement with superior authority.

I consider the recently published statements of Count Berchtold on this point as entirely correct, while Count Czernin, who also testifies to the German Ambassador's urgent arguments in favor of war, asserts in his book the view that he went beyond his instructions.

The reports of the Entente ambassadors, as published in the color books, also agree that Mr. v. Tschirschky pursued a war policy in the most unmistakable fashion. The Counselor of Legation, v. Bethmann-Hollweg, is said also to have talked openly in Vienna in those critical days after the same fashion as his chief. No further special evidence is necessary to prove that the weak Austria would not have dared to risk a war with Russia without our unconditional support.

The official instructions transmitted to Mr. v. Tschirschky were not imparted to me, but the records, except for the private official letters, which are probably in the possession of the widowed Mme v. Tschirschky and could be had from her, should give ample information. Finally, I should like to remark that, as appears from subsequent publications, Mr. v. Tschirschky was still counseling caution in Vienna on the 30th of June, 1914, so that the thorough change in his attitude must have resulted from instructions higher up.

In answer to all the other questions I should like to refer to my memorial which appeared in the publication *The New Fatherland*, the observations in which still represent my views.

PRINCE LICHNOWSKY.

¹ These facts are significantly supplemented by the information Councilor v. Lössl (retired) was able to give from the records in the Bavarian archives. See *post*, p. 91.

Adding to my written statement of the 13th instant I should like to be permitted to refer to the recently published Austrian Red Book (Vienna, 1919), Part I, Nos. 3, 10 and 15 of which leave no doubt that Mr. v. Tschirschky was in full agreement with the Berlin Government when he urged on the Vienna Government, after the murder at Serajevo, the utmost possible energy and held forth the prospect of the unconditional support of its German ally.

LICHNOWSKY.

5. BARON v. FREYBERG

At the time of the outbreak of the war, Naval Attaché in Vienna

I. I concerned myself in Vienna with politics only in so far as it was absolutely necessary to my service as naval attaché, and can therefore give no information on the political attitude of Mr. v. Tschirschky.

II. No attempt was made from naval quarters in the German Government to influence the Ambassador. Whether and in what manner influence in his direction may have been attempted from other quarters, I have no knowledge.

BARON VON FREYBERG,
Captain.

6. COUNT KAGENECK

At the time of the outbreak of the war, Military Attaché in Vienna

To the letter of December 5, 1919, and the attached *questionnaire* I can answer that as military attaché I was not initiated into the particulars of all the diplomatic notes that passed from the Foreign Office or the Chancellor to the late Ambassador Mr. v. Tschirschky in those critical days. However from all the conversations that I had toward the end of July, 1914, with the Ambassador, I have retained the recollection that, having a thorough knowledge of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, he fully recognized the prospective peril. Hence the now oft-repeated reproach that Mr. v. Tschirschky urged Austria on to war and overstepped the line of his authority is, in my opinion, entirely unjustified.

It ought not to be difficult for an unprejudiced judge to answer the question, Who planned and contrived the offense that led to the World War? France, which in the recent years of peace had loaned to her ally Russia a round 24 billions for the building of strategic railways on its western border, or Germany, which during the same period had not even requested, not to speak of pressing, its ally Austria-Hungary to build up its (Austria-

Hungary's) very much neglected means of defense? That the Entente knows exactly where the parties really guilty of the World War are to be found, their repeated refusal of our proposition of an international investigation commission sufficiently proves.

COUNT KAGENECK,
Former Military Attaché at Vienna.

7. AMBASSADOR BOTHO COUNT v. WEDEL

The First Committee of the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry has requested me by a letter dated December 5 of last year to state in writing my opinion of the attitude of Ambassador v. Tschirschky in the critical weeks of 1914. I was appointed to Vienna at the end of November, 1916, after the death of Mr. v. Tschirschky, did not give my attention to Austrian matters in the Foreign Office, and therefore was not able to observe Mr. v. Tschirschky's attitude. After my arrival in Vienna I perceived in official circles there a tendency to lay the responsibility for the breaking out of the war as much as possible on Germany, and particularly on Mr. v. Tschirschky. This inclination arose, in my opinion, from the war weariness which was at that time on the increase. I received no definite information in reply to my questions regarding the matter. Reference was made to alleged warlike speeches of the late Ambassador, notably in conversations with non-official persons. I was told later in Berlin that Count Czernin had declared that Mr. v. Tschirschky had urged Count Berchtold to stringent proceedings, that he had even threatened another orientation of German policy, thus actually exercising pressure. Thereupon I asked Count Berchtold himself about it. He denied that any such representation had been made by him. He answered my question, whether Mr. v. Tschirschky had exercised pressure, with "No," the Ambassador had exercised no pressure, he had simply declared that the German Government regarded a determined procedure as "desirable."

I have no knowledge of military instructions or of influences exercised on Mr. v. Tschirschky. His political instructions are to be found in the records.

B. COUNT VON WEDEL,
Privy Councilor and Ambassador, Retired.

8. DR. VICTOR NAUMANN, LL.D.

It appears to me to be from its very nature an impossibility ever to determine from documentary evidence the question of who was responsible for the outbreak of this war. For the true cause does not lie upon the

surface; it is not to be found in the records or memoranda of statesmen, politicians, or diplomats; it is unattainable and must remain so. For this war can only be explained from the point of view of eternity. Men will only be able to interpret it, cosmically or metaphysically, according to their comprehension of finality. At any rate we can determine this: Every great phase of development which is universal, which is of equal importance to all nations, which always indicates an advance, is ushered in by great upheavals, by long drawn out revolutions or wars. Such are the birth-throes of a new era, an era which adds to the spiral ascent of human development a new upward curve. And, like all throes, they have to be painful. The history of the individual and the history of the world are absolutely similar in this respect. Statesmen, parliaments, and peoples, it is true, think they can act of their own free will, but they lack both freedom of will and of management, they are moved about by a higher power like pawns on a chess-board.

As, therefore, we can not and shall not be able ever to sound the farthest and deepest cause of the tremendous catastrophe, because the *ignorabimus* will always count, we must content ourselves by making clear its secondary causes. These secondary causes are, in the last analysis, nothing but the conflict of two world-conceptions, both of which were forced to the extreme and which stood inimically opposed to each other, and were therefore constrained to clash with each other. On one side stood individualism, which recognized the ultimate purpose of the State as the freest possible form of existence for the individual. But this individualism had become an individualism of class, and counted only for capitalism; it had its seat in Western Europe, notably in England and in France. Diametrically opposed was the other doctrine, which I may describe as Roman-Prussian-Japanese, and which maintains that even the most highly gifted individual and his accomplishments are worthless, in so far as they are not devoted exclusively to the common service, that is, the State. The State became the ultimate as well as the objective purpose of every effort. This doctrine also—correct as it may appear—erred in the last analysis. The Treitschkean view, that the State is its own objective purpose, can not be permanently maintained, however great may have been the results accomplished during the course of the centuries by the strict pursuit of the doctrines developed from the theory. In addition to this the solid structure of the Prussian-German State, erected on the foundation of this philosophy, was threatened with being undermined by the rapid development of capitalism in Germany. Therefore its protagonists, looking into the future with concern, became determined to use every means to bar the irruption of a strange doctrine. Everything which its opponents falsely term militarism—for the splendid training and devotion to duty of the Army was merely one of the evidential consequences of the doctrine—rests on the fundamental principle indicated

above. It was to be expected that capitalistic individualism would not hesitate, provided it had the power, to come to a reckoning with a system that endangered its establishment. It is evident that the state of affairs was fast approaching a catastrophe.

In addition must be considered the genesis of Germany, which was becoming a source of uneasiness to the other Powers. From the modest Power Prussia had evolved Germany, the strongest of the Great Powers of Europe, and under William II its development, economical and financial, made ever more rapid strides. The agrarian nation became almost the greatest industrial State in the world, the necessity of the too thickly populated land for expansion forced the Great Power to become a World Power. The alarming increase in the export and import figures of the German Empire, its more efficient methods of industry, and the more inferior methods of foreign business, were endangering the world power of England, and she had long watched with concern the growth and invigoration of the new Power that was developing.

In order to count as such, oversea possessions were necessary. But the world was pretty well divided up, and thus Germany had to content herself with scattered colonies in Africa, in Oceanica and with one on the mainland of China; she lacked a compact colonial empire. In order to make up for this it was necessary to protect her trade, and for this purpose the construction of a powerful fleet appeared necessary to the administration. Besides that, it had to acquire spheres of influence. Now the bad part of all this was, that the unsettled foreign policy of Germany undertook too much at one time. It wanted to gain a dominating influence in Turkey, worked at the same time to get into Morocco, cast glances at the Portuguese colonies, sought to enlarge its prestige in China—in short, the striving for direct or indirect expansion was everywhere noticeable. And because no one scheme was carried to a conclusion before another was attacked, the country was brought into conflict not only with one, but with several Powers: with Russia, England and France in Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, with France in northern Africa and Kamerun, with England on the whole African continent, with Portugal in Africa, with America in Oceanica and with Japan and England and America in China. The world was turned against us, without really having a good reason therefor, for it was, after all, comprehensible that we wished to reap the fruits of a labor almost too great. But the road to this goal was unfortunately such as must involve the possibility of conflict with many Powers.

When two business firms are injuring each other by competition, the world of affairs offers a means of putting an end to this two-sided damage—combination or the formation of a trust.

In political relations this measure can be made use of only in a restricted manner, in the form of alliances or ententes. English statesmen have

recognized this fact, and Chamberlain brought it to such a point that Germany was twice interrogated (1899 and 1901) whether it would be agreeable to her if England should enter into an entente connection with the Triple Alliance. The condition was naturally stipulated that England's mastery of the sea should remain uncontested; that we should desist from plans for a great navy. In the time of Bismarck and Salisbury the order of the day was: "You on the land and we on the water." This was apparently again to be the situation, according to the desire of the British statesmen. At the time of the second interrogation it was suggested by England that she could not remain in a state of splendid isolation if Germany refused, i.e., a hint was given that in that case she should have to approach the Dual Alliance.

Why the German political chiefs of the time showed themselves unresponsive to this idea of an alliance, which was accepted by Japan in spite of all that had preceded it, still remains a wholly unsolved riddle. This action is doubly incomprehensible when it is remembered that Italy's value to the Triple Alliance would be equal to nothing, should England be found in the camp of the enemy. It was hard enough, anyway, to hold Italy fast in the Triple Alliance, on account of her ancient enmity to Austria. The north African rivalry with France would have been relieved, for France would have had to pay this price if it were certain that Italy would at least stand by to watch a European conflict with her arms ready at her side. But if England should join the Dual Alliance or get into close connection with it, it would be impossible for Italy to carry out her contractual obligations, as had been often announced from Rome, even in Triple Alliance negotiations which took place long before the critical moment: Italy's geographical position itself forbade that she become an enemy of England.

On that account German policy should only have shown itself deaf to England if it could have organized another combination strong enough to face victoriously an attack by the western Powers. A Russian alliance might have made this possible, and it seems doubly remarkable that Emperor Nicholas, when, during the Boer War he made a definite reference to a coalition against England and even pretended to be able to speak for France, should have met with a cool refusal in Berlin. German policy was trying to sit on two chairs at once, and such a position is never comfortable. But it was bound to become a very dangerous one, if some strong, reliable ally could not be found. But the sole German ally was the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and to fight with her against three or four or even five Great Powers would only have been possible if Austria-Hungary had herself actually been a Great Power of the first rank, and if there had been sufficient raw material and foodstuffs within the two Central Powers to enable them to hold out through a war of long duration.

It was not to be denied, and it is erroneous when in these days of incom-

prehensible Masochism we attempt to refute it, that English policy, after the rejection of English advances to Germany, did its best to render harmless by other means her rival, who, besides, was then engaged in building a strong fleet. King Edward hoped, perhaps, to isolate Germany, without bloodshed, by a ring of Great Powers, through the formation of a chain of alliances and ententes. I would like to mention here that Count Czernin is right when he states, on page 1 of his book *Im Weltkrieg*, that King Edward VII attempted (and, as a matter of fact, in the year 1908 while on a visit to Ischl) to shake the fidelity of the Emperor Franz Joseph toward his ally. He met with no receptive ear, but with a sharp refusal from the aged Monarch. I was told at once of the occurrence, in court circles at Vienna. I have also repeated it openly in Germany on many occasions, but my words were not listened to. Apparently nobody in Berlin liked to discuss the matter, which certainly imposed on Germany a new and weighty obligation toward Austria.

But was Austria-Hungary really a strong Great Power, capable of usefulness in alliance? During the last ten or fifteen years of the reign of the Emperor Franz Joseph the internal conditions of the Dual Monarchy had become very trying, all the more trying because, on account of the Monarch's advanced age, the government was administered more for his benefit than for that of the peoples. A one-man rule of over sixty years implies stagnation. This had set in over Austria-Hungary in the highest degree, and also throughout all the dominions. In Hungary attempts were made to weaken still further the loose bond that bound the one monarchy to the other. The government was conducted at Budapest almost independently and a policy was carried on against other nationalities that promised to become perilous for the foreign policy of the joint government. The agrarian interests of the Magyars led to an industrial policy that sought to undermine Serbia's welfare. We can not comprehend how important a rôle the Serbian swine industry played in the deliberations of the Belgrade politicians. The Hungarian statesmen adopted a policy toward Austria that bordered closely on extortion. The least concession for the Army or the fleet had to be purchased with the utmost deference. And thus it came about that Austria possessed an army commensurate neither in numbers nor in armament with the importance of the country, that its fleet was small and scarcely sufficed for the protection of its coasts. So far as concerned Austria, the nationality strife increased to an extent that became unbearable: Germans, Czechs, Slovenes, Poles, Italians, and all the rest of the different peoples were at violent odds with each other, and prevented all progress on the part of the State. And the danger lay in the fact that the German Hakatistic policy continually heightened the prejudice of the collected Slavic elements of the Dual Monarchy against attachment to the Empire. The strong hand, which perhaps could have improved matters

was lacking. And it appeared questionable whether the Dual Monarchy could weather powerful foreign storms.

It is true, there was a resolute and far-sighted politician at hand—for so one must call the archduke and heir to the throne, Franz Ferdinand, despite all his failings, wanted to end the strife of nationalities; he wanted to make the most of the economic advantages of the Empire and of the Dual Monarchy, he wanted to strengthen the land and sea power of Austria. But on him lay the curse of being heir to the throne. Only in his very last years did the aged Monarch permit him a restricted sphere of activity, keeping him, as far as possible, out of affairs. Archduke Franz Ferdinand looked, to begin with, toward a strengthening of Germany and Austria by a new triple-empire-alliance, and had labored long in behalf of this plan. He never believed in Italy or her fidelity.

This alliance, however, proved itself impossible. It was, I might say, a fatal misfortune for Austria that in the last years before the war she had at the helm of her foreign policy a highly gifted statesman, Count Ährenthal. Ährenthal committed a fault common to many a highly gifted man: because, by his diplomatic cleverness, he was able to triumph personally over his enemies, he considered these triumphs true victories. That was a fatal error. The administrative head of a second-class State can perhaps succeed with Count Ährenthal's policy; but for a great power it is a question, in the last analysis, of that State's relative strength as compared with other Great Powers, and Austria's strength was such that it was forced anxiously to avoid a conflict with any Great Power, especially with Russia, its ancient rival. For it is a tragic accident—if one may really speak of accident—that Germany had very few causes of friction with Russia and very many with England, while Austria had none with England, but very many with Russia. *Thus there was no such thing as a homogeneous interest of Austro-Hungarian and German foreign policy.*

Count Ährenthal believed that Russia had been so weakened by the Japanese war that he could act more freely in the Balkans than before. He won temporary victories over Iswolski. But through them he not only won for himself the deadly hatred of that able man, who was wholly unscrupulous, but had worked harm to his country, in spite or because of his great gifts; for as soon as Russia had partially recovered herself, she was bound to burn with desire for the opportunity of holding a final reckoning with Austria.

The stone was next set rolling by the Young Turk revolution. Austria-Hungary now faced the question whether she was to lose Bosnia, held by occupation for thirty years, or whether she could repair the error made by Andrassy at the Congress of Berlin by now annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina. Long conferences were held at the time in Vienna, and the army chiefs declared that only by finally annexing both territories could Bosnia

and Herzegovina be maintained against the advancing Serbian agitation. This annexation was in itself no such dreadful political deed. When a State has possessed a territory *de facto* through thirty years, has invested billions for its benefit, has inspired it with the beginnings of cultural development, no one ought to take exception at its refusal to be robbed of its possession. Surely England and Russia were never so modest as to be governed by any such consideration. But it had long been the custom in the concert of European and World Powers to permit anything to any State except Germany and Austria. This had been accomplished by influencing public opinion on a grand scale through the French, American, English, and Russian press; and so this annexation, which was, to be sure, questionable from the juridical point of view, roused throughout the world a commotion greater than might have been expected.

Belgrade had become the seat of anti-Austrian agitation ever since the accession of the Karageorgevitch dynasty in Serbia, ever since the inception of the Hungarian industrial policy directed against Serbia. The Greater-Serbia idea, which had never come to flower under the Obrenovitches, now burst into bloom with unexpected rapidity. Long years of Russian and Anglo-French labor of late had assisted this consummation. It is significant that the best work-horse Russia had in her political stables, Mr. v. Hartwig, refused every other important post in order to be able to continue work at Belgrade. To deny that the old Ignatieff method of conducting politics in the Balkans was being most busily pursued by Mr. v. Hartwig would argue a great simplicity. And it can scarcely be doubted that he found friends and helpers in King Peter and his sons, as well as among the Serbian intellectuals. Any one who knew the past of King Peter to any extent, who knew that this man had permitted the planning of attempts to blow up his own stepfather, could hardly conceive him as so shy in regard to his great neighbor as to maintain toward that neighbor the innocent attitude of a twelve-year-old girl, after he had been assured of Russian support. For this very reason Archduke Franz Ferdinand most heartily condemned the Hungarian policy displayed toward the Croats, and visioned as his ideal a southern-Slav realm that should exist as one of the three or four States in the union of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In this manner he expected to be able to satisfy all its national and cultural demands. Naturally enough, this idea of his was the main cause of the animosity of King Peter and of Russia against Austria. But at that time no important rôle was played by such dreams of the future. The important part was taken by the Serbian agitation, which became so threatening for Austria and Hungary that a conflict between Austria and Serbia was expected as early as the year 1909. The Entente Powers were not prepared for it, and instead of pouring oil into the fire, allayed it. So it came to the declaration of Serbia in 1909, in which she solemnly vowed that she would live as a good neighbor to Austria

and desist from all agitation among the south-Slav provinces of the Dual Monarchy. This promise had scarcely been given before it was broken. For, although use was made of forged documents at the subsequent Friedjung trial, only he who knows nothing of the circumstances would deny that Serbia was constantly striving for the destruction of the Monarchy. That Mr. v. Hartwig gave these proceedings his blessing can not actually be proved from documentary evidence, but no one who knows the psychology of the czaristic diplomacy can doubt it. Bismarck's caution to the effect that European conflicts might only too easily develop from Balkan disputes, was again proved good. Under the aegis of Russia was evolved the Balkan alliance against Turkey, which was easily overthrown. Germany and Austria watched this development of events with the greatest anxiety, and the fact that in their further course the paths of the two Great Powers parted, was a new fatality.

When the war against Bulgaria broke out, when that State was attacked by Roumania, the Ballhausplatz took the side of Bulgaria, clearly but lamentably compelled thereto by the internal conditions of the Monarchy. To let Roumania become the undisputed principal Power of the Balkans meant in time the turning of the ambition of Roumania toward the possession of Transylvania. The policy of Budapest had not been able to pacify the desires of Hungarian Roumania, and so the Ballhausplatz was forced to seek a support elsewhere among the Balkans. This seemed to offer itself in Bulgaria. The development of these events was watched from Berlin with a certain concern. The Wilhelmstrasse fully recognized that the policy forced upon the Dual Monarchy by Hungary might drive Roumania, which had pledged itself to the Triple Alliance, into an inimical position; and it was further feared that Russia would take immediate advantage of the new state of affairs, which is just what happened. Russia began making love to Roumania, with the assistance of the extremely clever representatives of England and France in Bucharest. Just consider the excellent service performed by Mr. Blondel. Germany took the part of Roumania, and the Peace of Bucharest was concluded. But it was the opinion in Vienna that no definite solution was reached by this agreement. Scarcely had this danger passed than a new one appeared on the horizon. The Albanian question had to be solved, and this solution proved how deep were the differences which had arisen between Austria-Hungary and Italy. The Italian attitude toward Vienna was the most inimical imaginable, and a friendly sentiment was out of the question.

And, after everything else, it looked as if Montenegro wanted to toss a firebrand into the European structure on account of the Scutari affair. That time it was Germany and England who once more prevented the misfortune through their intelligent and united policy, although the motives of the two Powers were very different ones; but this is not the place to

discuss motives. I should like to interpolate here that Count Berchtold assured me, during a long conversation in November, 1913, that at no time while the danger lasted was it felt that Russia really wanted a war at that moment, while it appeared to be otherwise with France. French policy had decidedly been working to accentuate the differences. Naturally I can not know on what grounds the Count based his assertion.

Once again the danger passed; but that Italy suddenly attacked Turkey, declaring war in order to assure herself of the possession of Tripoli, was even before that a sign of warning. It was a situation doubly embarrassing for Berlin, because the authorities at Berlin had been playing the part of the protector of Turkey to the limit of their zeal, although less in the time of Mr. Kiderlin than earlier. And now their ally attacked their old friend.

In the meantime it had become more and more plain during the course of the years that the policy of England was carefully feeling its way forward toward opposition to Germany, passionately supported by certain French statesmen. Whoever passed much of his time during the last years before the war in foreign countries could discover that the German diplomats no longer stood in intimacy with the leading circles in foreign capitals. They stood on the outside of the circle, and they were no longer seen in intimate circles on official occasions—naturally, with some exceptions.

The favor of the world was turned against us by masterly press campaigns. It was the cloud before the storm, and at the end of every year in which war did not break out, we looked with anxiety toward the coming year. The tremendous military preparations in Russia, the French loans that were only made for the purpose of making possible the building of strategic railways through that broad realm, the so-called trial-mobilizations which constantly brought new masses of troops to the German and Austrian borders and created new garrisons from which the troops were only in part withdrawn, showed what was happening. The new army plan was adopted in France, and its excellent field artillery gave it a preeminence in that branch of the service, even if howitzers were lacking. Added to that was the knowledge that Russia was active in Italy through family connections in order to assure safety there in any event. Definite news to this effect multiplied constantly after the meeting at Rocenigro. The ghost of the German peril stalked over England, Lord Northcliffe's activities commenced, and Lord Roberts was already demanding universal service to stand off German greed. British military men and Belgian statesmen held their meetings in Belgium to attempt to form an alliance. These did not come to anything; at least, there is not a single circumstance to show that they did. But that the attempt was made by England is unquestionable. The weight of armament was, as a result, resting heavily on the civilized world; should it continue to grow at the same rate, should the wretched race not halt its course, the thunderstorm was certain to break some day.

German diplomacy has been severely reproached from all sides and by all parties. It has been described as incompetent, as foolish, as blind. These reproaches are merited only in the smallest degree. Messrs. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, v. Jagow, v. Stumm, etc., are not to blame; they found themselves in a situation which could be altered into a peaceful, a finally peaceful state of affairs only by a genius taking the lead, and only if an equal will to peace should be demonstrated on the opposite side. So far as concerns Russia, this statement must be qualified. The Czar was inclined to peace; the military and Pan-Slavic party was determined on war. This was overlooked in Berlin, in so far as it was believed that the will of the Czar would decide the matter. What was the situation when Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg became Chancellor of the Empire? He inherited the unfortunate Morocco question. It had lastingly cast a cloud over our relations with France, which were just becoming tolerable. And England had taken prompt advantage of the situation to make of France an ally suitable under all circumstances for the coming war, in case she should be drawn into one. The secret arrangements that were not even known to Parliament, date from that time. Russia was expecting to come to a reckoning with Austria in the Balkans, and dropped her political activities in the Far East to recommence those near at home. Italian faith was more untrustworthy than ever, thanks to the work of the Entente. Catastrophe was hanging over the Balkans, English malignity and instigation were working against us in America, and Japan had become our secret enemy since that foolish act of German diplomacy of the old days, since the Peace of Shimonoseki and Bülow's interpretation of the Manchurian agreement. The refusal of the alliance offered us by England in 1901 had soured her still more, and the subsequent Anglo-Japanese Alliance for offense and defense threatened us with new dangers in the Far East. In the year 1912 I said, during a conference that I had with Mr. v. Kiderlin: "If it is coming to a world war, and apparently it will come to that some day, why do we not adopt a precaution and give Kiaochow to Japan? By doing that we could make Japan our friend; otherwise she will be our enemy." Mr. v. Kiderlin replied: "That is absolutely my view and the Chancellor's as well, but there are other influences that unfortunately make this proper action impossible."

It is evident that the work of the Chancellor of the Empire and of the other German diplomats—to keep the world at peace—had become of almost superhuman difficulty. It can not be denied that the gentlemen of the Wilhelmstrasse at first applied the lever at the right spot and attempted an honorable reconciliation with England—the most sensible thing that they could possibly have done under the existing circumstances. If England remained on good terms with us, we had nothing to fear from the Entente, provided that no unforeseen conflict between Austria and Russia should break out. The zealous and faithful effort of the Chancellor and his chief

advisers to attain the end in view, is recognized. I do not need to dwell on it here; I will only state that in the winter and spring of 1914 the situation seemed to be such that Mr. v. Stumm, in many conversations, and Mr. v. Jagow, in one or two, ventured to assure me that we were over the hill; and they asserted this with relief. Mr. v. Stumm informed me with real joy that the Bagdad question was solved, that an African adjustment would follow, and that peace seemed thereby assured for a long period. But that if it should come to a European war, "we believe today that we can assume that England will not take part in it at the beginning, at least. Whether she will enter it later, remains to be seen."

Mr. v. Stumm was wrong, but Wilhelmstrasse is not alone to blame for his error. Downing street was equally to blame; for the march through Belgium, insisted on by the General Staff, became a fact only after England's too tardy and weak intercession with Petersburg had failed of success. Then, indeed, did we give her the desired excuse for entering the war. But that does not alter the fact that the Chancellor, the Secretary of State and his most distinguished assistants did everything they could to come to an understanding with England and thereby to accomplish the best assurance of peace, under the most difficult circumstances which had for years beset German diplomacy. On this account we should be a little more careful about blaming these men.

So far as concerns Austria, the situation had become for the past few years worse and worse, as has been indicated. The Serbian provocation had been most intensely active, not only in Bosnia, but also both in Croatia and in the Slovene districts. Almost every day, according to the assertion of Vienna, threads of conspiracy were uncovered, and it seemed very peculiar that the Belgrade Government, which was otherwise strictly anti-Catholic and had scarcely tolerated the presence of a single Catholic priest in the whole country, should suddenly approach Rome with the request to arrange a concordat. I said at the time to the Apostolic Nuncio in Munich, Frühwirth: The application is only made to hasten the fall of the Austrian Monarchy. Rome must act very cautiously, otherwise she will hurt her interests more than she will help them. But the Nuncio was of the opinion that the attempt should be made.

At the same time the Russian agitation among the Ruthenians in East Galicia assumed tremendous proportions. Churches were built for them with funds from unknown sources, their national spirit was raised against the Galician Poles, who were admittedly handling matters in a very foolish fashion, and Russian agents were traversing the entire country to make everything ready. The pernicious activity of the Russian Count Bobrinski, who during the war continued this activity officially in the then conquered country, was noticeable everywhere. It even reached into Hungary, and it is remarkable that in all the talk that has so far been made about the origin

of the war, nothing has been brought up about the great Marmaras-Szigeth case, which threw a brilliant illumination upon Russia's underground maneuvers. Whoever acts as did the Russian agents, believes himself to be upon the instant verge of war. Nor must the manner in which every Russian military representative conducted himself in Vienna be forgotten, or that these gentlemen were mostly compelled to leave Vienna after brief periods of activity, because their efforts were so evident that, with all possible due regard to their diplomatic character, they could no longer be tolerated. The affair involving Colonel Redel of the Austrian General Staff was only one of many that were carried on under cover. And even shortly before the war were the Russian attempts to gain over Italy an influence dangerous to Austria and to Germany more than ever apparent. I stated in Berlin as well as in Vienna at that time (and in the first months of the year 1914, as well) that the noteworthy journey to Rome of the Grand Duchess Vladimir had a distinct political object.

I received this information from a relative of the distinguished lady, to whom she had evidently expressed herself rather uncautiously. Add to this the strengthening of the garrisons on the Austro-Hungarian border and the amatory advances already mentioned as being made to Roumania by the Empire of the Czar, and it can not be doubted whither the journey tended.

This had certainly already been perceived by the heir to the Austrian throne, and he had some time before reluctantly parted for ever with his hope of an alliance with Russia. He recognized that Russia's efforts toward the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were inspired by her desire to become the unconditional mistress of the Slavs. And the old guarantee against the Russian greed that Austria-Hungary had once possessed in the shape of its relations with the western Powers was gone for ever. The Ballhausplatz hardly believed any longer in Italy's fidelity, and consequently viewed the situation with great anxiety.

I remember that in the late autumn of 1913 Section Chief Count Forgach, who shortly before had been Minister to Dresden, told me how embarrassing had been the meeting of the Archduke heir with a Russian grandduke at the Leipzig Centennial celebration. The gentlemen had behaved more than coolly toward each other. It was also a remarkable fact that at the marriage of his daughter, Emperor William dispensed with the presence of the heir to the Austrian throne. It was reported at that time in circles that might be supposed to know, that this was done out of consideration for the Czar, who wished to avoid a meeting with Franz Ferdinand.

But I must take this opportunity to expose a falsehood. It has been stated that when he was last in Konopischt, Emperor William, who was accompanied by Tirpitz, discussed war preparations with the heir to Austria. I state emphatically that not only Count Czernin later declared to me that

this was absolutely untrue, but that the same assertion was made to me immediately after this visit by the most confidential friend of the Secretary of State for the Navy, Dr. Schramm, Ministerial Director in the Naval Office. The visit was purely a friendly one; political matters were certainly touched upon, but of war discussions or arrangements there were none.

I would like also to mention here, what may be of historical interest, that I was told directly after the assassination by two persons who stood in very close connection to the Archduke and his wife—yes, if I remember correctly, I was informed just *before* the assassination—that the Archduke had received numerous warnings not to go to Bosnia and Herzegovina. He himself had made the reply that the bullet which was to strike him had long been moulded. But for that very reason he refused to abstain from the journey. It did not belong to his character to move out of the path of danger. And he believed that if he could not enter a country that had been governed by Austria-Hungary for thirty-six years, quite incomprehensible conditions must obtain there. But it was just these warnings that determined the Duchess Hohenberg not to permit her husband to travel alone; she wanted to share his every danger.

Such was the state of affairs when the bloody catastrophe at Serajevo occurred.

I must now talk of myself. For a long time I had been in close connection with the ruling and many other political circles in foreign lands. I had especially considered it a task well worth while to inform myself thoroughly as to Austria-Hungary; for I found that we knew in general all too little of the circumstances of the Dual Monarchy so closely allied to us. Therefore for a number of years I had spent several months of each year in Austria-Hungary; stood in intimate connection with the circles which were in friendly touch with Franz Ferdinand, and also with the higher clergy and with many political leaders of every party and nationality. Many times I prepared for the late Archduke Franz Ferdinand, at his desire as transmitted to me, treatises on political subjects, and even after his death I received from one of his nearest confidants an expression of thanks for one of my latest and more important labors. I wish to state definitely that all my labors were performed of my own free will and were, of course, unremunerated; and that I considered it my patriotic duty to make use of my social and political connections, which, as I have said, touched almost every circle, for the acquisition of a well-grounded knowledge of foreign affairs, especially of those of Austria-Hungary. I have always worked solely on my own responsibility, and for many years, quite independently of the Foreign Office. When Mr. v. Kiderlin learned this, at the time he became Secretary of State, he got into touch with me through a mutual friend, and I often visited him at his villa to discuss Balkan and Austrian and Italian matters with him. I gave him accounts of my experiences which, he informed me,

were both very welcome and very serviceable. But on his advice I kept away from the German Embassy at Vienna as well as from all other German legations, as he believed that if I had any connection with these offices they would want to control my reports, which he did not desire. When Mr. v. Kiderlin departed this life so suddenly, the same gentlemen who, at his desire, had brought me into connection with the Secretary of State, brought about similar relations between myself and Mr. v. Stumm. And during the years 1913 and 1914 I had many talks with Mr. v. Stumm, and also several with Mr. v. Jagow; and, when I was traveling, exchanged letters with Mr. v. Stumm. At the wish of Austrian friends I also, from the year 1913 on, entered into relations with the Ballhausplatz, and had during the fall of 1913 long conferences with Count Berchtold, with the First Section Chief, Baron Macchio, with the Second Section Chief, Count Forgach, with Count Alexander Hoyos, with Baron Musulin and with many other gentlemen engaged at the Foreign Ministry; and, at the wish of Count Berchtold, continued in epistolary communication with Count Alexander Hoyos. Count Berchtold said to me: "Such a completely independent man as yourself must be welcome to both sides alike, Berlin and Vienna. Both sides can speak much more freely to such a man than to diplomatic representatives, and one can always disavow you and yet know, on the other hand, that you have told the truth." Now on the 26th of June, 1914, I went to Vienna. Count Berchtold had arranged with me for an early date a conference on some Turkish question that interested both him and myself very much, and which had aroused some little attention in Berlin. When on that fatal Sunday the news of the double assassination and of its tragic success arrived in Vienna, I wrote at once to Count Alexander Hoyos that under the circumstances I should naturally forego making my appearance at the Foreign Office and should only express my deepest sympathy. The Count informed me, however, that the Minister wished to receive me, as he hoped to confer with me on the situation, and that he wished to do this as soon as he returned from making his report to the Emperor at Ischl. Count Hoyos remarked to me that the deed had certainly had its origin in Belgrade, and that the most serious consequences might result. I want to state here, *that I stood whole-heartedly and with entire sympathy on the side of Austria-Hungary*, and believed—as, indeed, I could do nothing else at the time, especially after the declarations of almost all of my Austrian and Hungarian friends—that the murderous act could surely be traced back to Serbian, perhaps to Russian influences. It was the general opinion that Franz Ferdinand, whose strong determination was well known and who seemed particularly qualified, in case he should ascend the throne, to propitiate the Slavs of the Monarchy and end the nationality quarrels by his triad idea, was the real obstacle in the road of Russian and Serbian policy, and that, therefore, it had been determined in Serbia to get rid of him. That official

circles in Serbia had a hand in the affair appeared certain; how far the Serbian Government was involved no one could tell. And I must add here that I am not convinced of the absolute innocence of the Serbian Government even today.

The first question that Count Berchtold asked me was the very natural question as to what Germany's attitude would be in case a great conflict should break out. I could answer no differently than I did, especially under the circumstances of the moment: that Germany would in any case live up to the obligations of her alliance. But as I, being only a private individual, dared not take the responsibility of making any perhaps too strong professions, in spite of my sympathy for Austria—as I well knew that my only rôle at this juncture could be to play the part of telephone between Berlin and Vienna, and knew that I had in no way the right to speak for Berlin—I wrote to Mr. v. Stumm, described to him categorically the state of affairs, and begged him to give me instructions. Mr. v. Stumm, who was then, so far as I remember, away on leave, replied to me on his return to Berlin as follows: That Germany had no desire to see the outbreak of a European war; on the contrary, that, as Germany had always been against the idea of a preventive war, so she took today the view that war was to be avoided if that could in any way be accomplished. That German diplomacy had just succeeded in putting through one good piece of work in bringing the Bagdad question to an end, that she would be able to settle the other outstanding differences with England, and that therefore our interest lay self-evidently in peace.

That every great Power had to decide for itself whether its vital interests were threatened, and that only if this was the case, did Austria have the right to go to extremes, and in no other. That only if its existence was endangered should it determine to employ force, and only then. That it was Vienna's business to decide whether this was the case. And that it must be remembered by the authorities at the Ballhausplatz what tremendous responsibilities were also being undertaken for Germany, should it come to war.

I must remark here that Mr. v. Stumm could truthfully state that he was against the idea of any preventive war, as could also Mr. v. Jagow. When, in February or January, 1914, I received from the most reliable sources the news of new Russian preparations on a great scale, I gave Mr. v. Stumm the information at once. But Mr. v. Stumm assured me most earnestly that even if Russia carried her preparatory armament even farther, Germany would never enter upon a preventive war. That no German statesman could assume such a responsibility. That Mr. v. Jagow and the Chancellor agreed with him fully. At that time Mr. v. Stumm did not credit the reports, but told me at the end of May of the same year that he had become convinced of their truth, as our former consul general in Moscow

had become consulting counselor of the Ministry and had imparted the same information. Nevertheless, he very properly maintained his original point of view.

Then I explained in detail to Mr. v. Stumm in a long letter the Viennese view of the critical situation of Austria. The Army would not stand for a third mobilization; to be mobilized and then sent home without having received any satisfaction, would prove an impossible grievance to it, according to all the information that I received. The commanders were of the opinion that the disorders among the Slavs in the Army, especially among the Czechs, would then become so great that the military weapon could not be counted on. That the agitation in southern Slavia would also increase enormously, and that war could not be avoided in the future, and would, perhaps, have to be waged under extremely unfavorable circumstances. That, after the experiences of 1909, the Ballhausplatz was in favor of being very strict with Serbia. But that nevertheless the hope was entertained that Russia—inasmuch as the matter concerned a matter of monarchism and that an appeal could be made to the feeling of mutual-fellowship among princes—might listen to reason; that it appeared to me as if even in Austria they might hesitate before making the final move, especially in consideration of the great age of the Emperor. Mr. v. Stumm replied to me in a second letter to the effect that he hoped the trouble might be localized, and that Germany still stood as it had stood before, on the ground described in his first communication.

Mr. v. Stumm told me later that very similar instructions had gone to v. Tschirschky. I will add to this statement that, when in the year 1915 the opinion spread abroad that Mr. v. Stumm had been one of the instigators of the World War, I conceived it to be my duty to him to show his letters to me to several important political personages, that they might convince themselves to the contrary. Among others of these personages was our ambassador to Berne, Dr. Adolf Müller.

I will also add that in January of 1915, during a conversation with Count Tisza, in the course of which he happened to advert to the occasion of the beginning of the war, he expressly declared to me that people would eventually become convinced of the wrong they did in representing the German Ambassador in Vienna as an instigator of the war. He and I are both accused of this action, and we are both maligned. We were the persons who at the beginning argued most for a peaceful solution of the quarrel.

Mr. v. Stumm also said to me himself—I believe it was in 1917, after the death of v. Tschirschky—"Poor Tschirschky has been bitterly wronged. God knows he did not lift his voice for war." Baron v. Tucher, the Bavarian Minister at Vienna, expressed the same opinion to me. The truth of it is evident in Tschirschky's earliest reports. Therefore I can not understand how Count Czernin, in his otherwise so discerning memorials, can

look on v. Tschirschky as a promoter of the catastrophe. I do not see on what facts he bases his opinion.

I will mention one thing more: In the *Memoirs* of Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz is to be found a letter from the Chancellor of July 12, 1914, which contains the information that Mr. v. Tschirschky had received from reliable sources the news that the contents of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia were as follows:¹ . . . To be sure it says: "He learned privately and also from Count Berchtold."

The Chancellor of the Empire indicates with three dots the content of the ultimatum. In any event Telegram No. 85, Vienna, July 10, 1914, was the source of the Chancellor's information. I find, however, that the ultimatum with its conditions is not positively referred to in this report, but that it says: "Count Berchtold said that he would like to know what is thought in Berlin about it." It is, then, in the first place a query; probably the Ambassador received private information besides. I can add, as the result of my conferences at the Ballhausplatz, that to my knowledge, only one thing had been definitely determined upon up to the 10th of July, which seems justified, namely, to take the most severe measures against Serbia, in view of the experiences of 1909. The ultimatum was in any case not reduced to form by the 10th of July. This statement is based upon a declaration of its author, that is to say, the man whose duty it was to put it in shape, Baron Musulin, made to me in March, 1919. Baron Musulin declared to me that it was set up and rewritten no less than five times, the alterations being made to accord with the constantly changing condition of affairs. I believe that nobody in Berlin knew of these proceedings, and that certainly Mr. v. Tschirschky did not.

Before I left Vienna, on the 12th of July, 1914, I had had (on the 10th) a conference with Count Hoyos, who certainly told me that the ultimatum would have to be sharply worded. I remarked at the time that in that case it seemed to me advisable to add to it a memorial which should clearly show what was maintained in Vienna—that the threads of the conspiracy could be traced to Serbian governmental circles. This memorial was then drawn up. That it could not give absolute proof, has been shown. Nevertheless, circumstantial evidence was there, though nothing more than circumstantial evidence.

That at least until the middle of July the affair was not viewed in Berlin as tragically as in Vienna, is evident from the following fact: I traveled from Vienna to Munich and went to my honored patron, Count Hertling, to report to him my Vienna news. When I entered, he said to me: "What good news do you bring me?" I replied: "Unfortunately, no good news; the possibility of a world war seems to me to be at hand." Whereupon he answered: "That is impossible. The Berlin dispatches do not permit

¹ Tirpitz, p. 212.

assumption in the least." This talk took place on the afternoon of the 13th of July, and in agreement with it is the fact that the Schön report was only dated on the 18th of July. That, too, appears to me to be a proof that Berlin both hoped and labored to avoid the extremity, despite the situation.

I wish to add that the Emperor's marginal annotations pointed to the contrary opinion from the very beginning. But I do not hesitate to declare, even if it is only my own personal idea, that these marginal annotations were nothing but momentary expressions of temperament; that is evident from the spicy words that were employed, and which in general contain no guide for the Chancellor and the Foreign Office to measure their action by. That Emperor William abhorred the idea of war from the bottom of his heart is proved by a former statement of his, of which Mr. v. Kiderlin told me in 1912. Mr. v. Kiderlin was referring to the Morocco affair, and said that once, in order to influence Cambon, he made an indefinite threat of war, which he did not even think of meaning. Mr. Cambon replied to him: "Do not excite yourself, your Excellency. Your Emperor has assured me that he will wage no war over Morocco."

There is among the published documents a very weighty remark of Mr. v. Bethmann's, commenting on how regrettable it was that all nations really wanted to avoid war, and yet could come to it.

Mr. v. Bethmann was quite right. But one exception might be made to this statement, namely, Russia, that is, not the Czar, but the military party, appears to have wanted war. This is evidenced much less clearly by Sazonoff's statement to our Ambassador, than from the documents brought to light by the Soviet Government. But the opinion was held in Austria that if no satisfaction could be obtained from Serbia, the existence of the Dual Monarchy hung in the balance. I might add that many statesmen declare today that it was a fortunate thing that the Dual Monarchy was broken up; that it could not have been held together, and that therefore our policy, which attempted to prevent the process of its dissolution, was a mistaken one. Prince Bismarck declared Austria-Hungary to be a political necessity, and it looks as if he might have been right, for even in Entente circles the at least partial reconstruction of the Monarchy is considered, in view of the more than Balkan-like tangle of nations, brought about there by the peace. To discuss the matter today is like shutting the stable door after the horse is stolen, however.

The real cause of the war was, in my opinion, the unhappy heritage which left us Austria-Hungary as our only sure ally, and into which Mr. v. Bethmann stepped. Had we separated from her, we should then have been left to stand alone, and what would have happened under these conditions is easy to conceive. It might have been possible that, for the sake of separating Germany from Austria-Hungary, Serbia could have been induced to give every satisfaction; or it would have been at the cost of having it

said afterwards in Vienna: See what German faithlessness has done for you, by leaving you in the lurch. If you had remained with us, this would not have happened. We must not for a moment forget that there were strong influences at work in Austria-Hungary with the object of attaching her to the Entente. It was not only in the circles centering about Mr. Kramarz and Mr. Masaryk, but there were also many among the high aristocracy who were making eyes at England and France, and who had nothing good to say of the alliance with Germany—even among the Austrian diplomats. When I went to Vienna in the year 1913, Mr. Stumm said to me: "When you talk with Count Berchtold, you may mention this, but speak as if you heard it among court circles, and not from me. It is being very unfavorably remarked here that members of the Austrian diplomatic corps are talking in foreign countries very ambiguously about their alliance with us, and are making approaches to the other side." This remark leads to various conclusions, and I can assert that there were wide circles in Austria in which opinions similar to those mentioned were held.

What would have happened, however, if we had withdrawn and stood alone, it is not difficult to foresee. Even if England had been of a peaceful disposition, the Dual Alliance would undoubtedly, at the urgency of France, have taken advantage of our being enveloped.

The true and final cause of the war lay, as I have already mentioned, in the discrepancy between the foreign policies of Austria and Germany. Austria practised a Balkan policy that inevitably brought it into constant conflict with Russia and with Italy, a policy which it could scarcely avoid on account of the remarkable mixture of nationalities out of which it was constructed. Germany was given to a policy that brought it specifically in opposition to England. It was our misfortune that at the moment when it seemed as if this difference could be overcome, the conflict between Austria and Serbia broke out.

The efforts of the Berlin policy were then directed toward the localization of this conflict. It was hoped thereby to avoid a European war. At first these efforts seemed to be having some success, as England was at the time exerting herself in the same direction. The mistake made by Vienna of leaving Italy in the dark, a mistake made against the wishes of Berlin, thus gave Italy a welcome excuse for repudiating the obligations of her alliance. At the same moment in which England recognized that the conflict could not be confined, an attempt was made to end it by means of a conference in Italy. To this Austria did not agree, nor did Germany press her to do so, because Austria said, rightly or wrongly, you can not appear together with Serbia before the bar of Europe to hear its judgment there. Sir Edward Grey, who rightly appreciated the danger of the situation, considered this scruple as immaterial. But let us take the case that the Prince of Wales and his consort had been slain in northern India by Persian murder-

ers and that London held the firm conviction that the seat of the conspiracy had been in Teheran, and that the Russian Minister had known about it. Can one really believe that England would have permitted a court of justice to decide between Persia and itself?

Nevertheless, there was *one* moment at which the conflict might have been banished from the world, namely, if the Austrian Minister at Belgrade had not determined on instant departure. As he did, however, the matter was decided. Now we know how strongly Berlin urged Vienna to avoid going to extremes. Mr. v. Bethmann and Mr. v. Jagow saw themselves forced either to the decision to support Austria, at the same time warning her against too precipitate a resolve, which they did, or, on the other hand, to the probable loss of their last ally. It was as serious a decision as has ever been given statesmen to make. It is easy to condemn it after the fact, but the Russian mobilization should not be left out of account, nor the danger it threatened, before we condemn the deed. It is much more incomprehensible to me that the General Staff apparently underestimated the Russian preparations and considered the Austro-Hungarian Army as a much stronger engine than it actually was. And, further, that, in the last few days before the war, reports—later proved false—were spread by military agencies, which were calculated to convince us *all* that the enemy had already actually opened the war. Mr. v. Bethmann had to trust to them, and he was unfortunately also compelled to agree that if we respected the neutrality of Belgium, we were sure to lose the war. Naturally, as soon as the war was upon us, it was no more the office of the statesman to speak, but that of the general. The statesmen saw themselves forced to submit. Mr. v. Stumm said to me in his time: "It was flatly declared to us that if we did not begin, we were going to be left behind. And cases of violation of the frontiers were continually being announced to the foreign office." The Russian mobilization was bound to start the stone rolling, and, unfortunately, England, in spite of the fact that she apparently did not want the war, failed to exert the necessary energy in Petersburg to prevent it.

In conclusion, I may remark, by the way: After the outbreak of the war I was told by Count Berchtold that he originally had the idea that the largest number possible of royalties should attend the funeral of the victims at Vienna. He was convinced that, in the presence of the dead, they would have listened to the warning plea of the aged Emperor, and that the feeling of a common interest among monarchs might have brought them to permit Serbia's rendering Austria the required satisfaction. But he told me that the Chief Master of Ceremonies had wished that no royal personages be present, probably out of consideration for the health of the Emperor—the declination of Emperor William was due to other reasons—so that his idea had not been possible of execution.

At the commencement of my discourse I remarked that the original

cause of the war could only be explained cosmically or metaphysically, according to the philosophy of the individual. I believe that, with the most honest desire to attain to truth and lucidity, no other conclusion can be arrived at in the end. We set beneath our judicial decisions the words "By virtue of Right." The more modest Turks write beneath theirs, "Allah knows better." In the present case, and least of all in the present case, shall we be able to find the Right. We, too, must content ourselves by crying out: "Allah knows better!"

VICTOR NAUMANN, LLD.

9. BARON v. TUCHER

At the time of the outbreak of the war, Bavarian Minister in Vienna

DECLARATION

The political attitude of the late Mr. v. Tschirschky, Ambassador at Vienna, after the assassination at Serajevo, was, as I observed it, composed of the greatest caution, the severest conscientiousness and the serenest judgment, uninfluenced by any prejudice, and completely adapted to the deep seriousness of the circumstances.

I do not remember that Mr. v. Tschirschky made at that critical period any remarks which indicated a conviction on his part that war was either necessary or unavoidable, or that could be construed as either encouraging or instigating war.

If Mr. v. Tschirschky had adopted an attitude provocative of war, I, who was in almost daily touch with the Ambassador, would surely have noticed it. I should have talked it over with my late Saxon colleague, Count Rex, and should certainly remember it. I should also, convinced as I was from the beginning of the great peril of undertaking war with such insufficient diplomatic preparation, without question have considered such an attitude on the part of the Ambassador as both doubtful and dangerous, and should have made it the subject of my political reports. But my reports contain not the slightest suggestion of such a thing.

On the other hand, I remember very clearly that Mr. v. Tschirschky repeated again and again that it was for Austria-Hungary to judge of her own vital interests, and to decide how and when to defend them. That Germany would stand faithfully at the side of her ally and accept all the consequences of the alliance.

This blank power of attorney that seems to us so ominous a thing today, appeared to us at that time in Vienna, during the development of affairs after the assassination, as not at all too comprehensive, but as perfectly natural—indeed, the least that Germany could do. Our principal impression was

that Austria-Hungary, of whose Balkan policy I by no means approve, was vitally endangered by the Greater-Serbia propaganda, and that Germany could not leave that ally in the lurch who had given her such evidences of faithfulness (Algeciras, The Hague, Ischl). Her determined abstention from interference bespoke a certain hesitation to influence the considerations and conclusions of the Austro-Hungarian Government, induced by the extreme sensitiveness of the Austrian and Hungarian statesmen, as well as of public opinion in Austria-Hungary.

Nowadays we certainly see things in another light.

To return to Mr. v. Tschirschky's attitude, I must state that from my point of view I consider it unjust to represent the late Ambassador as an inciter of the war, and to lay on his shoulders any material part of the responsibility for the proceedings of the Austro-Hungarian Government against Serbia.

I can give no information in regard to the matter of the influencing of Mr. v. Tschirschky by either military or political circles of the German Administration, as, notwithstanding all our intimacy, the Ambassador told me nothing about his instructions. Our discussions were confined to the progress of events and to the action of the Austro-Hungarian Government, and were not about the affairs of the German Government.

The result of my investigations and observations I included, as was my duty, and, I may say, exhaustively, in my reports to my government. Anything that can not be found in them with relation to reasonably important matters is matter that never came to my knowledge or cognizance.

BARON V. TUCHER,
Former Bavarian Minister.

MUNICH, *January 5, 1920.*

10. DR. HUGO GANZ

*At the time of the outbreak of the war, Vienna representative of the
"Frankfurter Zeitung"*

The undersigned can only say of his own knowledge that the attitude in Vienna of the German Ambassador, Mr. v. Tschirschky, after the assassination at Serajevo, was in no wise that of an encourager of war, as has so often been stated. Mr. v. Tschirschky was convinced, as doubtless was also the Foreign Office in Berlin, that Austria-Hungary would be able to count on the support of the German Empire in the quarrel with Serbia which was forced on her by the murder at Serajevo and by all that had preceded it, if the alliance itself was not to be discarded. It is possible and even probable that Mr. v. Tschirschky, of his own accord and perhaps acting on instructions from Berlin, advised Vienna to take sharp and determined action,

because it was also to Germany's interest to see that her ally was not treated as if already defunct by the Greater-Serbia propagandists. It was Mr. v. Tschirschky's conviction that Serbia was being used by the Entente as a battering-ram against Austria-Hungary, and was to be turned to the destruction of German power in Europe, which stood in the way of the Entente plans with regard to Asiatic Turkey. Up to the last day of his life he was firmly convinced that the World War was the result of an infernal plot of the Entente Powers against Germany, and was especially an act of revenge of Mr. v. Iswolski against the late Count Ährenthal, who had wounded his pride during the annexation crisis. Nevertheless, Mr. v. Tschirschky advised cautious action, because he thoroughly realized the danger of a universal catastrophe. He had no knowledge of the ultimatum to Serbia before it was handed to him for confidential transmission to Berlin. He faithfully delivered the German notes, which up to the last moment strove to turn Austria-Hungary into the path of adjustment. Nor can I believe that he contradicted them verbally. As I remember it, I met Mr. v. Tschirschky in the Embassy on the 31st of July [*sic*], 1914, as he was on the point of driving to call on Count Berchtold to hand him over a note. He was in unaccustomed official dress and had a portfolio under his arm. Knowing that Berlin was striving to the uttermost to slow up the Vienna Cabinet, which was already in full swing, I said jestingly to Mr. v. Tschirschky in the words of Frundsberg to Luther: "Little monk, thou goest on a hard journey." He answered: "God knows I do!" I awaited his return to the Embassy, and before I could ask him what the result had been, Mr. v. Tschirschky said, as if relieved: "Thank God, Berchtold gave way." It was in those days my lasting belief, which has kept me immune to all the Entente legends about the causes of the war, that German policy, even though it was willing to protect Austria-Hungary in an offensive resistance against Russo-Serbian intrigue, tried to do its utmost to localize the conflict; and that Mr. v. Tschirschky, who from the first had had in view the danger of an Italian and a Roumanian defection, considered the chances of the Central Powers far too unfavorable to permit him to believe so easily that the opportunity for splitting or destroying the Entente had come and so felt able to attempt to influence Vienna politics personally from this point of view. Mr. v. Tschirschky was no pacifist; he was, if you will, somewhat of an old style German imperialist; he saw things through "Vienna spectacles," as they thought in Berlin; was very distrustful of Entente diplomacy, which he regarded as in full offensive battle for the hegemony of Europe. But he did not wish for war, and after its outbreak suffered severely on account of it.

I could hardly, of my own knowledge, tell anything more or of a different nature in answer to direct questions, and therefore submit to the high committee the question whether it would not be willing to dispense with my

personal appearance, which would involve my making an expensive and inconvenient journey from Switzerland to Berlin.

Very respectfully,

DR. HUGO GANZ.

HOTEL WAGNER, LUCERNE,

December 17, 1919.

11. PRINCE ZU STOLBERG

At the time of the outbreak of the war, Counselor to the German Embassy at Vienna

With reference to your courteous letter of the 5th of the month and to the questions attached thereto I have the honor to state as follows:

As to No. I. Mr. v. Tschirschky, who as a result of his activity of many years as Ambassador at Vienna had a fundamental knowledge of the internal conditions of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and of the national differences that existed therein, and who followed with especial anxiety the centrifugal convulsions in the southern Slav districts incited by a propaganda becoming ever more dangerous to the stability of Austria-Hungary, was, because of these facts and because of the conviction they enforced of a serious situation for our ally and hence for the alliance itself, fully persuaded of the necessity of stern action against Serbia, without being in the least in doubt as to the critical consequences which might result from such action. So far as I know, this attitude of Mr. v. Tschirschky corresponded exactly with the instructions communicated to him. If our opponents show a tendency to represent matters as if he had spurred on the war, this may be explained by the fact that the Ambassador, in view of the reproaches which were directed against German policy during the Balkan wars, to the effect that it had not sufficiently exerted itself in behalf of the interests of Austria-Hungary, conceived it to be his duty to uphold energetically in the interest of the maintenance of the alliance, Austria's view-point in relation to external affairs.

As to No. VII. So far as I know, the customary memoranda on the papers of the Vienna Embassy afford the necessary information.

With the assurance of my highest regard,

PRINCE ZU STOLBERG.

12. ADMIRAL v. MÜLLER

At the time of the outbreak of the war, Chief of the Naval Cabinet

With reference to the letter of the 5th of December which I received today, concerning: "It must be determined what political and military

transactions took place at Berlin or Potsdam on the 5th or the 6th of July," I may remark that I was not present at any such conferences. My diary for the 6th of July contains only the entry that "His Majesty yesterday and also this morning received representatives of the Minister of War, the General Staff, the Admiralty Staff and the Imperial Navy Office to confer about the situation which arises from the proposed advance of the Austrians into Serbia."

From whom I received this information, I no longer know. But it must have been from one of the gentlemen of the Imperial suite on the journey to Kiel, undertaken on the morning of the 6th.

Under these circumstances my appearance before the investigation committee would be of no service, and I therefore beg to be excused from appearing.

V. MÜLLER,
Admiral.

13. NAVAL CAPTAIN ZENKER

I have the honor to inform you, in response to your courteous letter of December 5, of this year, that I can give no information beyond that contained in my report of the 8th of November, or which could not be framed in verbal answers to direct questions.

In connection with the address for my summons, I beg to remark that I have since been appointed Inspector of Naval Artillery with quarters at Wilhelmshaven. My address up to the 4th of January, 1920 will be: Berlin-Lichterfelde-West, Knesebeckstrasse 2; from that time on it will be Wilhelmshaven, Naval Artillery Inspection Department.

ZENKER,
Naval Captain.

14. ADMIRAL V. CAPELLE

At the time of the outbreak of the war, Acting Secretary of State in the Imperial Naval Office

To the letter of December 5, I beg to make the following reply:

As to question No. II. At the beginning of October of this year I received the following communication from the Foreign Office:

There has been found in the records of the Foreign Office a memorandum written by Under-Secretary of State Baron v. d. Bussche, according to which a conference of military officials was held with Emperor William on the 6th of July, 1914, in which, among others, your Excellency is said to have taken part. I should be grateful to

your Excellency for the most complete information possible regarding what, if anything, is known to you about the conference.

(Signed) HANIEL.

I answered this as follows:

On Monday, July 6, 1914, between 7 and 8 o'clock A.M., I received, as Acting Secretary of State—Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz was on leave—a telephonic order to come *at once* to Emperor William at the New Palace. I found the Emperor in the garden, ready to commence his northern journey. The Emperor walked up and down with me for a short time and gave me a brief account of the events of Sunday, the day before. He added, according to my recollection of its *purport*, something like the following (about which, probably, neither private nor official memoranda exist): He did not believe that a great war would develop. In his opinion, the Czar would not associate himself with the murderers of princes. Besides that, neither France nor Russia was prepared for war. The Emperor did not mention England. On the advice of the Imperial Chancellor, he was going to start quietly on his journey to the north, in order not to arouse any apprehensions. Nevertheless, he wished to inform me of the strained situation, that I might consider it further.

According to the above, a conference of military officials could not have taken place at Potsdam on the 6th of July, inasmuch as the Emperor commenced his journey to Kiel immediately after the conversation with myself.

ADMIRAL v. CAPELLE.

Having returned to the Imperial Naval Office, I called together the department heads and the Chief of the Central Division—according to my recollection, Vice Admiral Behncke, Deputy Chief of the Admiralty Staff, also took part in the conference—and informed them of the Emperor's communication. We all agreed that, in view of the restrictions imposed—no political disquiet, no employment of extraordinary financial means in the departments controlled by the Imperial Naval Office, namely, the Navy yards (ship construction, etc.), torpedo workshops, artillery and mine depots, fortifications (coast defense), equipment offices, commissary department, etc.,—no action was to be inaugurated.

According to my recollection, no official minutes were taken of this conference, nor did I give any notice of it to be included in the reports or make a personal record of it for myself. But, nevertheless, I certainly ordered the Chief of the Central Division, Rear Admiral Hopmann, to provide for the notification of the circumstances to Secretary of State Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz, then on leave. This was in accordance with the usual routine of the Imperial Naval Office.

To this notification are doubtless due the remarks of Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz on page 209 of his *Recollections*.

As to question No. IV. Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz had been away on

leave since the beginning of July, and I acted in his place until about the end of July.

No military preparations or movements took place within the domain of the affairs of the Imperial Naval Office during this time. According to my recollection, such measures as I took in this regard, as suggested in my answer to question No. II, were not afterward altered by Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz.

With the assurance of my highest regard,

ADMIRAL V. CAPELLE.

15. MAX M. WARBURG¹

In courteously replying to your kind letter, permit me to make answer as follows:

No such audience as you seem to surmise took place, nor any special invitation to a conference on the part of the former Emperor. The Emperor was accustomed to come every year to Hamburg before he went on to the yacht races at Cuxhaven and Kiel. Thereupon it was practically the annual custom to give a dinner at the residence of the Prussian Minister on the evening of the day of the Emperor's arrival, on the next day a breakfast at Mr. Ballin's, and on the following day a general luncheon at Cuxhaven on board one of the steamers of the Hamburg-American line. Usually the same gentlemen were invited to these gatherings, and the former Emperor would converse in unconstrained fashion with the guests present, such conversations taking on a more intimate tone from the fact that, as suggested above, we saw each other quite often during these days.

I remember, in the year 1914, after a dinner at the Prussian Minister v. Bülow's, talking at length with the Emperor on the terrace of the Minister's gardens. The Emperor gave me the impression of being more care-worn than usual. I remember that he spoke about the extensive armament provisions in Russia, and about French plans for railway construction to the Franco-German border, which in his opinion were being made for military reasons. In all this the Emperor seemed to see the preparation for a war with us, perhaps for 1916. Nor did he conceal that some circles in Germany held the view that it would be better not to await the development of the growing power of our opponents. But in spite of the seriousness of the occasion I did *not* receive the impression *that the Emperor believed in an imminent war; nor did he give me in any way the impression that prior action on our side was to be taken in any form.*

I did not go to Kiel after that, because for many years, whenever pos-

¹The statement refers to a meeting with the former Emperor shortly before the assassination.

sible, I have avoided the Kiel festivities. Nor did I thereafter speak with the former Emperor *again* during the whole period of the war, save at breakfast in the Hamburg City Hall in the spring of 1918. At that time the former Emperor addressed me only very briefly, and very evidently intentionally avoided discussing politics with me. He merely referred to a previous conversation between us regarding the University of Hamburg. As a result of his attitude I withdrew, taking no further part in the conversation which continued among a larger group.

I could not impart verbally any further information than I have here put down in writing.

With my highest regards,

MAX M. WARBURG.

16. BARON v. LYNCKER

At the time of the outbreak of the war, Chief of the Military Cabinet

With regard to yours of the 5th of the month, received on the 18th of the month, and as to No. II of the Resolution of Evidence:

Whether and what political transactions took place at Berlin or Potsdam on the 5th and the 6th of July, 1914, I do not know. I only know that the question was discussed between the Imperial Chancellor and the higher court officials, whether His Majesty the Emperor should make his customary northern journey or not.

No military transactions, especially any concerned with a prospective war, took place to my knowledge during these days; at least, I can remember no such. This would certainly have been the case, however, if anything of the sort had happened and I had been present. I believe that I was myself in the presence of His Majesty in the New Palace on the 6th of July, *to make my usual report* on current military affairs, but I can not state this with certainty, any more than I can say whether the Minister of War or a representative of the General Staff was present on that same day.

It is certain, however, that in my report—if it was made at all at the time—there can not have been a word about a *prospective war* or about preparations for war. That I should naturally have remembered; it would also have prevented me from accompanying His Majesty that year, as usual, on his northern journey; it would, on the other hand, have compelled me instead to remain in Berlin.

BARON v. LYNCKER,
Colonel General.

17. WAR MINISTER v. FALKENHAYN, RETIRED

To your request of the 5th, which reached me today, I have the honor of replying.

As to question No. II of the Resolution of Evidence. His Majesty the Emperor on the afternoon of the 5th of July, 1914, commanded my presence at the New Palace—if I am not mistaken, over the telephone—and received me at once upon my arrival. There were present besides, Colonel General v. Plessen and General Baron v. Lyncker. His Majesty read me portions of the well-known letter of the Emperor Franz Joseph, as well as portions of the equally well-known memorandum of the Austro-Hungarian Government, pointed out how very serious consequences might ensue from the evidently firm determination of Austria-Hungary to put an end at last to the Greater-Serbia propaganda, and in conclusion asked me the question whether the Army was ready for all contingencies.

In consonance with my conviction I replied briefly and unconditionally that it was, and only asked on my part whether any other preparations were to be made. His Majesty answered just as briefly that they were not, and dismissed me.

Apart from the greeting and the dismissal, not another word was spoken at the meeting.

As to question No. IV. No military preparations or movements took place at my orders before the delivery of the ultimatum to Serbia.

V. FALKENHAYN,
State and War Minister, Retired.

18. LIEUTENANT GENERAL COUNT WALDERSEE

*At the time of the outbreak of the war, Acting Chief of the General Staff
of the Army*

In reply to the letter of the 5th of the month I have the honor to respectfully remit my answers to the questions asked of me.

As to No. II. I know nothing of any political or military transactions at Berlin or Potsdam on the 5th and 6th of July.

In my capacity as Chief Quartermaster I of the General Staff of the Army, I acted for my chief, Colonel General v. Moltke, who was then taking treatments in Carlsbad, in all matters of preparation concerned with warfare. On the 4th of July I went to Hanover in connection with a death in my immediate family. Up to that time no military conferences of any kind had been directed from any quarter. I had left orders at my departure to keep me notified by telephone of all important happenings and to recall me at once in the case of eventual necessity.

I had word in Hanover that in the meantime General v. Bertrab, chief

of the Registration Division, as the senior general on the General Staff, had been called to Berlin to receive instructions. The selection of General Bertrab in itself was evidence that no conferences at Potsdam were in view, as this general was not acquainted with matters concerning war preparation. I, who was, could have been recalled from Hanover at the proper time.

After my return on the 7th of July General Bertrab informed me that he had been briefly received by His Majesty the Emperor, to be told by him that he, the Emperor, had promised the Emperor Franz Joseph to stand by him in his difficulties with Serbia. General Bertrab was to inform the chief of the General Staff of this. He had received no further orders and he had not been asked for his opinion in any particular.

There was nothing for me, or even for the General Staff to attend to, in connection with the audience that General Bertrab had in Potsdam. And, so far as I know, it had no further result in any quarter.

As to No. IV. I can state most decidedly that on the German side, *no* military preparations or movements took place before the delivery of the ultimatum to Serbia.

None were initiated at the Ministry of War by the General Staff—and through the former would have come the appropriate orders to officials and troops. I did not hear that such orders emanated direct from the Ministry of War. The General Staff would have had to have knowledge of such matters.

On the evening of the 7th of July—thus, on the very day of my interview with General v. Bertrab referred to above—I left Berlin. At the express wish of the then Imperial Chancellor I was directed by Messrs. v. Jagow and Zimmermann to enter on my leave of absence, already granted, for the purpose of recuperation. General v. Moltke had expressed his agreement to my departure. From these circumstances as well as from the fact that I let myself be persuaded to leave Berlin, it must be plain that military preparations and movements were at that time not even in contemplation. I think it is worth while to emphasize the fact that with my conception of duty nothing would have kept me away from my office if such important matters as preparations for a war had been in view.

During my absence I was continuously kept in touch with affairs from Berlin. Nothing concerning war preparations was mentioned to me until the delivery of the ultimatum to Serbia.

As evidence that even to the Army no news of war preparations had penetrated, I would state here that I know it to be true that commanders of the cavalry regiments on the border were off on leave until immediately before the outbreak of the "threatened danger of war," and were then first recalled.

COUNT WALDERSEE,
Lieutenant General.

19. VICE ADMIRAL BEHNCKE

At the time of the outbreak of the war, Acting Chief of the Admiralty Staff

II. It must be determined what political or military transactions took place at Berlin or Potsdam on the 5th and the 6th of July.

1. On the afternoon of the 5th of July an order from the Emperor arrived at the offices of the General Staff to the effect that I should report to him at once in Potsdam. As I had gone out, Naval Captain Zenker went in my place. I have in my possession no private memoranda concerning either that period of tension in July or concerning the later period of the war. As nearly as I can remember the report of Captain Zenker, His Majesty the Emperor gave the following explanations and directions:

(a) Further complications may result from the Austro-Hungarian quarrel in which Germany will fulfil the obligations of her alliance with Austria.

(b) A war with Russia and France may arise from the situation. Even if such a war is not probable, its possibility must be reckoned with from a military point of view. England was not mentioned as a possible opponent.

(c) To avoid causing any concern or giving the appearance of attaching too much importance to the political situation, the Emperor would go on his summer journey to Norway as planned, and the fleet also was to start at the present and make its cruise to Norway according to arrangement.

(d) The Chief of the General Staff was not to be recalled from his leave of absence.

2. In a talk with Admiral v. Capelle on the morning of the 6th of July I learned that he had received similar information from His Majesty the Emperor early on the 6th of July. We were fully agreed that, with things as they were, it was above all absolutely necessary to keep the affair secret, and next, that no measures were to be taken that could occasion any uneasiness, and that *only immaterial preparations* should at the time be made for meeting the situation of a possible outbreak of war. It was agreed that the notice should be given personally and by word of mouth to the higher naval commanders and the chiefs of the dockyards on behalf of the Imperial Naval Office.

3. Further transactions with which the Admiralty Staff, then represented by myself, was concerned, did not, to my knowledge, take place on July 5 or 6. Such more restricted measures as were undertaken up to the 23d of July as a result of the information received on July 5, will be disclosed by the answer to No. IV.

PAUL BEHNCKE,

Vice Admiral, and at the time Acting Chief of the Admiralty Staff.

BERLIN, December 27, 1919.

VI (*sic*; misprint for IV). It must be determined whether any military preparations or movements took place before the delivery of the ultimatum to Serbia.

On the strength of the instructions given on the 5th of July by His Majesty the Emperor and in full consideration of the comprehension and wishes of the Foreign Office, with which we were in continuous and faithful accord, *no military preparations of any kind* took place during the period from the 5th to the 23d of July. The measures undertaken by the General Staff in consideration of possible warlike developments, were confined to:

(a) A test, suited to the circumstances, of the measures established by the current mobilization practice. In making this test the case of a possible war with Russia and France, without the participation of England, was particularly kept in mind.

(b) The making of a number of requisitions on the Imperial Navy Office as a result of this test. These consisted of measures to insure the timely preparation of war-ships and smaller craft, and of their auxiliaries, without going noticeably beyond the limit of peace measures or marking up a deficit against our current peace budget.

(c) Direction of the movements of the high-seas fleet and of ships out of home waters according to the Foreign Office's judgment of the situation.

The activities described in (a) consisted of work in the quarters of the General Staff and of verbal transactions with the Imperial Navy Office and, to a minor degree, with the commanders of the fleet and the dockyards. These preparations everywhere were *purely subjective*.

The requisitions mentioned in (b) were also presented to the Imperial Navy Office by word of mouth. A written compilation of these requests, enlarged by others of a similar nature demanded by further measures, went to the Imperial Navy Office on the 25th of July.

This compilation covered particularly the following points:

1. The hastening to completion of new ships, torpedo-boats and U-boats already almost finished and of such ships and small craft in service as were laid up for repairs, as well as the preparing for war service of all ships and small craft out of commission. The budget allowance was not to be overstepped.
2. The completion of the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal and a test trip through it by a battle-ship.
3. Enlarging the provision of fuel, etc., to the necessary volume.
4. Preparations for the provision of a number of auxiliary and store ships without incurring any immediate expense.
5. Putting into shape the naval flying forces.

As to the reference in (c) to the movements of the high seas fleet, these were made to correspond exactly with the plans and wishes of the Chancellor (Foreign Office). In order to avoid causing any political uneasiness, all military scruples concerning the fleet's leaving its home waters were set

aside. Even if the Foreign Office believed it could count on British neutrality, it was nevertheless the military duty of the Admiralty Staff to consider the possibility of an immediate participation by England, in view of the unfavorable strategical position in which the German fleet stood, while in Norway, as compared with the English fleet. As things were, however, the Admiralty Staff felt sufficiently assured by the declaration of the Foreign Office that political developments would under all circumstances permit the timely return of the high-seas fleet—six days before the possible commencement of war with England. The high-seas fleet began its northern cruise on the 15th of July, and entered Norwegian harbors on the 24th of July.

Of the vessels in foreign waters, those ships whose special situation or position made it necessary were kept in touch with the current of affairs and given special orders. Among these were the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, which, under the commander of the cruiser squadron, were on their way to Samoa. They received orders on the 6th of July to remain in Truk or Ponape, to make possible a certain and constant communication with them. The *Goeben* had been ordered to Pola a few days earlier than had been contemplated by her itinerary, for necessary repairs to her boilers. Dockyard workers were sent to Pola in the middle of July in order to hasten the repairs to her tubes. The *Eber*, which was lying at Capetown to be docked and to have her boilers cleaned, was notified in order that the necessary work might be adjusted to the political situation. The *Dresden* received special orders for the first time on July 22. The rest of the ships abroad were only notified on July 26.

It may be remarked that the Chief of the Admiralty Staff returned to Berlin from his leave of absence early on the 25th of July.

On the whole, it is evident from these facts that during the time up to July 23, no military movements were ordered or effected by the Admiralty Staff, and that such orders and preparations as were put through came well within the bounds of the ordinary measures for self-protection and within the limits of regular peace outlays; so that, in taking military measures, the most complete inconspicuousness and self-restraint was observed, up to the very limit of military safety, in order to avoid anything that might be seized upon as a sign of political nervousness or that might contribute to the acuteness of the situation. The limited measures that were taken were justified by the great dependence of the Navy on material supplies and on the absence of its ships from home and from the source of their conveniences and necessities.

PAUL BEHNCKE,

Vice Admiral, and at the time Acting Chief of the Admiralty Staff.

BERLIN, December 28, 1919.

20. CONSUL GENERAL DR. EISWALDT¹

Among the ultimate causes that led the Vienna Cabinet to deliver the so-called ultimatum to Belgrade in July, 1914, thereby inevitably hastening the outbreak of the World War, the question of the responsibility of the Serbian Government for the murder of the Archduke takes first place. Public suspicion was immediately and generally aroused as to the question of whether this responsibility really existed and whether it could be proved. It is therefore not surprising that the Parliamentary Committee formed to investigate the preliminary history of the war proposes to determine, among other matters, whether and what measures were at that time adopted by the Imperial Chancellor and his Secretary of State at the Foreign Office to obtain information regarding the progress of the investigation at Serajevo after the 5th of July, 1914.

Such a determination, whether it results positively or negatively, can hardly bring about the desired elucidation; it will leave open the question, what might have been ascertained concerning the progress of that investigation on the part of the German interests, and what actually was ascertained. It is the object of these remarks to add something to the elucidation of this question. It may first be prefaced that the writer was during the years 1912-18 consular representative of Germany in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Little as the majority in Serajevo competent to form an opinion doubted after the murderous attack that the slayers of the heir to the Hapsburg crown and their homicidal assistants were the tools of the Belgrade politicians, especially of that portion of the officers' corps which was affiliated with Prince George, it was more than evident from the beginning to the higher officials interested that it would be extraordinarily difficult, unless aided possibly by a lucky chance, to be able to offer proof that the murder had been conceived, arranged and seconded by the Serbian Government itself. With this prospect in view, the investigation had to be carried on with the greatest caution as well as with the most careful restriction as to its initiates. That this was not at first effected, in no way proves that it was not a necessity. Despite my complete realization of this necessity, I requested in the most friendly manner those gentlemen of the district government who were in charge of the investigation to keep me from time to time and by memoranda in touch with its progress; in reply I was informed just as amicably but most unmistakably that this would, unfortunately, be quite impossible under the particular circumstances; that at the direction of the Minister, information concerning the investigation was to be rendered to him alone. One of the guiding considerations that led to this refusal was that concerning the consuls of the other Powers, especially the consuls

¹ Statement sent to the Investigation Committee by the author of his own accord.

of allied Italy and of friendly England, but its particular occasion was the view that the gathering of seriously important information of a foreign political nature was the business of diplomatic representatives and not of a consul.

Hence, to inform oneself with even reasonable reliability about the progress of the investigation in its established direction was scarcely possible in Serajevo. But there were plenty of rumors: it was a fact that the bombs had come from the arsenal at Kraguyevatz; they were wrapped, it was reported among other things, in the same kind of paper as had been those found in 1912 at Brčka on the Save, whose Serbian origin had been incontrovertibly shown at that time. Also that the prime movers of the assassination were to be looked for in Belgrade, and even that a Serbian staff officer and a high official of the Serbian state railways had been identified as among the accomplices, as well as the frontier commissioners at Schabatz and Losnitza. Whether all this was no more nor less than coffee-house chatter, which was at that time in full sway at Serajevo, could not be determined. On the other hand, it appeared to be almost immaterial whether the instigators and abettors of the murderer Princip and his associates were Serbian officers, Serbian officials or Serbian politicians, for to everyone who was not struck with blindness it was unshakably evident that they were first of all "royal" Serbs, Serbs who knew that they were protected in Belgrade by government, national assembly and crown. Later, after the advance into Serbia, researches among the archives demonstrated the truth, as likewise was later proved by the fact that the leading nationalistic organization in Serbia, the *Narodna obrana* had carried on Greater-Serbia propaganda in Bosnia and Herzegovina under apparently harmless designations through the medium of the *Prosjeta* and other allied unions of an orthodox Serbian character, thereby nourishing the fanatical spirit that took possession of a Princip, a Gavrilow, and others, making it scarcely possible to ignore either persons or acts concerned, and, indeed, in part bringing to light the support of the district government of Bosnia and of its head at Vienna, Minister v. Bilinski. This clever leader of the Polish Club could hardly have belonged among those blind to what was going on. At any rate, a few weeks before the murderous assault in Serajevo a conference of the Supervisory Information Service for the Greater Serbia Irredenta had been opened; its proceedings must have opened the eyes of the Minister in question, if that was any longer necessary. At this conference the chairman, who lacked neither sympathy with nor comprehension of the many complaints, some of them justified, of the Serbian peasants in Bosnia, nor respect for the intellectual superiority of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Serbs, declared in clear and unmistakable terms that the supervision ought not to be relaxed for any Serb in Bosnia, as not a single Serb loyal to the Kingdom could be found in the country, but would have to be born first; that the whole country, young

and old alike, was, without any exception, infected with the poison of Greater-Serbia sedition! I have many times been assured that Minister v. Bilinski had for years been receiving information of a similar nature, principally with the result of stiffening the backbones of the Serbian Irredentists.

The gentleman is today a power in Warsaw; in 1914, as joint Minister of Finance, he was the head of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That he spoke in favor of a belligerent reckoning with Serbia and against any amicable settlement at the ministerial council that preceded the delivery of the ultimatum is perhaps explained by his special knowledge of the Serbian insubordination in Bosnia. Did the Imperial Chancellor and Mr. v. Jagow get in touch through the usual or through any other channels with the chief of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Government Bureau concerning the ominous question of complicity in the fateful murder at Serajevo? Mr. v. Bilinski was, more so than the conscientious Privy Councilor of the Ballhausplatz, competent—I might well say that he alone in Vienna was competent—to express himself with full and complete knowledge of the facts about the progress of the investigation at Serajevo, so far as it concerned the question of Serbian complicity. If they did get in touch with him, so much the better; if they failed to do so, it would be no great mistake and of but small disadvantage, for Mr. v. Bilinski was accounted by very competent judges a master in the art of concealing thought in words.

What intelligent circles in Serajevo thought about the question of "complicity" in those critical weeks, I can make plain by concluding with a personal reminiscence. In talking with a highly educated man who made no secret of his sympathy for the Serbian people, I let fall the remark that in the twentieth century assassination should not be negotiated in the chambers of a Minister of State, even in the Balkans. I was here interrupted by an observation to the effect that I apparently believed in the complicity of the Serbian Government. "Then I will admit to you," continued this gentleman, "that politically over there (that is, on the other side of the Drina) nobody is entirely innocent, but legally only a few are guilty, and certainly not one of the ministers. For they are too clever, and, besides, stand in fear of the moral judgment of Western Europe. They might deprecate, but beyond that they would be silent." I then asked the question: "So you do not believe in the complicity of the Belgrade Government?"—and received the significant answer: "From the standpoint of a judge, certainly not."

DR. EISWALDT,
Consul General.

21. MAJOR GENERAL TAPPEN

IV. It must be determined whether any military preparations or movements took place before the delivery of the ultimatum to Serbia.

STATEMENT

Except for the regular annual maneuvers and service preparation and practice, no military preparations or movements *of any sort* took place, to my knowledge, before the delivery of the ultimatum to Serbia.

TAPPEN,
Major General.

22. COLONEL v. TIESCHOWITZ

I have the honor to reply as follows to the inquiry of December 5 of this year.

I had been since April 1, 1912, senior Adjutant to the Chief of the General Staff of the Army. As such it was my duty to assist in preparing for the maneuvers. It was my duty first of all to prepare the Army lists for the maneuvers and to inform all General Staff officers of their dispositions for the maneuvers. These labors were completed in 1914, as always, on the 1st of April. From that time on until the day of the Russian mobilization, I performed no mobilization duties. During the summer months, the officers of our General Staff were, for various reasons, scattered in great measure all over the country. The gentlemen of the Topographical Division, for instance, were in the year 1914 at their work of mapping out the country in East Prussia; others were at maneuvers or were traveling for the General Staff in the west and south of Germany.

The first preparation for a mobilization would have been to recall the officers of the General Staff from their distant stations. Nothing of the sort occurred. Only when the Russian mobilization was in full flood were the officers brought back.

But the most striking proof that the war came as a great surprise to the General Staff lies in the fact that in July, 1914, the Chief of the General Staff of the Army as well as most of the chief quartermasters and Division chiefs had gone away on their regular long leaves. Even the Chief of the Central Division, whose duty it was to arrange the personal duties of the officers of the General Staff and to conduct the affairs of the Grand General Staff had been granted leave of absence from the first of July to the first of August. I acted as his deputy. Had any military preparations or movements taken place before the delivery of the ultimatum to Serbia, I should, in my position, unquestionably have had knowledge of them.

I can assure you on my honor and conscience that nothing of the kind occurred.

VON TIESCHOWITZ,
Colonel.

23. COLONEL GENERAL BARON v. KRESS

In answer to Document No. 2 of the Fifteenth Committee, First Subcommittee, Article IV, I attest that within the province of the Bavarian Army Command no particular military preparations or movements of any kind took place before the delivery of the ultimatum to Serbia.

BARON V. KRESS,
Colonel General,
former Bavarian Minister of War,

24. SECRETARY OF STATE v. TIRPITZ, RETIRED

To your letter of the 5th of December of this year and to the accompanying Resolution of Evidence of the Fifteenth Committee of the German National Assembly of the 6th of December, this year, I beg to state that I myself was not in Berlin during July, 1914, but was in Switzerland. I returned to Berlin only on the 27th of July, and up to that time was informed of matters only by reports from my department.

Respectfully,
v. TIRPITZ.

25. LIEUTENANT GENERAL v. OVEN

To your letter of December 5, 1919, relative to the Resolution of Evidence, No. 2, First Committee, I beg respectfully to inform you that from March, 1913, up to the outbreak of the war I was commander of the 165th Regiment of Infantry in Quedlinburg, and as such had no knowledge of any financial or economic preparations undertaken before the delivery of the ultimatum. When I was appointed Director of the Department of Army Administration at the Ministry of War in March, 1915, I found such a mass of work ahead of me that I had no time for past occurrences that had happened in July, 1914. Therefore I am able to give no information in answer to the question under No. V in the Resolution of Evidence referred to above.

Respectfully,
v. OVEN,
Lieutenant General.

26. PRESIDENT HAVENSTEIN OF THE REICHSBANK

To the question under No. V of the Resolution of Evidence, "whether any financial or economic preparations were made before the delivery of the ultimatum," I may reply as follows:

1. Since the year 1892 there had been drawn up every year by the individual institutions belonging to the Reichsbank a statement of the financial quotas to be held in readiness for the first thirty days of the year for the purposes of the Army in case of mobilization. This account was made up at the office of the Imperial Treasury. According to statements received from the Imperial Treasury or to information concerning contingent alterations, the directors of the Reichsbank then transmitted to the individual Reichsbank institutions the necessary instructions.

As is known, the bill proposed for the national defense submitted to the Reichstag in the year 1913 involved a considerable increase in the peace strength of the Army. The putting through of this plan involved the complete reconstruction of the scheme of the financial statements mentioned above. The new quota scheme was presented to the directorate of the Reichsbank in correspondence dated January 17 and February 25, 1914.

I had furthermore—as well as I remember, as a result of the Morocco crisis—taken occasion, during the last years before the war, to bring up for discussion at the directors' meetings held by me once or twice a year about the country, the question whether the regulations to provide for the contingency of a mobilization, as prescribed in 1887 by the management of the Reichsbank, were still adapted to all their purposes, in view of the development of conditions that had since that date occurred. I had come to the conclusion, as a result, that a reconstruction of these regulations, with the elimination of their antiquated provisions, was necessary. A review of the old provisions, undertaken in Berlin during the winter of 1913-14, further confirmed the necessity of such a reconstruction. For the purpose of carrying out this task, I sent, on the 3d of March, 1914, for the junior managing director of the Reichsbank's branch in Kattowitz, Bank Assessor Gartenschläger, to assist the Reichsbank directorate in the work. The work of reconstruction took a long time. It was only through the decree of the 15th of July, 1914, that the new provisions could be transmitted to the banking institutions. They were confined throughout to such arrangements as are necessary even in quite peaceful and normal times to facilitate the smooth functioning of financial affairs at the contingent outbreak of war.

2. After the conclusion of the aforementioned business a test was made, in view of the strong tension of the political situation which had developed in the meantime, to see if all necessary preparations had been made for the opening of government loan departments, the actual organization of which did not devolve upon the Reichsbank, but the affairs of which, after their

inauguration, were to be conducted by the Reichsbank. It developed at this test that many necessary preparations in this line were lacking, it especially appearing that forms, stamps and seals which were absolutely essential to the opening of the loan departments had not yet been provided. It was not without some difficulty that the Imperial Treasury, though equal to the occasion, managed to provide these articles at a comparatively reasonable expense. The order for the printing of the forms did not go to the Imperial Printing Office until July 25, 1914.

3. It goes without saying that the Reichsbank was also burdened with the obligation of seeing that legal tender should be provided at the earliest possible moment, not only for the needs of the Army, but also for the requirements of trade, shown by experience to be sure to increase enormously at the outbreak of war. With regard to this matter the creation of fifty- and twenty-mark notes had been determined on, as (at the time when the law of February 20, 1906 was debated ¹) was confidentially communicated, with a detailed exposition of the object in mind, to a committee of the Reichstag. After the necessary quantity of fifty- and twenty-mark notes had been issued on the basis of this law, the quantity anticipated as necessary for the contingency of war was sent to the individual banking institutions. In the absence of other means of estimation three times the maximum sum needed to carry them through a quarter was laid down as the estimated requirement for the individual establishments. It was on this basis that financial provision for the banks was regulated *in the year 1912*. The regulation determined on at that time was maintained in all its details at the outbreak of the war.

4. The introduction and the acceptance of the Prussian Savings-Bank law of December 23, 1912 ² was warmly urged both by the Reichsbank and by myself personally, principally because of the opinion that in case of a great war Germany would probably be restricted to her own financial capacities and a strong holding of public securities would be indispensable to put her in position to meet the heavy decrease in deposits that could be expected, and to aid efficiently in financing the necessary war loans that would reach up into the billions.

5. The policy pursued by the Reichsbank since about the time of the Bank Inquiry (1908-9), pursued even more energetically since the Morocco crisis (1911), of increasing its own security holdings and maintaining the continued equilibrium of German economic life (through the elimination of exchange from the control of the Reichsbank, a system for foreign bills of exchange, intermediary balances and cash reserves for the banks, the restriction of unsound bank credits, increase of cost of loan transactions in quarterly rating of deposits, unrestricted issue of small notes, ³ increase of

¹ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, p. 318.

² *Gesetzsammlung*, 1913, p. 3.

³ Cf. the proceedings of the Reichstag of January 21, 1913, Stenographic Reports, p. 3089.

the gold reserve, etc.) was not alone actuated by the intention of placing and keeping our economic status, which was built very largely on credit, on a sound basis capable of withstanding the effects of economic or political crises. It was also dictated by the further purpose of assuring the Reichsbank itself as solid a foundation as possible from which to face economically or politically hard times, especially in case of war, if we were not to be spared therefrom, so that it might fulfil its function of acting as the financial platform for Germany's undisturbed economic progress and the indispensable support of the tremendous credit requirements of the realm.

This policy, like all the other measures described in this statement, was but the fulfilment of the duty of every central bank of issue—a duty similar to that of the General Staff in the military jurisdiction, or of the railroad management in the realm of transportation—to prepare ceaselessly for financial mobilization in quiet as well as in unquiet times, and to make itself as powerful as possible to that end; and it was guided by the hope—as these measures were mostly carried on and put through in full publicity, the necessity for healing and preserving our economic life by curbing excessive credit expansion was constantly emphasized—that not only if we are financially and economically powerful but if our strength might become more and more evident to peoples and governments inimical to us, and if their estimate of our financial and economic weakness and exhaustion might be refuted, this refutation would prove a further and perhaps a very potent pillar by which the hope of maintaining peace could support itself.

5. By the law covering alterations in the financial field put through on July 3, 1913,¹ at the same time as the defense measures, two precautions were provided for that bore the character of war preparations, to wit:

(a) The increase of the Imperial War Treasury by 120 million marks in gold, with the simultaneous increase of the Imperial banknote issue to the same amount.

(b) The provision, to the extent of 120 million marks, of a volume of silver coins sufficient to satisfy an extraordinary necessity.

The duty of carrying out these measures belonged to the Imperial Treasury and not to the Reichsbank. At the outbreak of the war the Imperial War Treasury, it is true, had been increased by the sum of 85 million marks in gold. But of the provision for 120 marks in silver coin, not more than 6 million had been coined. The paucity of this supply made it impossible to supply the banking institutions so that the suddenly and loftily mounting demands of business could be properly served. A temporary but severe financial stringency, eventually alleviated by the provision of municipal emergency currency and loan-bank notes of 1 and 2 marks, was the result. The failure to carry out the law of July 3, 1913, is, it seems to me, clear

¹ *Reichsgesetzblatt*, p. 521.

proof that the Imperial Government neither wanted, nor prepared for, nor foresaw the outbreak of the war.

6. The bills concerning financial and currency affairs which were laid before the Reichstag and adopted by it without alteration immediately after the outbreak of the war, had been prepared years before that time. They had, in all their essential points, finally been resolved upon in the year 1906, at the instance of the Reichsbank and as the result of transactions that reached as far back as the year 1902.

7. Toward the end of April, 1914, the Prussian Minister of Finance had submitted to the Imperial Chancellor (Department of the Interior and Imperial Treasury Department), as well as to the proper Prussian administrative officers (Minister of Agriculture, Minister of the Interior, Minister of Commerce, and Minister of War) a memorial prepared by Privy Councilor of Finance Dr. Meydenbauer and dealing with the permanent insurance of a *food supply for the population in case of war* by means of grain storage, with the recommendation to refer to it whenever the question of the economic mobilization of the German Empire should be dealt with. A copy of this memorial was also brought to my attention. As the Reichsbank was concerned in the matter only to the extent that it would have had to assist at any necessary financing of the project, I had no occasion to *institute any action at the time* the memorial was communicated to me. Of further transactions in the matter I have no knowledge.

8. I myself started on the 19th of July, 1914, on the leave of absence that was granted me, and journeyed to Switzerland. I was called back by a telegram from my deputy, sent on the 25th or 26th of July, which reached me at Zermatt on the 27th of July. On the 28th of July I returned to Berlin. It must be evident that I should not have gone off on my leave if I had foreseen the outbreak of the war.

In case the Committee of Inquiry should consider my verbal testimony or any augmentation of this statement necessary, I should be glad to receive a preliminary statement of specific questions.

HAVENSTEIN.

27. SECRETARY OF STATE v. DELBRÜCK, RETIRED

It must be determined whether any financial or economic preparations were made before the delivery of the ultimatum.

The form of the Resolution of Evidence leaves open to question whether information is desired about any general financial or economic preparations made before the delivery of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, or only such preparations are referred to as took place after the assassination at Serajevo and as a result of it, but before the delivery of the ultimatum. I assume

the latter is the case, and, from my knowledge of affairs and so far as concerns the activities of the Department of the Interior, which was conducted by myself, must reply negatively to the question propounded.

Before I explain this in greater detail, I must preface my remarks as follows:

The events under consideration occurred nearly six years ago, and in some cases longer. I kept no daily memoranda during the period of my service. During the critical period, namely, from the 30th of June until the 24th of July, I was away on leave, and only in Berlin casually and on personal business from the 9th to the 16th of July. During this period I did not take over the guidance of affairs, but only had a few conferences with the Imperial Chancellor, Secretary of State v. Jagow, Under-Secretary of State Dr. Richter and some other officials of my department. In May, 1916, I resigned my office on account of illness. After the condition of my health had improved and I was again able to work, I made notes—chiefly from memory, as I no longer had records at my disposal and conferences with my former coworkers were impossible—regarding those points of the economic preparation for the war that seemed to me of importance. These notes are the basis of the following statement. When I was charged, in January, 1918, with the formation and conduct of the Scientific Committee for the Presentation of the German War Economic System, the question came up, whether I should take part in the preliminary work, namely, the administrative report of the Department of the Interior. I therefore caused the body to which was delegated the drawing-up of this report, the Scientific Council of the Department of the Interior, headed by Professor Spiethoff, to apply for the records relating to the economic preparations for the war. It then developed that, owing to the subsequent subdividing of the Department and the consequent transfer of the affairs with which we were concerned among various offices, the records were scattered and in part not to be found, so that it was necessary to that extent to reconstruct them. Whether this last was fully accomplished, I am unable to say. I looked over in part such records as were remitted to the "Scientific Council" and found nothing contrary to my own notes. Certain proceedings I was not able to verify. The records were very confused. A full review of them was made impossible on account of my appointment as Chief of the Privy Civil Cabinet, and on account of the Revolution and the circumstances that followed upon it. Before I could again take up my labors, the records were recalled by the Industrial Department.

With this reservation relative to the completeness and reliability of my account, which is the necessary result of these facts, I can make the following statement:

I have already remarked above that, for the purposes of the investigation, only those preparations are in question that were arranged for and made

between the assassination at Serajevo and the delivery of the Austrian ultimatum; in other words, between the 28th of June and the 22d of July; not those that were already being undertaken before the 28th of June in the course of the regular mobilization operations. I must, nevertheless, refer briefly to these latter, in order that the occurrences in July on which I am to report, may be understood.

When I took charge of the Department of the Interior in the year 1909, the government offices concerned were occupied with many transactions connected with a large number of problems related to an eventual mobilization, among them several economic problems. The so-called financial mobilization had been in its more important phases completely provided for. Bills to be laid before the Reichstag for enactment in case of mobilization, and the regulations that would have to be promulgated, had already been framed. They had only to be kept up to date and supplemented. But it was different with those problems which we group today under the head of economic war preparations. Concerning these, many varying opinions were raised between the departments concerned; official conferences were held and notes were exchanged that led to no practical results. The tediousness and futility of these transactions, and the tension of the international situation brought about by the Morocco and Balkan disturbances led me to lay a proposition before the Imperial Chancellor. I proposed the formation of a permanent commission to work concurrently on the solution of all problems connected with mobilization which were not purely military and which required the cooperation of the civil authorities. At the same time I requested a decree that would make it the duty of all departments concerned to act promptly in the furtherance of the proposed transactions. The Chancellor approved of my proposition and signed the draft of the decree which I presented to him.¹ Thus the permanent Mobilization Commission came into being. I select, from the broad scope of its activities:

A. For provisory measures

1. The creation of a statistical system that shall, without making special estimates, provide an account of the status of the most important crops for set dates to be determined and to be kept up monthly.

2. Preparations for the purchase in neutral markets, especially Rotterdam, of available stocks of grain.

Both projects were at once carried out.

B. For definitive measures

1. The creation of an accurate system of provisioning statistics, based on regularly recurring and on extraordinary estimates. For this purpose

¹ I have not been able to find the decree among the records I was able to examine.

was passed in the spring of 1914 the law concerning the statistical reporting of grain supplies and other similar food products for man and beast, the carrying out of which was at once undertaken. The first regular estimate in obedience to this law was being made when the war broke out.

2. The creation of a permanent grain reserve for the case of war.
3. The providing of large cities and industrial districts with food supplies during mobilization and concentration of the Army.
4. The provision of food supplies for the civil population in the fortified places on the border in the event of a siege.
5. The provision of all ordinary necessities for army and people in case of a blockade.
6. The provision of coal and raw materials for industrial purposes in case of a blockade.
7. The provision of labor for industry and agriculture in case of mobilization.

All these problems were thoroughly worked out in the appropriate departments and by the Commission. But they could be solved for the most part, to get practical results, only by getting the opinions of experts in the different branches of the inquiry and after hearings of the so-called Economics Committee, formed of representatives of the agriculturalists, the manufacturers, and the business men for the discussion of economic conditions with the Department of the Interior. These hearings were retarded, however, by the strained international situation, which, until the end of the winter of 1913-14, caused the extensive discussion of measures which might have been interpreted as preparations for an immediate war to appear to the directors of our foreign policy as unprofitable. Not until the spring of 1914 was I empowered by the Chancellor to commence these transactions. After the experts had been heard by Under-Secretary of State Dr. Richter, the Economics Committee assembled, with myself as chairman, to discuss all the problems named above and many other matters connected with them. There is a stenographic report of its transactions, but unfortunately, owing to the warlike developments that so soon followed, it was not corrected by the individual speakers and was never printed. The developments at the hearings of the Economics Committee, however, laid the foundation for broad legislative and administrative measures that were at once initiated and, naturally, were prosecuted with energy after the assassination at Serajevo.

Of the time from the 28th of June until the 22d of July I have the following to report:

The doctors had ordered me to take a four months' vacation, on which, as I stated above, I entered on the 30th of June. When I went to the Chancellor to report before leaving, I again fully discussed the results of the transactions of the Economics Committee and spoke of the plans for

legislation they involved as matters for the fall. Then we separated, without, as I remember it, having talked at all of the foreign situation.

When I returned to Berlin on the 9th of July, being called back by the severe illness of my wife, I was informed that the Chancellor wished to speak to me that very day. When I reported to him that evening, he addressed me practically as follows. He would not have had me called back, but as long as I was there, he wanted to inform me about the foreign situation. Austria was planning to address an ultimatum to Serbia on account of the murder of Serajevo. To my question whether that situation did not compel us to put into execution at once the economic measures arranged and prepared for the contingency of a possible war, especially the purchase of grain stocks in Rotterdam, the Chancellor replied to me that he did not know the text of Austria's intended ultimatum, but that he was agreed with Mr. v. Jagow that in case war developed between Austria and Serbia it would be possible to localize the conflagration; in any case it was not advisable that any measures should be initiated on our side that could be interpreted as preparations for imminent war. I could have a talk with Mr. v. Jagow, but otherwise was to observe absolute silence to everybody concerning our consultation. On the next day I had a long conversation with Mr. v. Jagow, who merely confirmed what the Chancellor had said to me. I gathered the impression from these conversations that both statesmen were surely counting on the possibility of belligerent developments between Austria and Serbia, but still believed that they would be able to prevent a general European war, and in any case had no intention of using the Austro-Serbian imbroglio as an excuse for a preventive war.

After a few days the physician attending my wife informed me that her condition was for the time no longer dangerous, and that I need not hesitate to leave Berlin again. He strongly recommended to me not to forego the opportunity of recuperation away from Berlin. The Chancellor and Mr. v. Jagow assured me that the political situation did not make my presence in Berlin necessary, but requested me, nevertheless, to choose a resort from which I could reach Berlin in a few hours. I left Berlin on the 16th of July, after I had taken opportunity again and again to go over all the measures necessary in case of war with my Under-Secretary of State and the Division chiefs concerned, and had particularly directed that they should go ahead with the purchase of the grain stocks just as soon as the foreign situation should make it advisable and possible. That the activities and measures initiated before the 28th of June were prosecuted with energy, goes without saying.

On the 24th of July my Under-Secretary of State besought me over the telephone to return to Berlin, where I arrived on the afternoon of the 25th. On my arrival I discovered that nothing had been done about the grain purchases up to that time, and on that account went to the Secretary of

the Imperial Treasury to ask for the necessary credits. He at first refused them to me, and only put them at my disposal after the Chancellor, at my request, gave him instructions to do so. These instructions came too late, for, as I was shortly thereafter informed, *the Rotterdam market had been cleaned out*. Nevertheless, the stock of provisions held there had mostly reached Germany, as the wholesale dealers in the western part of the country, instructed by the proceedings of the Economics Council, had opportunity at that time to buy it and bring it in. The other preparations, especially the provisioning of the industrial centers and military concentration centers as well as that of the civil populations of the fortified cities, could still be put through in time.

From this account it is evident that from the time of the assassination at Serajevo up to the delivery of the Austrian ultimatum, no especial economic preparations, so far as my sphere of activity was concerned, were inaugurated by the Administration. The financial mobilization had, as has already been related, been attended to long before. If or whether any banking regulations were adopted by the Reichsbank during those critical days, I do not know.

DELBRÜCK.

28. DR. MEYDENBAUER

At the time of the outbreak of the war, Ministerial Director of the Prussian Ministry of Finance

While the principal features of the financial preparation for war had been practically settled for a long time—changes in the banking laws, the passing of a loan bank law, of a law regulating treasury certificates and bank notes, of a law relating to alterations in the currency system—the governmental departments had, up to the last few years before the catastrophe, formed but a faint idea of the tremendous upheaval which war would bring about in the economic life of the nation. I was never intimately occupied with the purely financial problems of the technique of the currency question, so that I can give no information on that subject. On the other hand, I took part in most of the economic activities. In November, 1912, at the instigation of Secretary of State Delbrück, a permanent commission was formed, under the chairmanship of a representative of the Department of the Interior, to test, of its own initiative or at the instance of the departments, the measures suggested by the economic problems arising from the contingency of war, and to work out the proposed plans for an “economic mobilization.” At the conferences which took place in November and December, 1912, it very soon developed that a serviceable system of subsistence statistics was lacking, and that special provisions for the inauguration

of such a system of statistics were eminently necessary. Therefore a law providing for the statistical recording of grain supplies and of mill-stuffs in the shape of food for man and beast was drafted and proposed. I should like to refer to this draft, unfortunately only enacted into law on the 20th of May, 1914, and to its purpose.

The uncertainty as to the means of increasing such supplies was no less than that concerning the quantity of such supplies available in the country. Suspension of the duty on corn was considered among other measures; furthermore, restriction of the industrial uses of potatoes, the promotion of potato desiccation, and that of the system of corn and grain loans were discussed; and debates were held on the question as to how imports could be effected before a declaration of war. The question was also discussed as to how food and fodder supplies could be prevented from leaving the country before their export should be officially prohibited. In this connection, arrangements with export houses and certain alterations in the tariff laws were debated. But the principal problem was how to counteract the unfavorable effect of the import bond system, which was driving our eastern grain crops out of the country before the needs of the interior could be protected until the succeeding harvest. Exhaustive debates were also held on the question of the means by which grain could be bought up and stored. Tentative transactions were inaugurated with trade associations to learn under what conditions they would inconspicuously discontinue export. This proposal brought up the question of the granting of cheaper loan credits in commercial form through the Prussian Central Trades Bank. The debates very speedily developed the fact that the Commission had but little conception of the stocks held in our seacoast towns or of the seasonal distribution of large grain movements. The exchange of opinions without obligation on either side between the Commission and the agricultural associations brought these transactions to no practical conclusion. It was constantly and emphatically insisted on by the representatives of the eastern trades associations that a high Reichsbank discount rate put a premium on exports, and that the safest means to put a check on the outflow of eastern grain-stuffs would be an export embargo. To shorten the term of validity of export bonds would not assist materially. If it was desired to keep home-grown grain in the country without putting an embargo on export, the equalizing tariff would have to be restored. If that was not done, the only alternative was the buying and storing of grain during the period when it was offered for sale most eagerly, in January and February. Its purchase would have to be made on commission, as would its storage and care. The storage contractor would require a buyer's commission and the payment of a monthly storage charge. If prices went up, there would be a profit for the Treasury; if it came to war, the Treasury would have it on hand with which to curb excitement. Even if the quantity was not

large enough to supply the people as a whole, it would nevertheless be large enough to put a check on reckless speculation. If prices fell, the loss to the government need not be particularly large, as it would always be better instructed about the political situation than the grain trade. Even these suggestions indicate that the question of grain policies was being taken up in the circles of our agricultural trades-unions at that time with real comprehension and energy.

Throughout all these conferences there were two causes of confusion on which agreement could not be reached. For one thing, it was necessary for everything to be carried out inconspicuously and kept absolutely secret from foreign countries, an object that, naturally, could not be attained. To put through a genuine, energetic grain-storing policy without anyone's taking notice of it, was then, as it is now, an impossibility. The second difficulty was the money question. It was not possible to reach an understanding as to who should bear the losses of the contributions, the Empire or the Federal States.

Of especial interest was the attitude of the Foreign Office, which, in the face of the anxiety expressed by the other departments, declared itself confident that England would respect the American flag and leave the American ships that brought the grain unmolested. They considered participating in the American shipping enterprises and the purchase of American grain in Holland. The confidence exhibited in the declarations of the representatives of the Foreign Office was not generally shared by the other departments.

The conferences resulted, as a whole, in no tangible result. A memorandum of the Department of the Interior of January, 1914, contained a thorough abstract of the measures so far determined on, and made it plain that the Imperial Administration, in order to avoid occasioning any uneasiness, had failed to take any effective measures. It had especially refrained from altering the import bonding system, as it wished to sustain the industrial policy and did not desire to disturb the favorable balance of the tariff. It had also refrained from any alteration of the customs duties law.

At further conferences, conducted at the beginning of January, 1914, at the request of the Prussian Interior Department on the subject of the maintenance of the civil population in the seven fortified Prussian cities of Königsberg, Thorn, Graudenz, Posen, Breslau, Cologne and Wesel, the question was studied as to by whom and at whose expense provisions were to be supplied to the civilians in these fortress cities. It developed that the military authorities could only care for a tenth of the civil population, and that the city governments were incapable of looking out for the balance. It was generally agreed that this problem could not be solved by the delivery of supplies from time to time, but that adequate stores of provisions would have to be laid in. The question of the responsibility for the expense

arose in this case also, and the Prussian departments declared that the expense should be borne by the Empire, as the defense of the whole country was in question. The question of import bonds was also debated anew. The Prussian Finance Ministry announced that it was prepared earnestly to consider whether, notwithstanding all opinions to the contrary, it would not be possible to abandon the import bonding regulations again. The Prussian Ministry of Agriculture objected, although it had to admit that the bonding system expedited the export of German rye. It insisted that the increase in rye production resulting from the opportunity for export was of greater importance.

On the 13th of March, 1914, the permanent Commission on Economic Mobilization Questions was once more convened by the Department of the Interior, and was given to understand that the Economic Committee would be asked to come to an agreement on an opinion. The question of grain-provisioning was again to be thoroughly gone over at the session. The Department rightly laid emphasis on the fact that trade, industry, and even the municipalities, had recklessly failed to take into consideration the dangerous prospect of a war in their economic schemes, and that it was only the winter of 1912-13 that had first brought many of them to a closer consideration of this point. The department further expressed the fear that the warning of the winter would again be forgotten as soon as times were politically quieter, unless the Imperial Government and the governments of the Federal States should strive independently for a solution of the questions involved in an economic mobilization plan.

The department was supported in its views by a memorial on the grain provisioning of Germany in case of war drawn up by Schulze-Gaevernitz, who emphatically pointed out the danger to which the sustenance of the industrial city populations in the Mannheim maintenance district would be subjected in case of the cutting off of supplies, and explained the hazards of a blockade. He proposed the reinstatement of interest-exempt custom credits. The Prussian Minister of Finance laid great weight on the proposals of Professor v. Schulze-Gaevernitz, and urged in a memorial of April 15, 1914, that the customs legislation provisions, which intentionally hindered the accumulation of grain supplies in the interior, be abolished by law as soon as possible; he especially requested the immediate abolition of section 2 of paragraph 12 of the tariff laws, which forbade delayed duty payments on dutiable grain and prescribed the payment of interest on the duty due on grain stored in bonded warehouses and on which duty had not been paid.

It is clear from these proceedings that in the spring of 1914, the questions relating to an economic mobilization again came up for discussion. And with them the question of the responsibility for the expense was again opened. The Prussian Minister of Finance demanded the adequate storing-

up of breadstuffs and fodder, and explained that, by cooperating with reliable landed proprietors, agricultural associations, the grain trade, mill, transport and warehouse industries and with the cities, sufficient supplies must be maintained. The erection of cold storage plants was also to be encouraged through subsidies. All these measures were to be taken in behalf of the safety of the Empire, and should, therefore, be paid for by the Empire, in fundamental accordance with Article 58 of the Constitution of the Empire.¹ The Minister demanded agreement on the responsibility for the expense, before further details were gone into. This exposition met with opposition from the Imperial Treasury, which maintained that making provision for the sustenance of the civil population was, leaving out of consideration the uncontested connection between conducting a war and providing for the general subsistence of the people, a duty required by the public welfare, for which the Empire was not responsible. The fundamental principle of Article 58 of the Constitution of the Empire was fully carried out by military legislation and by the drawing up of the Imperial economic budget, so that no pertinent interpretation could be assigned to this article. The sustenance of the civil population was in every sense of the word a civic duty, for which the separate States were responsible. Therefore the matter could not be taken care of by simply adding the expense to the imperial economic budget; that could only be done by an Imperial statute amending the constitution. The reserved rights conceded to Bavaria by the federal agreement of November 25, 1870, made the matter especially difficult in so far as it concerned that State. Most of the Prussian departments took the side of the Prussian Minister of Finance. No elucidation of this fundamental problem was arrived at.

In April, 1914, there were exhaustive conferences concerning various alterations of the tariff laws, which also failed to accomplish a legislative conclusion.

On May 26, 1914, the Economic Committee held a meeting, at which a number of important questions were laid before it. The Department of the Interior had made preparation for the session with a wealth of fundamental argument, which brought to light the facts that Switzerland had since 1892 made thorough plans for the provisioning of the people with grain, coal and salt in case of war. Switzerland, like Germany, had submitted these problems to renewed consideration in the years 1912 and 1913, but, unlike Germany, had arrived at the determination of positive measures. France also, since 1912, had thoroughly debated the problem of grain and flour supplies for Paris. The municipal administration of Paris had acted on the proposals of the national government in January, 1914, and had, among other matters, made arrangements for the storing of a permanent supply of flour. Russia too, since 1913, had taken a long step forward

¹ In a communication of March 10, 1914. S. J. 112.

in the direction of grain policies through corn-crop advances made by the state bank. Later it became known through the publication of the W. T. B. (unofficial, March 16, 1915), that a financial agreement existed between France, England and Russia by which Russia, as special security for the numerous necessary credits to be granted her during the war, had ordered the grain stocks stored at Odessa to be put at the disposal of the money lenders in Paris and London through bills of lading.

Feeling that the government authorities, though with the best will in the world, would not achieve positive results with sufficient celerity, both for internal and external political reasons—the desire to avoid causing any concern, and regard for the existing economic policy—on April 25, 1914, I submitted to my then chief, the Prussian Minister of Finance, an exhaustive memorial on the subject of assuring the provisioning of the populace in case of a war, a memorial based, in its numerous fundamentals, on calculations which Professor Dr. Ballod, a member of the Prussian Provincial Statistics Office, had at my request undertaken to make. The memorial proved by figures the necessity for the adequate storing up of definite quantities of grain and fodder in case of war on three fronts, in frank imitation of the grain policy of Frederick the Great. I went into the question of expense as far as haste then permitted, and offered conclusions on the constitutional questions involved. All this soon showed that, without a thorough governmental control of the grain business and of the development of grain prices, no satisfactory results would follow. Future events unfortunately even exceeded my apprehensions.

On the 29th of April, 1914, the memorial was transmitted to the departments, and influenced the Ministry of War to the extent that this department declared with emphasis in an exhaustive communication issued on the 17th of June, 1914, that the early guarantee of the sustenance of the population in case of war was a matter of vital importance to the German people; that the general public, far and wide, was prepared for action to this effect on the part of the Imperial Government—was, indeed, expecting it; and that it was therefore now all the more necessary to bring to a successful conclusion as soon as possible the transactions that had been pending since November, 1912, and to enter upon the path of actual progress by laying before the legislative authorities of the Empire during the winter of 1914–15 the draft of a law.

The Chief of the Admiralty Staff of the Navy also expressed the hope that practical results would follow from the memorial (communication dated June 25, 1914).

But nothing happened: at least, I never knew that the enormous problem was ever seriously attacked.

In the middle of July, 1914, I went on my leave, and was called back by wire on the 28th of July to take part in a conference at Hanover on the 30th

of July, 1914, at which it was announced that the government had purchased the wholly insufficient amount of 100,000 tons of wheat, of which, up to the 15th of August, 30,000 tons would be available at Duisburg. The balance of 70,000 tons, was to be on hand at Rotterdam no later than eight weeks thereafter. The apportionment among the Rhenish fortresses and the industrial districts of the first 30,000 tons to be delivered was discussed, and debates were held on the question of how far the State could take over the possible prospective losses of the municipalities due to the use of breadstuffs in case of independent purchase and supply. The conference clearly showed that no organization of any kind existed; that nobody had any accurate knowledge either of the need, or of the state of the grain stocks in storage in the country.

I know nothing further about the economic preparations for the war.

DR. MEYDENBAUER,
Ministerial Director, Retired.

29. KRUPP v. BOHLEN-HALBACH

After His Majesty the Emperor had informed me at Kiel at the beginning of July that the political situation might become serious, in case—against expectations—that Russia and England should extend their protection to the Serbian regicides, I discussed confidentially, as was my duty, with the two proper members of the directorate of the firm of Krupp the question whether it was necessary to take any action toward the reinforcement of the supplies of the firm in case of mobilization. I was told that it was the fixed custom to maintain a sufficient supply of materials on hand to guarantee the undisturbed continuance of the activities of the works even if fully shut off for quite a length of time.

As, in addition to that, I was, through the course of the month of July up to the delivery of the ultimatum to Serbia, confirmed in my hope of a peaceful solution of the conflict in question, no financial or economic preparations were made by the firm.

Nor do I know of any such preparations made in other quarters.

Most respectfully,

KRUPP v. BOHLEN-HALBACH.

30. W. MUEHLON

At the time of the outbreak of the war, Director of the firm of Krupp, Essen

In answer to your letter of the 5th instant, I regret to say that, in reply to question No. V of your query, whether any financial or economic prepa-

rations were made before the delivery of the ultimatum, I can give no information which seems to me of importance in helping you to the object of your investigation.

W. MUEHLON.

31. HUGO STINNES

I know of no financial or economic preparations made before the delivery of the ultimatum to Serbia. I can give no further information in the matter.

HUGO STINNES.

32. SECRETARY OF STATE KÜHN, RETIRED

I have the honor of informing the committee, in reply to No. V of the Resolution of Evidence of December 6, 1919, so far as this relates to financial war preparations, that before the delivery of the ultimatum to Serbia *no* such preparations for the late war were made by the former Imperial Treasury.

Such measures as had to be taken by the Treasury for the case of any possible outbreak of war had long before been provided for. The first steps taken as a result of this financial mobilization plan were taken just before the war—on Friday, the 31st of July, according to my recollection.

Most respectfully,

KÜHN,

*Minister of State,
Secretary of State of the Imperial
Treasury, Retired.*

33. STATE SECRETARY DR. HELFFERICH, RETIRED

I have the honor to reply to your letter of the 5th of last month that I should prefer to refrain from an answer in writing to the one question to which I am asked to testify, but that I am at your service as far as regards an oral answer.

DR. HELFFERICH.

I hear from other persons from whom information is sought and who have likewise received the request for a written reply to the questions formulated by the Subcommittee, that the Subcommittee does not expect detailed and specific replies, but merely brief statements of opinion. In that case I can say in reply to the question addressed to me as a source of information, that

during the weeks and months before the ultimatum was given to Serbia not a single request, not a single hint from any official quarter regarding any financial or economic war preparations to be inaugurated reached me in my position as Director of the German Bank at that time.

DR. HELFFERICH.

34. A. v. GWINNER

In reply to your letter of the 5th of December I may respectfully state that any account of mine would not cover enough to make it worth while laying it before you in writing.

I may add that on the 31st of March, 1919, I withdrew from the management of the German Bank to which I naturally belonged in July, 1914.

Most respectfully,

A. v. GWINNER.

35. UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE v. STUMM, RETIRED

Replying to the questions directed to me in the addendum to your respected letter of the 5th of the month, I have the honor to make answer as follows:

As to No. VI. My personal observations are limited to the time from the 12th of July forward. I returned on this day to Berlin from my summer leave. No knowledge of the prospective contents of the ultimatum came to me beyond what was contained in the records of the Foreign Office. Nor have I any knowledge that the political administration of the Empire received any particulars concerning the ultimatum other than through the reports of Ambassador v. Tschirschky.

As to No. VII. According to the published records, the ultimatum was received at the Foreign Office on the afternoon of the 22d of July. I can give no more accurate information concerning the exact time of its arrival.

So far as concerns the attitude of the German Government toward the Austro-Hungarian Government with regard to the ultimatum, I beg to refer to the account of Secretary of State v. Jagow in his publication concerning *The Causes and the Outbreak of the World War*, and to the personal letter of Count Wedel of September 5, 1917, to Under-Secretary of State Baron v. d. Bussche, which is printed in Appendix IX of the published Reports. To my knowledge, the stated position of the German Government concerning the ultimatum was confined to the declarations of Secretary of State v. Jagow to Count Szögyeny, as reproduced therein. I am unable to

give any information as to the exact times at which these declarations were made.

With the assurance of my highest regards,

V. STUMM,
Under-Secretary of State, Retired.

36. COUNCILOR OF STATE v. LÖSSL, RETIRED

I can reply to the question as to when and how the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum became known to the Government at Munich by stating that, so far as I know, the verbal or complete contents of the ultimatum first became known to the Bavarian Administration through the publication in the newspapers on the 24th of July of the Austro-Hungarian note of the 22d of July.

The Bavarian Government had, it is true, received information of the intention of the Austro-Hungarian Government to address to Serbia a note fixing a term for reply, and of certain features of the note earlier than that. In order to determine exactly the circumstances which, owing to the failure of my memory I did not fully recollect, with the permission of President Hoffmann of the Ministry I looked over the records of the Bavarian Foreign Ministry relating to the matter and made from them the following extracts:

In a report from the Bavarian Minister to Vienna, Baron v. Tucher, dated the 6th of July, 1914, it is written:

There is also talk of making the assassination a cause of war and thereby making up for past neglect, as there is no other way of settling the Serbian difficulty. But up to the present time no sufficient reason for such action has developed. Violent measures against Serbia could only be considered should Serbia refuse the demands which will be made by Austria-Hungary after the results of the investigation at Serajevo; for example, the dissolution of the Narodna-Odrbrana and other Greater-Serbia unions, the punishment of the instigators and accomplices of the assassins, etc. It is certain that Emperor Franz Joseph will take steps that may lead to the outbreak of a European war only under pressure of compelling circumstances.

On the 10th of July the Bavarian Minister at Vienna reports the results of a joint ministerial council of the 7th of July as follows:

I learn under the seal of secrecy from a reliable source that all concerned agree that the methods of administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina up to the present time have been a mistake; they were based on the assumption that the Serbian element, which constitutes four ninths of the population, could be won over to a loyal acceptance of the constitutional government of the country, while it has now been proved in dreadful fashion that the Serbs, with few exceptions, are de-

voted to Greater-Serbia ideas. As the threads of these ideas run toward the kingdom of Serbia and the propaganda can not be rooted out in their own land without its destruction at its source, and as, furthermore, the preparations for the assassination all point to Serbia, it is agreed that such action against Belgrade must be taken as will offer full guarantee against any further cultivation of the Greater-Serbia idea.

Up to this point all are agreed. The majority in the ministerial council were of the opinion that this guarantee could only be obtained by force, and that therefore such action should be taken as would result in a diminished Serbia; Austria-Hungary, however, must refrain from extending its domain as a result, but, on the other hand, permit the other Balkan States, including Roumania, to benefit at Serbia's expense. It is hoped that the approval of Europe can be obtained for this method of punishment.

The minority believes that it could content itself with the indispensable guarantees obtained through diplomatic methods, and that military measures should only be advised if full satisfaction of the demands from this side should not be obtained. To this view it is opposed that a satisfaction on paper would only increase Serbia's immeasurable hatred, without offering any guarantee for the keeping of promises that would be made.

A report of the Bavarian Minister at Vienna, dated July 14, 1914, states further:

The move of the Austro-Hungarian Government against Serbia has been somewhat delayed. First, they have been getting information as to the developments of the investigation at Serajevo; now it is a question of overcoming some opposition on the part of Count Tisza, who wants the way to a peaceful accommodation left open, and of coming to an agreement as to the wording of the note to the Serbian Government. Count Berchtold wants to offer to the Serbian Government conditions such as it can not accept, in order that a resort to violent measures will have to follow. When the wording of the note is determined on, it must be submitted to the Emperor at Ischl—by that time the end of the week will have come.

Knowledge of these grave preparations is confined to a small group of initiates; the great public has no idea how serious the near future is likely to prove; there is only a feeling of great uncertainty, marked by a severe and continuous fall of stocks on the exchange. The opinion is expressed in many quarters that the matter will be arranged by the exchange of a few diplomatic notes; even foreign diplomats accept this view.

Germany's attitude is the same as during the whole Balkan crisis: that it is for Austria-Hungary to recognize what her own vital interests are, and for her to decide how and when she has to protect them. Germany stands faithfully at the side of her ally, and will accept all the consequences of the alliance.

The reply of the Serbian Government to the Austro-Hungarian note will depend on Russian counsels. The probability that the Serbian Government, if it and not the military party is master of the situation, will agree to all demands made by Austria-Hungary, is still to be

reckoned with. Then it would be shown whether the intention of partitioning Serbia, which is that of the majority of the ministerial council, is inexorable. But they do not want to let it come to the point of having to make this second decision; they want to word the note so unacceptably that they will be compelled, after it has been refused, to commence military action at once. This is supposed to be the idea of the Foreign Ministry.

On the 18th of July, 1914, the Bavarian Minister at Vienna reported that the Austro-Hungarian note to Serbia had suffered another delay (on account of the visit of Poincaré to Petersburg), and added:

The last reported determination of the local Foreign Ministry has undergone no alteration. They say there with concern that a full compliance on the part of Serbia would make the preparation for a blow an embarrassing matter, and feel that if Russia is not going to allow the struggle to remain localized in Serbia, that the present moment is more favorable for a reckoning than any later time.

The Ballplatz notes with great satisfaction the change in the views in Berlin concerning the punishment of Serbia, where the impossibility of a neighborly relationship is now clearly recognized.

On the same day (July 18, 1914), as a result of conferences held with Under-Secretary of State Zimmermann, and further with the Balkan and Triple Alliance reporters of the Foreign Office and with the Counselor of the Austro-Hungarian Legation in Berlin, the Bavarian chargé-d'affaires in Berlin, Privy Counselor of Legation v. Schön, made that exhaustive report on the proposed break of the Austro-Hungarian Government with Serbia which has already been made public a number of times, and which is printed *verbatim* in Volume IV of the *German Documents concerning the Outbreak of the War*, page 126. It is therein stated that the note to be sent to Serbia would contain the following demands, coupled with the condition of their acceptance within a term of forty-eight hours:

1. The promulgation of a proclamation by the King of Serbia, in which it was to be asserted that the Serbian Government had nothing to do with the Greater-Serbia movement, and disapproved it.
2. The commencement of an inquiry to discover the accomplices of the perpetrators of the murder at Serajevo, and the participation of an Austrian official in this inquiry.
3. Steps to be taken against all persons having any part in the Greater-Serbia movement.

According to a report from the Bavarian Ambassador at Vienna, dated July 21, 1914, the note of the Austro-Hungarian Government, concerning the contents of which full agreement had been arrived at, even with Count Tisza, was to be delivered the next Thursday (July 23), or the next Friday (July 24) to the Serbian Government.

Reports of the Embassies at Vienna and Berlin, dated July 23, 1914,

next contained the information that the delivery of the Austro-Hungarian note to Serbia was to take place on the 23d of July, either in the afternoon or in the evening. The Vienna report added that the note had already been made known to the German and Italian Governments, and that it would be given to the press and to the signatory Powers the next day. The reply was expected from Belgrade on Saturday evening, and if it was a refusal, as the Ballplatz hoped, six army corps were to be put on a war footing.

No closer description of the conditions of the ultimatum were contained in the last-mentioned report from the Embassy.

So on the 24th of July appeared in the newspapers the text of the Austro-Hungarian note of the 22d of July, 1914, to Serbia. The majority of the conditions required of Serbia by the note were, so far as I know, unknown to the Bavarian Government before its publication; I should also like to mention that, so far as concerns the above-cited Embassy reports which contained some of the stipulations, these were reports of the results of special inquiries, and not of information directly vouchsafed by the Austro-Hungarian Government or by the heads of the Administration. As to how far verbal information in addition to these reports was received from the Austro-Hungarian and Prussian Ministers in Munich, I have no knowledge. The Bavarian Government was first officially informed of the procedure of Austria-Hungary against Serbia on the 24th of July, the day of its publication in the press, when the Austro-Hungarian Minister at Munich read to Prime Minister Count Hertling the note which Austria-Hungary had on the 24th of July directed to the ambassadors of the Triple Alliance, the subject of which was the published ultimatum.

If, with regard to this statement concerning the communication of the ultimatum, the question should be asked why the Bavarian Government made no effort to check the war-like development of affairs, I do not know whether Count Hertling did not actually take steps in this direction, perhaps in private letters, perhaps verbally. As the records contain no information regarding such a step, I would like to submit that the Bavarian Government was not entitled to take part officially in the management of foreign affairs. The foreign policy was, under the old constitution—just as it is under the new one—solely the business of the Administration of the Empire, and the Bavarian Government has always refrained from offering advice on matters of foreign policy, inasmuch as it would thereby have laid itself open to an equitable repulse. It is necessary in the nature of things that a foreign policy should be directed from *one* quarter alone, as it is practically impossible even to keep the separate federated state governments informed of each rapidly succeeding step, not to speak of getting each separate government to agree to each step, especially during the development of dangerous political situations, when every hour may bring about a new

change. The constitution very properly assigned the conduct of foreign affairs solely to the Imperial Government, which, therefore, assumes all its responsibility. It is true that the old constitution created a Federal Council Committee under Bavarian chairmanship for the consideration of foreign matters, but the fact that Prussia was not a member of this committee is alone sufficient evidence that it was not created as an authoritative body, but as an instrument intended principally for communications from the Imperial Administration to the governments of the larger States of the Confederation. It is a fact, however, that the Bavarian Government was engaged in trying to win for this committee a position of more importance than it had enjoyed during the first thirty years of the Empire, in which the committee was only assembled five times; and it was so far successful, that since the year 1908 the committee had been regularly assembled once a year at the opening of the budget council. During the war the committee was for the first time convoked more often, and before the opening of the rigorous U-boat war it even held a formal consultation; but even then no formal decision was made.

The convocation of the Federal Council Committee for the consideration of foreign matters was always regularly arranged beforehand by the Imperial Chancellor and the Bavarian Prime Minister. Sometimes the one and sometimes the other took the initiative. Whether any such initiative was taken on the part of either before the outbreak of war in 1914, I do not remember; the ministerial records say nothing about it. A convocation of the Foreign Affairs Committee *before* the publication of the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum was precluded by the very fact that its assemblage, which could not remain a secret, would have aroused great attention and would have militated against the secrecy concerning the event demanded by Austria-Hungary. On the day after the rejection of the ultimatum, that is to say, on the 26th of July, however, a notice from the Deputy Chancellor of the Empire was issued, in which the federal governments were requested, in view of the political situation, to take such measures as would insure the representation of each government, in case a hurried assemblage of the Federal Council should become necessary. It could thus be inferred that a convocation of the full Federal Council was soon to follow, which would have made a special convocation of the Committee for Foreign Affairs seem scarcely necessary.

The question was brought up between the ministers of the Federal States; most concerned and the Deputy Imperial Chancellor whether the principal ministers should also appear at the meeting of the Federal Council; as a result of several telephone messages and reports from Berlin, Count Hertling finally put aside the idea of a journey to Berlin. A further consideration leading to this determination was the fact that a speedy return from Berlin might not be possible. In this connection, I recollect a remark of Count

Hertling's to the effect that he considered his presence in Munich more important in those days than his participation in the transactions at Berlin. I believe that Count Hertling was convinced that the Imperial Administration—with all its support of our ally—would use its utmost endeavors to preserve Germany from the horrors of war. Count Lerchenfeld had reported as late as the 29th of July:

The policy of the German Empire is directed toward getting its ally out of the affair with enhanced prestige, but toward maintaining the peace of the world at the same time.

SIEGMUND V. LÖSSL,
Councilor of State, Retired.

37. MINISTER OF STATE COUNT VITZTHUM v. ECKSTADT

As to No. VIII: When and how did the ultimatum become known to the governments at Munich and Dresden?

The Royal Saxon Government first knew of the ultimatum through its publication in the press.¹

As to No. IX, Part 1: Why did the Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Council hold no meeting between the murder at Serajevo and the outbreak of the war? Was a suggestion to call it together not complied with or was it opposed?

The duty of calling the Committee together belonged to the Bavarian Government, which conferred with the Chancellor in the matter of its assemblage.

Therefore I can not say for what reasons it was not called. I can only declare that the Saxon Government made no move in the matter.

Should an answer be desired to the question, why such an approach was not made, I can make the following statement:

According to the view of the Saxon Government, the murder at Serajevo and the satisfaction to be demanded therefor by the Austro-Hungarian Government were entirely the concern of the Austro-Hungarian Government. For the sake of the maintenance of peace it was to Germany's utmost interest not to let the circumstances develop into a European war. If the Committee of the Federal Council had been called together at this time, the fact could not have been concealed. The general public would have gained the impression therefrom that the political situation was a critical one, and that it was Germany's intention to mix into the affairs of Austria-Hungary. By doing that, the war intrigues of the Entente would have been served. The Saxon Government was informed through the

¹ *Sächsische Staatszeitung*, July 24, 1914.

reports of its Minister in Berlin that everything was being done on the part of the Empire to localize the Austro-Serbian conflict in order to maintain the general peace of the world.

VITZTHUM.

38. MINISTER OF STATE DR. BARON v. DUSCH, RETIRED

In answer to the question, why the Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Council held no meeting between the assassination at Serajevo and the outbreak of the war, permit me to point out the legal character of this committee.¹ After conditions had arrived at the point of the threatening of war in July, 1914, there was no occasion for the convocation of the committee, which was not competent to come to authoritative decisions and which existed chiefly to give information to the participating Federal Governments concerning the status of and to exchange opinions about our foreign policy. Current information was supplied to the governments in the quickest and most complete fashion by means of the Federal Council's plenipotentiaries in Berlin. A consultation of the committee concerning the situation, which, in those critical days was undergoing almost daily change, would have compelled its presence in Berlin for some length of time; it was scarcely feasible, and would only have served to embarrass the activities of the Imperial Chancellor, who was alone responsible for the conduct of affairs. For these reasons a convocation of the committee by its president² was probably omitted.

Consequently no move to call the committee together was initiated by the Government of Baden; whether attempts to initiate it were made in other quarters, I am unable to say. For the same reason I can not state whether any such move was "opposed." But if the Imperial Chancellor withheld his cooperation in the matter of convoking the committee at that time, I should consider it reasonable, for the reasons stated above.

DR. BARON v. DUSCH,
Minister of State, Retired.

39. MINISTER OF STATE COUNT v. BASSEWITZ- LEVETZOW

Since I had already resigned on April 1, 1914, as Minister of State of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, I was not a member either of the Federal Council

¹ Cf. Laband, *The Constitutional Law of the German Empire*, 5th ed., vol. 1, p. 253, and Dambitsch, *Commentaries*, etc., pp. 255 *et seq.*

² Art. 8 of the Constitution of the Empire.

or of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the time of the assassination at Serajevo. Therefore it must be an error, if I am named in the accompanying notice as one of those from whom information is sought.

COUNT V. BASSEWITZ-LEVETZOW.

40. MINISTER OF STATE DR. V. WEIZSÄCKER

To your letter of the 5th of December of this year I beg to reply that I—named as a source of information relating to the questions under No. IX on the *questionnaire*—can give no information that could not be afforded by verbal answers to these questions. I do not expect to read any lengthy report when I am called upon to testify orally. Nevertheless, I am ready to put the brief reply I have to give in writing beforehand and remit it to you, if this would help to simplify the proceedings.

With the assurances of my highest regard,

V. WEIZSACKER,
Minister of State, Retired.

ADDENDA

MARGINAL ANNOTATIONS OF MR. v. TSCHIRSCHKY, GERMAN AMBASSADOR AT VIENNA, ON HIS INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE FOREIGN OFFICE IN BERLIN

I

These are evidently notes made by the Ambassador during the conferences at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vienna.

Text determined with the assistance of the Princess Hatzfeldt, daughter of the Ambassador, and of Prince Stolberg, counselor of the Embassy at Vienna. A question mark was placed after words difficult to decipher. Submitted to the Committee of Inquiry, First Subcommittee.

MAX COUNT MONTGELAS.

BERLIN, *March 2, 1920.*

To A. I., No. 1296.

DOCUMENT¹ No. 150

Today a thorough talk with Baron Macchio. Since it has been declared in Rome that they can not bind themselves; it is natural that San Giuliano does not feel easy. It is of the utmost importance, and Berlin lays great stress upon it, that the ambiguities of the question of compensation between Vienna and Rome shall at last be settled. With a theoretical disagreement over the interpretation of Article 7, there is no getting ahead. Besides, they must feel here that Germany does *not* share the local understanding of it—*régions des Balkans*. Practical conclusions must be arrived at, for here there can be no doubt that at the very moment in which the Monarchy is compelled to undertake extensions of territory, Italy will approach Austria with a demand for compensation, no matter how they deny here in theory the legal basis for it. And it is of the greatest importance for all three Powers of the Triple Alliance that such dangerous causes of irritation should be eliminated at the beginning. I begged Baron Macchio to take the matter up with Count Berchtold from this point of view. Baron Macchio agreed to do so. He assured me that the theoretical differences concerning the interpretation of Article 7 would lead to nothing. That they certainly desired no extension of territory, but could not bind themselves in this matter for all future time. But that it was indeed entirely clear to him that Austria would have to allow compensation to Italy if she extended her own territory. "Only, the Italians can not demand that we cut the compensation out of our own body."

¹"Document" refers to *The German Documents concerning the Outbreak of the War* [the complete collection of the documents assembled by Karl Kautsky].

To A. I., No. 1297.

DOCUMENT NO. 156, NOTE 2

Provisional [occupation?] of Serbian territory with a reservation of compensation Article VII. War is no provisional occupation. Further than that, the Italian government proposed in the event of an armed conflict to maintain a friendly attitude, consonant with its duty toward the alliance.

To A. I., No. 361.

DOCUMENT NO. 356

Friendly conversation between Szapary and Sazonoff.

No categorical declining of every conversation, but only about the note.

Some points to be altered, minimum of demands, on this point further conversation to no purpose. *Ce serait très utile de continuer cette conversation. Alors nous pourrions aussi causer de nos propres affaires.* No categorical refusal of that—also(?) Szapary, that a misunderstanding faces us: explanation possible, even very useful to discuss Austro-Russian interests, the several territories, Ukraine etc.—leave it to Szapary.

(S. Tel. No. 141.—A. I., No. 377.)

To A. I., No. 1372.

DOCUMENT NO. 385

Here they are determined to mobilize, as soon as Berlin has agreed to it, strongly determined not to permit any further Russian mobilization.

Proposal: To ask Petersburg and eventually Paris to announce that if mobilization is continued, a general mobilization will commence with us and in Germany.

As soon as German colleague has instructions, let Ambassador be notified to make the *démarche*. Czar of Russia stands back of Serbia; no illusions about the real intention of Russia. Serbia licensed to instigate as it likes.

To A. I., No. 1375.

DOCUMENT NO. 384

Only not discuss the note; otherwise talk.

Now war, first peace; the conditions naturally now different from before.

Error, that with 5 and 6 all points have been accepted.

Let Tankowitsch escape?

Conrad: Wall of defense against Russia not (/)¹ war; carry through to Serbia.

¹The marginal note has in place of "not" the Gabelsberg stenographic character.

To A. I., No. 1378.

DOCUMENT No. 396

Conrad: He will tell Schebeko, no enmity, no cause of quarrel; security; no threat; even less intent to attack.

Conrad this evening with His Majesty the general mobilization.

To A. I., No. 1414.

DOCUMENT No. 436, NOTE 2

Szapary, July 31.

Sazonoff regretted(?) the mobilization. Niki has promised Willy that the Army will not stir as long as a conversation aimed toward accommodation is in progress in Vienna. As a matter of fact Austria, he said, had mobilized first, which Szapary strenuously opposed, so that the Minister said: *Laissons cette chronologie*. The Emperor could withdraw his army from the border with a word.

To A. I., No. 1419.

DOCUMENT No. 627

Everything possible will be done here. The southern corps will go north (and go quite through?). When *war is declared* they will put things here entirely on a military basis. Decision to assemble preponderant forces against Russia.

To A. I., No. 1444.

DOCUMENT No. 824

Russia this evening. The ships that have appeared in the Adriatic will be treated as enemies.

II

In this addendum I submit:

1. A comparative table of the peace strength of the land forces of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and France in the years 1905, 1907 and 1914.

2. Tables of the peace and war strength of the land forces of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and France, as also of England, Belgium, and Serbia in 1914; further, the man-power available for the Army in Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and France; explanations for all the tables above-

mentioned; finally, tables of the naval strength of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, France, and England in 1914.

MAX COUNT MONTGELAS.

COMPARISON OF THE PEACE STRENGTH OF THE LAND FORCES IN THE YEARS 1905, 1907 AND 1914

Country	1905	1907	1914	Increase from 1905 to 1907	Increase from 1907 to 1914
Germany	622,000	629,000	761,000	7,000	132,000
Austria-Hungary	382,000	382,000	478,000		96,000
Total Central Powers	1,004,000	1,011,000	1,239,000	7,000	228,000
Russia	1,215,000	1,254,000	^a 1,445,000 ^b 1,845,000	39,000	^a 191,000 ^b 591,000
France	559,000	^c 579,000	794,000	^d 20,000	215,000
Total Dual Alliance	1,774,000	1,833,000	^a 2,339,000 ^b 2,639,000	59,000	^a 406,000 ^b 806,000

^aSummer.

^bWinter.

^c1908.

^d1905-8.

I. PEACE STRENGTH OF THE LAND FORCES IN THE YEAR 1914¹

Country	Infantry, chasseurs and riflemen	Squadrons	Batteries		No. of men, officers included
			Field and mounted	Heavy	
I					
Germany	669	547	633	210	761,000
Austria-Hungary	684	353	413	28	478,000
Total I	1,353	900	1,046	238	1,239,000
II					
Russia	1,344	724	622	24	^a 1,845,000 ^b 1,445,000
France	673	378	705	58	^c 794,000
Total II	2,017	1,102	1,327	82	^a 2,639,000 ^b 2,239,000
III					
Serbia	100	16	45	[*] 16	51,600
England	157	93	172	107	248,000
Belgium	63	44	80	48,000
Total III	320	153	297	123	347,600

^{*}Winter 1913-14.

^{*}Summer 1914.

^aWithout the 86,000 native troops (non-commissioned officers and men in northern Africa, Morocco included) and the Foreign Legion.

¹ For explanations of the following figures see Annex 1, *post*, p. 107.

From 1905 to 1907 Germany increased her army by 7,000 men, or 1.12 per cent, Austria-Hungary increased hers not at all. The armies of France and Russia grew by eight times that number, namely, 59,000 men.

From 1907 to 1914 Germany and Austria-Hungary increased their land forces by 228,000 men, or 22.5 per cent. In France and Russia the increase in summer was nearly double that number, namely, 406,000 men, in the winter almost four times that number, namely, 806,000 men.

By percentage of populations under arms in time of peace:

In Germany, with a population of 65 million, 1.17 per cent.

In Austria-Hungary, with a population of 51 million, 0.94 per cent.

In France, with a population of 39.6 million, 2.0 per cent.

In Russia, with a population of 170 million, 1.09 per cent in winter; 0.85 per cent in summer.

2. ESTABLISHED WAR STRENGTH OF THE LAND FORCES IN 1914¹

Country	Division		Strength including officers	Guns of field, mounted and mountain artillery	Heavy guns of field army
	Infantry	Cavalry			
I					
Germany.....	85½	11	2,020,000	4,998	564
Austria-Hungary.....	50	11	1,338,000	2,370	168
Total I.....	135½	22	3,358,000	7,368	732
II					
Russia.....	117½	34	3,420,000	6,516	360
France.....	69	10	1,650,000	4,108	232
Total II.....	186½	44	5,070,000	10,624	592
III					
Serbia.....	15 (11)	1	285,000	380	40 (50)
England.....	6	1½	132,000	462	24
Belgium.....	6	1	117,000	468
Total III.....	27 (23)	3½	534,000	1,310	64 (74)

3. CALCULATION OF MAN-POWER AVAILABLE FOR ARMY SERVICE

The number of men available for army service was of more importance, in case of a long war, than the established war strength of the military forces. First to be considered were the men *trained for service* and *still of*

¹ Only the troops of the first and second lines are considered; for explanations of the following figures see Annex 2, *post*, p. 111.

military age. Their numbers amounted, as reckoned in Appendix 3 according to the military service regulations and the annual levy calculations, to:

in Germany	4.87	} Of the Central Powers 7.86 million including about 1 million Austro-Hungarian substitute reservists mostly of only 8 or 10 weeks of training.
in Austria-Hungary	2.99	
in France	4.98	} Of the Dual Alliance 10.68 million, not counting the French native troops and not counting the Cossacks.
in Russia	5.70	

The surprising fact that in the year 1914 France, with a population of 39.6 million, was able to find available a somewhat greater proportion of trained men, still of military age, is due to the following causes:

(a) For the calculation of men liable to military service only that part of the population over 20 years of age comes into consideration, so that it is not the population statistics of the last census year, 1913, that must be drawn on for comparison, but the statistics of the early 'nineties. At that time Germany's population was 49.43 million, that of France 38.34 million. The difference was thus much smaller.

(b) The low birth rate in France was in part compensated for by a lower death rate among children.

(c) France made use of her male population subject to military service in much greater proportion than did Germany. While in Germany only from 50 per cent to 55 per cent of the men subject to service were taken into the Army before the strengthening of the national defense scheme of 1913, this proportion increased in France to 78 per cent under arms, and to 82 per cent all told.

(d) As a result of the raising of the age of service to forty-eight years, France made available the levies of three years more than did Germany.

In case of a war of long duration, it would be possible to draw on all annual service classifications of untrained man-power from those of 17 years of age, up. If one accepts this in Germany and France as constituting an accretion up to 15 per cent, one in Austria-Hungary of 12 per cent, owing to the heavy emigration and also in part to political unreliability, and one in Russia only up to 10 per cent, owing to the difficulties of equipment, the following figures result as indicating the available reserve for army and navy:

Germany	9.75	} Central Powers: 15.87 million.
Austria-Hungary	6.12	
France	5.94	} Dual Alliance: 22.94 million (without the French native troops).
Russia	17.0	

4. NAVAL STRENGTH IN THE YEAR 1914

Country	(a) Ships of the line	(b) Armored cruisers	(c) Protected cruisers	Torpedo boats		(f) Sub- marine	Total tonnage (a) to (f)	Large battle- ships under (a) and (b)
				(d) Large	(e) Small			
I								
Germany	35 (2)	13	*41 (2)	149 (11)	70 (70)	28	1,019,417	17
Austria-Hun- gary	15	3 (1)	(7) 9 (4)	33 (7)	53 (17)	6	247,860	3
Total I	50 (2)	16 (1)	58 (13)	182 (18)	123 (87)	34	1,267,277	20
II								
Great Britain . . .	60 (1)	43	73 (15)	256 (71)	33 (33)	77 (8)	2,172,190	29
France	24 (3)	22 (3)	12 (4)	84 (30)	150 (150)	55 (6)	702,240	10
Russia (Baltic and Black Sea fleet only)	12 (4)	6	8	103 (21)	22 (22)	28 (11)	320,110	
Total II	96 (8)	71 (3)	93 (19)	443 (122)	205 (205)	160 (25)	3,194,540	39

* And 8 coast iron clads.

5. ESTIMATE OF THE EQUIPMENTS

According to the foregoing representation, the *peace forces* of the Franco-Russian Dual Alliance were in summer *nearly twice*, in winter *more than twice* as strong as those of the Central Powers. The draft on man-power for the purposes of the army was twice as great in France as it was in Austria-Hungary. The designed Franco-Russian *war-strength* was larger than that of the other side by *fifty per cent*. Mobilization was thus made much easier by the fact that the peace strength approximated the war strength more nearly than was the case with the Central Powers. This fact, especially in Russia, smoothed out many difficulties arising from great distances and the widely spread network of railroads. The number of trained men, still of military age, was, in France and Russia together, *thirty-nine per cent* greater than in the other group of Powers. The *Russian peace strength* alone, without any draft on the reserve forces, equalled the full war strength of the *Austro-Hungarian first and second line formation*. It was not France and Russia who were "insufficiently equipped," but Austria-Hungary.

So far as concerns the *naval equipment*, the fleets of the Central Powers *hardly came to more than a third* of the tonnage controlled by the Triple Entente.

In regard to the *increase of the land forces* during the last few years before the outbreak of the war, this difference may further be remarked:

The increase of the annual contingents of recruits, as it was arranged in Austria-Hungary, in Germany and above all in Russia, was a measure that

could not attain to its complete effect on all annual classifications for a long period, in Germany for twenty-four years, in Austria-Hungary and in Russia for twenty years. On the other hand, the retention of a fourth annual contingent for the winter in Russia, and the return to three-year service in France were changes in army organization that immediately increased the preparedness for war to the highest degree, inasmuch as they rendered very much easier the completion of the peace forces up to war strength. The long period of service in France, to which no exceptions were made, meant such a sacrifice to the population, particularly to the cultured and politically more dominant classes, that a long toleration of this burden was improbable. Many saw in it an omen very unfavorable to peace, as, for instance, the former Russian Minister Count Witte, who expressed this view in July, 1914, to the Bavarian Minister at Stuttgart, Count K. Moy, at Bad Salzschlif. Baron Guillaume, the Belgian Minister to Paris, said about it, in a report dated June 12, 1913:

It is evident that measures are about to be adopted by the French legislature that the country will not be able to tolerate for long. The burden of the new laws will prove so heavy for the people, the expenditures that they will require will be so tremendous, that the country will soon protest. France will then find herself facing the question whether to *renounce what she can no longer afford to bear, or to wage a war at the earliest moment.*

And again, on May 8, 1914:

One of the most dangerous omens of the present situation is the return of France to the three-year service period. It was unconcernedly put through by the military party, and the country will not be able to tolerate it. *Within two years they will either have to renounce it, or go to war.*

Nor is it reasonable to justify the enormous preparations of the Entente by the claim that, after the position Germany took against all reductions of armament at the Second Hague Conference in 1907, such procedure on the part of the Entente was easily explainable. Much as we may disapprove the attitude of Germany toward the question of the reduction of military armament and the attendant expense, we must not overlook the fact that even before that conference the comparative military strength of the two groups of Powers, though not so very unequal, was yet far from being in favor of the Central Powers.

The peace strength of the armies in 1907 was:

Germany	629,000
Austria-Hungary	382,000
Central Powers	<u>1,011,000</u>
Russia	1,254,000
France	<u>579,000</u>
Dual Alliance	1,833,000

Finally it may be mentioned what Lloyd George had to say about *German armament* before the World War:

On the 28th of August, 1908, hence a year after the Second Hague Conference, he said in a speech at Queen's Hall:

Look at Germany's situation! Her army is for Germany what our fleet is for us, her only defense against invasion. Germany has created no "two-power standard." Germany may have a stronger army than France, than Russia, than Italy, than Austria; but she is situated between two great Powers which, together, can raise a much greater number of troops than Germany possesses. Do not forget that, when you wonder why Germany dreads alliances and ententes, and certain secret intrigues that are illuminated by the press. . . . Suppose that we faced a combination that left us open to invasion; suppose that Germany and France, or Germany and Russia, or Germany and Austria had fleets which, combined, were more powerful than our own; should not we be seized with dread? Should not we arm? Naturally we would arm!

And at the beginning of the year that was to bring the World War, on the 1st of January, 1914, that same Lloyd George wrote in the *Daily Chronicle*:

The German Army is vitally important not only for the existence of the German Empire, but also for the very life and independence of the German people themselves, since Germany is, as a matter of fact, surrounded by other nations of which each possesses an army practically as strong as that of Germany herself. We forget that while we rely for the protection of our coasts on a navy 60 per cent stronger than Germany's, Germany possesses nothing approaching such superiority in relation to France, and, moreover, has to reckon with Russia on her eastern border. Germany has nothing that looks like a "two-power standard." Therefore Germany is disturbed by certain recent events, and is thus about to devote large sums for the increase of her military power.

Such was Lloyd George's justification, although he erred in estimating the Russian Army as only equal to the German Army, of the German defense proposal of 1913 and the defense contingent of 1914. For the fever for armament was universal. One armed not only oneself, but thought it perfectly natural that the next man should be arming. The ministers of the British island empire saw things no differently from those of continental military Powers.

ANNEX 1

EXPLANATIONS OF THE PEACE STRENGTH TABLES OF THE LAND FORCES OF THE YEAR 1914

Germany

The Imperial program for 1914 provided for 800,648 men, including officers. In this figure the one-year men are *not* included. If these are

counted in and, on the other hand, the augmentation lists which were only to be incorporated in October, 1914, are omitted, the number reached is 760,908, itemized as follows:

Reenlisted non-commissioned officers, including non-commissioned paymasters		105,868
Ordnance personnel, artificers, armorers, saddlers, and machinists		4,025
Reenlisted lance-corporals and privates		9,536
Third-year cavalry and mounted artillery contingents		21,408
One year volunteers and public school teachers		16,000
Commissary corps, one year service		1,800
Lance corporals and privates, 1st and 2d year		<u>558,980</u>
Total		<u>b717,617</u>
For unarmed service:		
Laborers and mechanics	4,472	
Bakers and hospital attendants	<u>3,070</u>	7,542
Officers (including medical officers, veterinarians, paymasters, band-masters, ordnance, munition and fortress engineering officers		<u>35,749</u>
Total		<u>760,908</u>
Total in round figures		761,000

^a This number can be verified, more or less, as shown by the following table.

^b Exactly the number of armed troops given by Kuhl, *The German General Staff*, p. 12.

	1912	1913
Drafted for armed service	220,610	285,445
Volunteers	<u>63,682</u>	<u>70,959</u>
Total	284,292	356,404
One-year volunteers, public school teachers, commissary corps soldiers for one-year service, about	<u>17,800</u>	<u>17,800</u>
Difference	266,492	338,604
Decrease by death, unfitness claim, 9% 1912, 7% 1913	<u>23,984</u>	<u>23,702</u>
Balance	<u>242,508</u>	<u>314,902</u>
Total balance for 1912 and 1913		557,410

Austria-Hungary

According to the conscription law of July 5, 1912, the recruit contingents—the total for 1911 was 134,840 (without the Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Bosnia, Herzegovina)—were increased as follows:

Year	Army and navy	Austrian militia	Hungarian militia	Total
1912	136,000	20,715	17,500	174,215
1913	154,000	22,316	21,500	197,816
1914-23 ^a	159,500	23,717	21,500	204,717

^a Increased by a few thousand by a decree of March 20, 1914.

The peace strength in the summer of 1914, minus the navy draft, but including the Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Bosnia, Herzegovina, was reckoned as follows:

1912 contingent, about.....	178,000	
1913 contingent, about.....	201,000	
	<hr/>	
	379,000	
Decrease by death, unfitness, etc., 8%.....	30,320	
	<hr/>	
Balance.....	348,680	348,680
Third annual contingent, 1912, in Austria, cavalry and mounted artillery.....		8,000
Do. in Hungary (Orders of the Day, Laws of the Hungarian Assembly for 1912, Section VI, No. 30).....		51,200
Reenlisted non-commissioned officers, to be replaced, so far as lacking, on the Austrian Army list from the third annual contingent (Conscription Law, July 5, 1912, No. 8c), about.....		<hr/> 34,000
Total non-commissioned officers and privates.....		441,880
Officials and officers.....		<hr/> 36,308
		<hr/>
Grand total.....		478,188

Reckoned by the German General Staff on May 1, 1914, as: 36,308 officers and officials, 441,551 non-commissioned officers and men.

Kuhl, *The German General Staff*, p. 103: 442,000 non-commissioned officers and men.

Rottmanner, *Armies and Navies of All the Countries of the World, 1914*: Only 34,300 officers (part of the officials lacking) and only 380,000 men (apparently the third Hungarian annual draft is lacking).

Russia

The strength of the Russian army was not published; the figures given are estimated, and consequently are only approximately valuable. The difference between summer and winter figures is explained by the fact that the oldest annual draft was retained until the completion of the training of the recruits, so that in winter four annual drafts were serving with the flag in the infantry arm, and five annual drafts in the other branches of the service. Thus the peace strength for the winter 1913-14 is reckoned as follows:

1909 draft in the cavalry, field artillery and technical troops, about.....	40,000	
1910 draft)	after deduction of about 9,600 men for the fleet.....	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="font-size: 3em; margin-right: 5px;">{</div> <div style="margin-left: 5px;"> 447,000 445,500 445,500 495,400 </div> </div>
1911 draft)		
1912 draft)		
1913 draft)		
Total.....	1,873,400	
Deductions for death, unfitness, etc., about 10%.....	187,300	
	<hr/>	
Balance.....	1,686,100	
Officers.....	42,000	
Non-commissioned officers with longer service.....	44,000	
	<hr/>	
Total.....	1,772,100	
Cossacks (2,774 officers, 70,115 non-commissioned officers and men).....	72,889	
	<hr/>	
Total.....	1,844,989	
Total in round numbers.....	1,845,000	

The summer peace strength of 1914 is arrived at by subtracting from the number above the oldest annual draft.....		1,845,000
Deducting	447,000	
Less 10%.....	*44,700	*400,000
Balance		1,445,000
Kuhl, <i>The German General Staff</i> , says on page 63: Summer		1,580,000
Winter		1,980,000

* In round numbers.

Presumably his deductions for death, etc., were not made at the rate of 10 per cent, but at a smaller rate.

An apparently semi-official article, published June 13, 1914, in the *Birschewija Wjedomosti*, gave the peace strength of the Russian army (in winter) at the exaggerated figure of 2,320,000 men; this number was pertinent only in 1918, after four annual drafts of about 580,000 men (640,000 less deductions of 10 per cent) had been raised.

France

Actual peace strength of the French army in the year 1914, according to the statements of Senator S. P. Doumer in his *Note sur la réorganisation de l'armée française* (submitted in 1919 to the Army Committee of the Senate in the name of the Subcommittee for Strength and Equipment).

Class of 1911.....	205,000	} Without the volunteers, who are classed with the reenlisted men (<i>Partie permanente</i>).
Class of 1912.....	210,000	
Class of 1913.....	170,000	
Reenlisted men (non-commissioned officers and men of the Home Army).....	105,000	} Without 26,000 reenlisted men of the native troops in northern Africa and the Foreign Legion.
Of the Colonial troops.....	25,000	
Auxiliary services.....	50,000	
Officers.....	29,000	
Total.....	794,000	

The French war budget of 1914 reckons roughly 32,500 officers; by accepting this figure, the total strength is raised to 797,500 men. Thereto are to be added in North Africa (inclusive of Morocco) 85,700 men; full strength then, 883,200 men.

The strength of 883,200 men agrees exactly with an estimate of the *General Staff*, which, although arrived at in another way, reaches the same result as Doumer. Deductions on account of death and unfitness were, it is true, not considered in this estimate of the *General Staff*; but the error is of minor importance for the reason that in France men not fit for war service do not always require to be dismissed, but can often be transferred to the auxiliary services.

In the Reichstag papers of the War Ministry, of April 29, 1914, the peace strength is given at 850,000 men *without officers*, which, including officers, would give a total of 882,500, almost exactly the same figure as the estimate of the General Staff.

Rottmanner, *Armies and Navies of All the Countries of the World, 1914*, on page 29, figures the actual strength to be "about 900,000 men." But, not to lay the foundation for too high an estimate, and to give expression to the nervous strain of the people of the motherland, the figure of 794,000, without counting the native troops, is used in the comparative survey, in accordance with Doumer.

Kuhl, in *The German General Staff*, gives on page 10, "an average for the year of *at least*" 690,000 men armed, 45,000 unarmed, thus including 29,000 officers, 764,000 men.

England

The figure is taken from the budget of 1914-15. It gives the strength of the *regular* English army, including those portions of that army stationed in India, Egypt and other oversea possessions. It does not include the English *Territorial Army*, the Indian native troops or the militia troops existing in the motherland or the foreign parts of the empire.

Rottmanner, *Armies and Navies*: 258,000.

Almanac de Gotha: 252,000 men (including officers).

Among the 107 batteries of heavy artillery are included 81 batteries and companies of coast artillery.

ANNEX 2

EXPLANATION OF THE DESIGNED WAR STRENGTH OF THE LAND FORCES IN THE YEAR 1914

INCLUDED IN THE STATEMENT	LEFT OUT OF CONSIDERATION
<i>Germany</i>	
25 active corps = 50 infantry divisions 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ reserve corps = 29 " " 6 $\frac{1}{3}$ mobile depot divisions = <u>6 $\frac{1}{3}$</u> " "	The two reserve divisions used for garrison fortifications, and further the Landwehr and Landsturm and depot levies (except the 6 $\frac{1}{3}$ depot divisions), the railroad, motor transport and immobile fortification units, and also the representative authorities.
Total 85 $\frac{1}{3}$	

The higher staffs and special field formations are included in the strength given.

Austria-Hungary

INCLUDED IN THE STATEMENT

32 divisions of infantry
 18 divisions of Landwehr and Hon-
 ved troops
 —
 50 divisions of infantry.

The Austrian and Hungarian Landwehr (Honved) were active troops, although of very slight effective force and, from the beginning, composed of two-year service men.

LEFT OUT OF CONSIDERATION

The Landsturm and depot units, among them the 14 "marching brigades" formed at the time of mobilization, to make up at once the deficiencies among the field troops, and which followed the latter into the field 14 days later.

Russia

Active divisions 70
 Reserve divisions 38
 19 brigades of riflemen $9\frac{1}{2}$
 Total infantry divisions $117\frac{1}{2}$

A Russian infantry division contained 16 battalions, and was thus $\frac{1}{3}$ again as strong as a German division.

Cavalry divisions and Cossack divisions, of the first levy 24
 8 independent cavalry brigades 4
 6 Cossack divisions, of the second levy 6
 Total cavalry divisions 34

Militia and depot troops, furthermore Cossack troops of the third levy.

France

Active divisions 48
 Reserve divisions 21

Senator Doumer mentions in the report referred to in Annex I only 47 active divisions, since he reckons the Colonial corps as only 2 divisions.

If the 20 Corps Reserve brigades attached to the corps from I to XVII and to corps XX and XXI were to be counted, the number of divisions would be increased by 10, thus to 79.

The roster is, according to Doumer's estimate:

47 active divisions 1,032,000
 21 reserve divisions 378,000
 10 cavalry divisions 52,000
 Heavy artillery, staffs,
 etc. 187,000
 Total 1,650,000

6 (5 and two halves), according to Doumer only four fortress divisions, the Territorial Army, the reserve of the Territorial Army, and the depot units.

INCLUDED IN THE STATEMENT

LEFT OUT OF CONSIDERATION

It should be added that the strength is given in round numbers and that a division should be counted as 18,000 men. But, in order not to make too high an estimate, no correction of Doumer's figures has been attempted.

England

Only the troops of the Expeditionary Forces.

All units not belonging to the Expeditionary Forces.

Belgium

Field army and garrisons of fortresses.

All troops not belonging to the field army, and, furthermore, the several fortress garrisons.

Belgian divisions contained from 3 to 4 infantry brigades.

The full roster was designed to amount, after the carrying out of the Army Law, to 340,000 men. According to the estimate of the German General Staff there were on hand in 1914, 150,000 men in the field army and 130,000 men in the garrison troops. According to the report of the Belgian General Staff, however, the field army only reached a strength of 117,000 men. This more inconsiderable strength is cited in this statement, and, to agree with it, only 105,000 men instead of 130,000 are reckoned as constituting the garrison troops, altogether $117,000 + 105,000 = 222,000$ men.

24 heavy guns were still lacking to the field army.

Serbia

Field divisions and reserve divisions of the first class. According to Austro-Hungarian reports their number was 15; according to German reckoning, 11.

Reserve divisions of the second class.

Germany

The obligation of military service lasted until the completion of the 45th year, and men were subject to the draft in their 20th year. The oldest

class subject to service in 1914, then, was that of the men born in 1869 and drafted in 1889. Thus in August, 1914, the 25 draft classifications from 1889 to 1913 were available.

Year	Drafted		Enlisted as volunteers	Total
	For armed service	For unarmed service		
1889.....	152,971	3,451	25,165	181,587
1890.....	175,779	3,715	24,532	204,026
1891.....	165,198	3,600	25,132	193,930
1892.....	161,660	3,598	29,409	194,667
1893.....	226,519	4,065	31,736	262,320
1894.....	226,276	4,499	35,563	266,338
1895.....	217,890	4,594	37,636	260,120
1896.....	214,541	4,447	41,315	260,303
1897.....	214,616	4,512	42,478	261,606
1898.....	211,349	4,574	43,443	259,366
1899.....	216,880	4,591	44,453	265,924
1900.....	222,667	4,608	46,372	273,647
1901.....	215,479	4,701	48,986	269,166
1902.....	209,201	4,413	53,535	267,149
1903.....	203,913	3,670	49,226	256,809
1904.....	206,709	3,842	50,205	260,756
1905.....	206,876	3,457	51,547	261,880
1906.....	207,935	3,158	52,002	263,095
1907.....	209,564	3,097	53,902	266,563
1908.....	207,509	2,628	57,076	267,213
1909.....	205,032	2,730	59,521	267,283
1910.....	201,530	2,623	64,077	268,230
1911.....	207,741	2,712	63,314	273,767
1912.....	220,610	2,616	63,682	286,908
1913.....	285,445	2,752	70,959	359,156
Total.....	5,193,890	92,653	1,165,266	6,451,809

To this number of 6,451,809 must be *added*:

(a) Such men as had entered the Army in 1889 before completing their 20th year, and had not completed their 45th in 1914;

(b) The men of the depot reserves, who from 1889 to 1892 had been recruited for the then required training of the depot reserves and had in 1914 not yet passed their 45th year.

These additions are not of great importance. On the other hand, the *deficiencies*—collated as follows—weigh heavily against them:

(a) About 7/12 of the draft of 1889, who, at the beginning of August, 1914, had passed their 45th year;

(b) Those men of the draft years 1889, 1890, 1891, etc., who at the time of their entrance into the service had already been 21, 22 and 23 years of age, and so forth;

(c) Losses through death, unfitness for service, emigration, etc.

An accurate ascertainment of these gains and losses is not possible. They resulted in a deficiency of 25 per cent, in round figures.

So far as figures were available:

$$6,451,809 - 1,612,952 = 4,838,857$$

there were left 4,838,857 plus some 30,000 trained depot reservists of the classes of 1889-92 still subject to service, that is, 4,868,857 or, in round figures, 4.87 million.

Austria-Hungary

Obligation of military service lasted to the completion of the 42d, liability to draft began in the 21st year. Thus the men born in 1872 and drafted in 1893 composed the oldest class subject to service. So that in August, 1914, the 21 annual classifications from 1893 to and inclusive of 1913 were available. The one-year volunteers were included in the account of the recruit contingent, but not the public school teachers.

RECRUIT CONTINGENTS FOR BOTH BRANCHES OF THE SERVICE (ARMY AND NAVY) AS WELL AS THE AUSTRIAN AND HUNGARIAN LANDWEHR (HONVED)

Year	According to the estimates of the German General Staff	According to the Austrian and Hungarian Law Gazette
1893-1903.....	11 × 126,000 = 1,386,000	11 × 125,600 = 1,381,600
1904-1907.....	4 × 130,650 = 522,600	4 × 130,100 = 520,400
1908.....	137,570	130,100
1909-1911.....	3 × 137,570 = 412,710	3 × 134,800 = 404,400
1912.....	175,877	174,215
1913.....	200,402	197,816
Total 1893-1913.....	2,835,159	2,808,531

The reason for the difference between the two figures could not be cleared up; therefore the larger figure of 2,835,159 was accepted.

This figure contains the number of recruits for the navy which must be subtracted annually, approximately..... 3,500

It does not contain, what consequently must be added to it, the number of recruits from the Tyrol and the Vorarlberg (even in 1912 only 770), and the number of recruits from Bosnia and Herzegovina (a yearly average of about 5,700), altogether annually, approximately 6,500

So there must be added yearly about..... 3,000

Or from 1893 to 1913, approximately..... 63,000

$$2,835,159 + 63,000 = 2,898,159, \text{ or, in round numbers, 2.9 million.}$$

From this figure must be subtracted:

(a) About 7/12 of the draft of the year 1893, who, in August, 1914, had passed their 42d year;

(b) The men of the drafts of 1893 and upwards who, at the time of their entering the service had already passed their 21st year or upwards;

(c) Losses caused by death, unfitness for duty, emigration, etc.

In consideration of the heavy emigration, 30 per cent—instead of only 25 per cent, as for Germany—were deducted.

As a result of which, we have available: $2,835,159 - 850,548 = 1,984,548$, or, in round figures, 1.99 million.

To this number, however, must be added the depot reservists (those sufficiently fit, those less fit, and those to whom special privileges had been granted) who from 1882 had received eight weeks and from 1889 ten weeks of military training, and who since 1912 had been obliged to undergo three further drill periods of four weeks each. Some classes of the annual drafts who had entered the service in place of the recruits at the time of the parliamentary conflicts over the magnitude of the recruit contingents, and such as had been drafted to increase the peace strength of the so-called "mobilizations" of 1908 and 1912, had also received a superior training.

The number of the depot reservists assigned to the maneuvers is not exactly known for every year. It is evident, however, from official reports that for the replacement of a year's draft of recruits, two years' classes of the depot reserves did not quite suffice. Therefore, if to the recruit contingents another million of depot reservists be added, the number will certainly not prove to be too small. Rottman, *Armies and Navies of the World, 1914*, page 58, accepts a depot reserve of only 500,000 men. According to these facts, there have been recognized as available: 1.99 million recruit contingents plus 1 million depot reservists, or, altogether, 2.99 million men.

Russia

The obligation to military service lasted until the completion of the 43d year, the draft liability began in the 21st. Thus the men born in 1871 and

Year	No. of men levied	Year	No. of men levied
1892	277,700	Forwarded	3,620,250
1893	277,700	1904	336,800
1894	285,700	1905	475,346
1895	290,350	1906	469,780
1896	294,700	1907	463,050
1897	297,700	1908	456,481
1898	302,500	1909	456,635
1899	306,700	1910	456,635
1900	312,800	1911	455,100
1901	318,800	1912	455,100
1902	324,800	1913	505,000
1903	330,800		
Forwarded	3,620,250	Total	8,150,177

drafted in 1892 composed the oldest class still subject to service in 1914. So that in August, 1914, the 22 annual draft classifications from 1892 to 1913 were available.

From the number of 8,150,177¹ are to be subtracted: The same deficiencies as are noted in *France* under *a*, *b* and *c*, with the appropriate alterations of the limits to the ages of military service and the years of the levies. Besides these must be subtracted the navy recruits according to the figures submitted (of late years 9,600 men annually).

In consideration of the heavy emigration, particularly of the so-called "seasonal emigration" in summer, 30 per cent—instead of 25 per cent, as in Germany—was marked off.

Thus there were available: 8,150,177 minus 2,445,153, or 5,705,124; in round numbers, 5.7 million men.

It is to be noted that the Cossacks are not included in these figures.

France

The obligation to military service lasted until the completion of the 48th year, the draft liability began in the 21st, and from 1913 on, in the 20th. Thus the men born in 1866 and drafted in 1887 composed the oldest class still subject to service in 1914. So that there were available in 1914 the 28 annual draft classes from 1887 to 1913 (in this last year two classes).

The period of service covered up to and including 1889, five years, from 1890 up to and including 1905, three, then up to and including 1912, two years, whereupon in 1913 the three-year period was again restored.

The figures not enclosed in brackets are for the levies of *reserve recruits* for the army and the colonial troops, including the volunteer accretions.² The figures in brackets represent the estimates of the German General Staff (corrected from the *Annuaire statistique de la France*) of those of each annual class of men liable to service placed (*affectés*) by the draft bureau in army service. *Included* in these figures are the reserve recruits for the sea and land services who did not present themselves at the time of the draft (*réfractaires*); on the other hand, the Algerian recruits and all recruits of earlier classes subsequently enrolled, as well as all volunteers, are missing from the estimates.

For the year 1913 the figures are only approximately determined.³

To the number 6,677,810 must be *added*:

The men who before 1887 and before completing their 21st year had entered the service, and who in 1914 had not completed their 48th year.

¹ See table on p. 116.—EDITOR.

² Estimates from Löbell's *Annual Reports* taken from the yearly *Compte-rendu des opérations du recrutement*. To years for which certain details were lacking, a question mark is appended.

³ See table on p. 118.—EDITOR.

Year	For service under arms		For unarmed service (services auxiliaires)	
1887.....	166,000	(176,000)		
1888.....	160,000	(170,000)		
1889.....	149,000	(231,000) (?)		
1890.....	228,000	(218,000)		
1891.....	213,000	(208,000)		
1892.....	206,000	(239,000)		
1893.....	245,000	(245,000)		
1894.....	272,000	(277,000)		
1895.....	246,000	(256,000)		
1896.....	255,000	(261,000)		
1897.....	256,000 (?)	(262,000)		
1898.....	256,000 (?)	(262,000)		
1899.....	225,000	(239,000)		
1900.....	238,000	(256,000)		
1901.....	238,000 (?)	(249,000)		
1902.....	270,000	(275,000)		
1903.....	229,000	(234,000)		
1904.....	258,000	(263,000)		
1905.....	253,000	(258,000)		
1906.....	276,000	(279,000)	11,661	(24,798)
1907.....	255,000	(259,000)	24,798	(17,910)
1908.....	241,000	(248,000)	17,914	(16,619)
1909.....	245,000	(259,000)	17,344	(18,670)
1910.....	240,000	(258,000)	18,394	(17,681)
1911.....	234,000	(243,000)	18,782	(18,688)
1912.....	238,000	(256,000)	11,917	(18,972)
1913 ^a	440,000 (?)	(445,000)	23,000 (?)	(23,000)
Total.....	6,534,000	(6,826,000)	148,310	(156,338)
Grand total.....		6,677,810	(6,982,338)	

^a In 1913 two annual classifications, those of the men born in 1892 and 1893, were called to the colors together, on account of the advance of the age of service from the 21st to the 20th year.

On the other hand, there should be *subtracted*:

- (a) About 7/12 of the enlisted class of 1887, who by August, 1914, had passed their 48th year;
- (b) The men of the classifications of 1887-1889, who at their enlistment were already 22 to 24 years old;
- (c) Losses by death, unfitness for service, emigration, etc.

The number of the men to be added is too unimportant to be considered.

The deficiencies under *a*, *b*, and *c* shall, notwithstanding the wholly insignificant emigration from France, be figured, just as in Germany, at 25 per cent, and for the first three classes at an extra 5 per cent.

Thus we get the result:

Whole number.....		6,677,810
Less 25 per cent.....	1,669,450	} 1,693,200
Less a further 5 per cent for the classes 1887-1889 (altogether 475,000).....	23,750	

or, in round figures, 4.98 million men.

In regard to the striking size of this figure, see the explanation in the text. It may be remarked in addition that the native troops in northern Africa (including the Moroccans) and the Foreign Legion are not included.

III

LETTER OF v. TSCHIRSCHKY TO v. JAGOW ABOUT THE ULTIMATUM¹

PRIVATE LETTER OF AMBASSADOR v. TSCHIRSCHKY TO SECRETARY OF STATE
v. JAGOW²

Absolutely confidential.

VIENNA, *July 11, 1914.*

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

I took the opportunity again today to discuss the proceedings against Serbia with Count Berchtold, principally to impress upon the Minister once more, emphatically, that quick action was called for.

The Minister expressed himself upon the matter as follows:

In order finally to obtain exact information as to what the investigation at Serajevo had so far brought to light, a confidential agent had been sent from here to Serajevo, whom he expected back Tuesday or Wednesday. Count Tisza had also been summoned to Vienna for Tuesday. A closer agreement had been arrived at since yesterday with the president of the Hungarian Council concerning the note to be directed to Serbia, and he hoped by Tuesday to be able to determine on the final version of this document. So far as he could say today, the principal demands on Serbia would consist of the requirement that the King should officially and publicly proclaim, in a formal declaration and through an order to the army, that Serbia discarded her Greater-Serbia policy; secondly, the institution of an agency of the Austro-Hungarian Government to see to the strict keeping of this promise, would be required. The term granted for the answering of the note would be made as short as possible, say, perhaps, forty-eight hours. If the reply is not regarded here as satisfactory, mobilization will take place at once.

The question was now, at what time would it be best to deliver the note. He believed that it would not be advisable to deliver the note at the time when Mr. Poincaré was in Petersburg, and thus give the French and the Russians the opportunity of discussing their attitude together in Petersburg. The note should be delivered at Belgrade, if possible, before the departure of Mr. Poincaré from Paris or after his departure from Petersburg. Some-

¹ From the political records of the German Embassy at Vienna.

² Received in Berlin on the afternoon of July 12, 1914.

time, therefore, about the 18th, or on the 24th of July. The latter date might perhaps be preferable on account of the fact that at that time the harvest work in the Monarchy would be finished, lightening the difficulties of mobilization and preventing great losses from an economic point of view.

With reference to the treatment of the foreign press, Count Berchtold told me, upon my asking him, that he had already entered upon concerted action with Berlin in the matter of exercising a united influence on the English press. He would now turn his attention toward the Roumanian and Italian press and see what could be done with money in Bucharest. The Minister is disturbed over the recent energetic efforts of the Russian Government to draw the Poles into a closer relation. These efforts would appear not to have been wholly unsuccessful, to judge by the attitude of some of the Polish papers.

I may conclude by saying that the Minister and Count Forgach, who was present at this conference, begged me *not* to telegraph in regard to the preceding and very confidential information, but to mention it only in private letters, in order that absolute secrecy may be assured. I got the impression that the gentlemen feared a leak *here in Austria* if I should telegraph in cipher.

Your Excellency's most obedient,
(Signed) V. TSCHIRSCHKY.

Telegram No. 117 has this moment arrived. I will inform the Minister of it at once.

REPORT OF THE SECOND SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY

WILSON'S PEACE MOVE OF 1916-1917

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

The present report completes the inquiry into the peace move of President Wilson in the winter of 1916-17, and therewith, for the first time, an official German politico-parliamentary investigation.

At its session of August 20, 1919, the National Assembly appointed, under the authority of Article 34 of the Constitution of the German Realm, a committee of inquiry consisting of twenty-eight members, with the duty of determining:

1. What circumstances led to the outbreak of the war, caused its prolongation, and brought about its losses; in particular—
2. What opportunities existed during the continuance of the war for bringing about peace parleys, and why such opportunities were brought to naught;
3. Whether, in the intercourse between the political offices of the government, between its political and its military management, and with the parliament or its representatives, good faith and probity were observed;
4. Whether, in the military and political conduct of the war, measures not in accord with the law of nations or measures cruel or harsh beyond any military or political necessity were directed or permitted.

The Committee of Inquiry thereupon decided to appoint four subcommittees, and to commit to the Second Subcommittee the investigation into the possibilities of peace according to Article No. 2 of the resolution of appointment passed by the National Assembly.

This Subcommittee took the peace move of Wilson as the object of its first investigation and opened at a public session on the 21st of October, after a review of the pertinent documents at the Foreign Office through its official recording secretary, Deputy Dr. Sinzheimer, with the examination of the last German Ambassador to Washington, Count Bernstorff. The examination of the responsible German statesmen was carried through thirteen sessions, at the last of which, on the 17th of November, the committee made known its intention to suspend for some time its public sessions after the hearing of the representatives of the Army command on the following day.

The investigation of the documentary evidence was being carried on concurrently with the hearings, and it appeared to be expedient to publish the results of this documentary examination before the resumption of the public hearings. In order to make possible the forming of an independent opinion abroad which was not dependent upon the reports of newspapers, simultaneous publication in German, French, and English was contemplated. The first of the documents appeared in German and English, on the 22d of

January, 1920, as Part I of the Supplements to the Stenographic Minutes. The French edition had to be delayed on account of technical difficulties. Parts II, III, and IV of the Supplements also were delayed, on account of the Kapp *coup*, until April 22, appearing then in German and English. Part V appeared on May 24, and Part VI is published simultaneously with the present report.

For the purposes of this voluminous inquiry the documents of the Foreign Office, the Chancelry, the Ministry of the Interior, the Admiralty Staff, the General Headquarters, and the Ministry of War have been drawn upon. By far the most important material came from the archives of the Foreign Office, from which all documents published in the supplements are derived, except when another source is indicated. To the heads of the office as well as to their designated agencies are due the thanks of the committee for the loyal manner in which they assisted and forwarded its labor, thereby making its smooth progress possible.

The closing of the session of the National Assembly on the 29th of April, contrary to its original expectation, as the result of the advanced election date, made the resumption of the public hearings on a broad scale impossible. Indeed, the committee believes itself justified in dispensing with them, inasmuch as the mass of documentary material presented herewith in its entirety in connection with the results of the hearings, offers a sufficient answer to the questions which were the subject of its investigation. Even if on some minor points complete elucidation has not been reached, these points are without weight in the formation of a general judgment on the question of the peace move. Some of the misunderstandings and confusions that arose were cleared up at an open hearing of Ambassador Count Bernstorff held on April 14. A series of likewise-deferred provisional hearings failed to develop material useful to the peace move investigation, except for the declarations of the former military attaché at Washington, Major v. Papen, which are embodied in Part V of the Supplements.

Thereafter it was possible to advance rapidly to the preparation of the report, and at the session of June 8, 1920, the recording secretary, Deputy Dr. Sinzheimer, presented a first draft. To this draft were added, at the session of June 18, the circumstantial opinions of the four experts. After hearing these opinions the committee on the same day constructed its final report on the basis of the draft of the recording secretary. The material additions to the draft are distinguished in the final report by italics, and the cancellations made by the committee are printed as notes, so that it is possible for the reader to find in the final report of the committee the draft thereof on which the opinions of the experts are based.

The report is agreed to by six of the seven members of the committee: Deputy Schultz-Bromberg, who, on the 8th of June had taken the place of Deputy Warmuth on the committee, found himself unable to agree with the

other members and set forth his views in the minority report published coincidentally. The committee was no longer able to take cognizance of this minority report.

The committee has seriously endeavored to keep itself free from the influence of party politics while engaged in its work. Proof of this is evident in the choice of the experts selected, of whom two, the university professors Privy Councilor Dr. Schaefer and Professor Dr. Hoetzsch, belong to the German National People's Party, and one, Professor Dr. Bonn, to the German Democratic Party, while the party affiliation of former Minister v. Romberg is not known to the committee. The opinions of three of the experts are in substantial agreement with the draft of the recording secretary. In the final draft of the report it was possible to give great consideration to such of their scruples as seemed to be of importance.

Thus the committee may lay claim to having drawn up its report without regard to the fear or favor of any political party.

GOTHEIN,
Chairman.

BERLIN, *June 23, 1920.*

REPORT ON PRESIDENT WILSON'S PEACE MOVE OF 1916-1917¹

I. THE TASK

It can not be the purpose of the report to give a connected and literal story of Wilson's peace move. For this purpose reference must be made to the official records and the investigations of the Second Subcommittee.

The purpose of the report consists in this, to collate the material results of the inquiries which have been conducted, and thereupon to submit an answer to the questions which have been propounded to the committee.

At the same time (and in this connection) the report must be limited to facts which have a direct bearing on the Wilson peace move, and must avoid all those subjects which have been made points of investigation in the course of the inquiry into this move without standing in an absolutely direct relation to it.

II. THE POINT OF DEPARTURE

Our point of departure is the fundamental fact that the peace move was instigated by us and desired by us. The fundamental instructions regarding the same were promulgated by the Chancellor acting in mutual accord with the Emperor and the Supreme High Command in the summer and autumn of 1916, following a more or less casual interchange of opinions regarding a possible interposition by Wilson in connection with the peace question—on the occasion, for instance, of the presence of Colonel House in Berlin—and after Wilson had indicated, ever since the time of his peace note of August 10, 1914,² his willingness "to act in the interest of peace."

There was, too, a community of agreement between Berlin and Washington with regard to the form of the peace move. Bernstorff announced that Wilson desired to take no part in territorial questions and, on the contrary, that his interest was limited to disarmament and the freedom of the seas; that Wilson had in mind a conference at The Hague, at which the United States and the other neutral Powers should only take part to the extent required by the two questions above referred to; that Wilson wished to play the part of the peacemaker; that he desired to win the distinction of having

¹ The Report is to be read in connection with the draft submitted in the session of the 8th of June, 1920, by Recording Secretary Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer. The material changes adopted by the committee in the session of June 18, 1920, after the opinions of the experts had been submitted, are characterized as follows: (a) Additions made to the text are in italics; (b) Cancellations are reported in the form of notes.

² Wilson's note (of August 5, 1914) is printed in the *New York Times* for August 6, 1914.—EDITOR.

brought the belligerents to the point of being willing to enter into negotiations with one another.¹ Accordingly, states the Chancellor, we should be very willing to consider any interposition on the part of the President which might lead to the commencement of peace negotiations between the belligerents. He asks that the activities of the President directed toward this end be energetically encouraged. He points out that it would be improper to demand that we should commit ourselves to the acceptance of any peace conditions by the mere fact of acceding to such interposition. He is of the opinion that a general peace conference following in the wake of peace negotiations conducted by the belligerents and not devoid of results, having for its purpose the discussion of questions of international law as well as those arising between nation and nation, in which the neutral Powers would participate, would be acceptable if need be.²

The Imperial Government clung to the thought of a peace move by Wilson and constantly endeavored to influence him toward this end.³ Even on the 20th and the 26th of November, 1916, Wilson's peace move was keenly desired. As a proof of the keenness of this desire to bring about peace through the instrumentality of Wilson, particular reference may be made to the telegram of the Chancellor to Bernstorff on the 14th of October.⁴ This contained the proposal that Wilson cooperate with the Pope, the King of Spain and the neutral Powers of Europe in order to start the peace move in operation.

On November 21, 1916, Bernstorff announced that Wilson desired to take steps leading to peace negotiations at the very earliest possible moment, presumably between that date and the New Year, interposing the condition, however, that during this period we should refrain as much as possible from expressing ourselves either orally or in writing on the subject of peace negotiations, in order to avoid the possibility of a premature opposition on the part of our enemies.⁵ According to Bernstorff, everything was set for the peace move on the 4th of December, though the Ambassador expressed an opinion that, taking Wilson's character into consideration, it was still doubtful as to when he would act; that the authorities in Washington were in favor of the move, that it might come overnight, particularly if it were possible for us to assume a conciliatory attitude in the matter of the Belgian question.⁶ Speaking in Wilson's behalf, the American chargé d'affaires declared to the Imperial Chancellor on December 5 that the President was hard at work on an early and energetic move, the purpose of which was the early establishment of peace, and to this end he asked the cooperation of the German Government.⁷

¹ 13, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 979.

² 14, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 981.

³ For instance, 16, 19, 21, 23, 29, 34, 35, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, pp. 983, 984, 986, 989, 991, 994, 996.

⁴ 23, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 989.

⁵ 33, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 993.

⁶ 38, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 997.

⁷ 210, Supplements, pt. VI, *post*, p. 1305.

III. THE PEACE PROPOSAL OF THE CENTRAL POWERS OF DECEMBER 12, 1916

On the 12th of December, 1916, came the peace proposal of the Central Powers. The question arises how, in the face of the negotiations with America, *and in opposition to the specifically expressed desire of Wilson that the peace move which he had in contemplation should not be interfered with by anything which we might do,*¹ an individual peace move, of which Wilson had not been informed, could have been initiated.

Bethmann-Hollweg called attention in the course of his examination to the fact that it was not certain when or even whether the proposed peace move of Wilson would become an accomplished fact; so that, for this reason if for no other, individual action on the part of the Central Powers was required by the situation, and all the more so because such action enabled them to choose their own time. As a matter of fact it was doubtful when definite action by Wilson would be taken. And, moreover, Bernstorff's last communication that action on the part of Wilson was unquestionably imminent, was still qualified by the doubt as to when Wilson's purpose would take the form of action. This delay was perhaps to be attributed to Wilson's temperament. But it was also certainly attributable, as the reports from Bernstorff show, to the fact that incidents were constantly occurring which made it appear to Wilson impossible to commence the peace move which he had planned without having American public opinion against him. This was due particularly to the various U-boat incidents which were constantly occurring during the course of the negotiations for Wilson's peace move, and to the Belgian deportations, which created in America an extremely unfavorable opinion against Germany. On this point, Lansing's announcement reported by Bernstorff on the 1st of December, 1916, is characteristic.² It reads as follows:

In conversation Lansing laid great stress upon the American protest against the Belgian deportations. That on account of this the entire Belgian relief movement was jeopardized and that, further, opinion on this side of the water was becoming unfavorably colored and this at the precise moment when it looked as if peace negotiations might be undertaken. Lansing stated that it was his opinion that if the Imperial Government could find a way to meet the protests of the neutral Powers with regard to the Belgian question, this would create an impression which would weigh tremendously in our favor, and that it would, in all probability, result in the immediate possibility of taking up the first steps leading to peace negotiations. That, unfortunately, up to the present time, it has always happened that some obstacle came in the way.

Especially, however, does Wilson's hesitation become really comprehensible when we take into consideration Bernstorff's reports. According to

¹ Inserted in the draft of Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer, recording secretary.

² 37, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 997.

these reports, Wilson was willing to begin a move for peace only if it should appear that the Entente were in a receptive mood. Bernstorff assumes, as may be deduced from his testimony, that Wilson had come into touch with the Entente on the question of peace. Bethmann-Hollweg too was depending on this. On November 27, 1916, he writes Hindenburg:¹

President Wilson has informed Count Bernstorff confidentially that it is his intention to put forth an appeal for peace in the time elapsing between now and the New Year. Whether he will really carry out his purpose remains wholly uncertain. He is undecided and fearful of a set-back. We must reckon on this, that he will only issue his appeal if he no longer feels certain that the Entente will meet it with a curt rejection, and that means if the Entente finds itself in a situation where it would not be likely to meet a peace proposal emanating from us with a curt refusal.

Therein lay precisely the great significance of Wilson's proposed move. If it were to take place, it could certainly be assumed that he had been in touch with the Entente or, at any rate, that his action was the outcome of a reasonable hope that it would meet with a favorable reception.

Wilson's hesitation alone could therefore hardly be considered as constituting a justification for action initiated solely by Germany. The preponderating reasons for turning the scale in favor of the individual move were to be sought in the general situation in which Germany was at that time, as well as in the weight attributed to it by the political department of the government. Beginning with the first of the year 1916 an urgent necessity had existed for Germany to find as soon as possible some means of coming to an understanding with the enemy.

According to the opinion of the highest authorities, the military situation was such even at that time as to eliminate the possibility of a military victory on land. Baron Burian's appeal of October 17, 1916, directed to the announcement of peace proposals, does not constitute the only basis for the above assertion.² This is made particularly clear in the opinions of the military leaders themselves. For example, Bethmann-Hollweg as early as January 4, 1916, repeats an assertion of General v. Falkenhayn, then Chief of the General Staff, according to which the war could not be brought to an end by military blows inflicted by the land forces.³ Bethmann-Hollweg expresses himself to the same effect in a letter to Secretary of State v. Jagow on March 5, 1916.⁴ Ludendorff takes the same stand, as appears from a report of Secretary of Legation v. Lersner to the Foreign Office of December 22, 1916.⁵ Therefore, the weapon of unrestricted U-boat warfare came under consideration as the sole means of accomplishing peace through a military triumph. The Admiralty Staff, and the Supreme

¹ 86, Supplements, pt. II, *post*, p. 1068.

² 145, Supplements, pt. IV, *post*, p. 1116.

³ 177, Supplements, pt. IV, *post*, p. 1200.

⁴ 75, Supplements, pt. II, *post*, p. 1053.

⁵ 150, Supplements, pt. IV, *post*, p. 1139.

High Command as well, believed in the certain success of this weapon. Because of this, the former had already long since been urging the commencement of unrestricted U-boat warfare. The Supreme High Command had, in any event, since the beginning of December, 1916, determined to pursue the same course. Not only does this appear from the telegram of Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office of December 1, 1916,¹ according to which Hindenburg, in reply to Mr. v. Heydebrand, seems to have taken a fairly firm stand in regard to an early inauguration of unrestricted U-boat warfare, but especially indeed from the notes of the Hindenburg interview with the Emperor on December 8, 1916, in which the commencement of unrestricted U-boat warfare by the end of January was asked for.² As opposed to this, the political branch took the stand that unrestricted U-boat warfare would be fatal for Germany; that, in the words of Helfferich, reasserted later by Admiral v. Holtzendorff, it would lead to ruin.³

In the face of this situation it followed that, in any event, the task of the political branch should consist in bringing about a friendly understanding at the earliest possible moment, since there was no other military means in contemplation competent to bring about peace by force of arms. The political branch also and in particular had to determine the question of how, if possible, the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat warfare, which was being urged by military circles, could be avoided by bringing about peace negotiations. It was precisely this last question which claimed the full attention of v. Bethmann-Hollweg in his deliberations concerning further advancement along the line of peace. Bethmann-Hollweg recognized the possibility that an answer might result from a German peace proposal which would prove to be the loom on which the peace fabric might be woven. As he states in his remarks before the committee,⁴ "Such an answer would have given the political department of the government the opportunity to successfully combat that momentous decision which from the year 1915 was suspended above it like the sword of Damocles and which, as a matter of fact, constituted a still greater menace as the number of our U-boats increased and the technical arguments against the U-boats became fewer and fewer—in short, I say, that such an answer would have put it within the power of the German Government to successfully combat, by invoking the possibilities of peace, that decision which was reached on the 9th of January and which it considered disastrous."⁵

Bethmann-Hollweg considered the course of a peace move on the part of Germany as all the more justifiable, in that he could not perceive in such an

¹ 170, Supplements, pt. IV, *post*, p. 1181. ² 89, Supplements, pt. II, *post*, p. 1071.

³ 212, Supplements, pt. VII, *post*, p. 1317. ⁴ Stenographic Minutes, 4th sess., *post*, p. 334.

⁵ In the draft of Recording Secretary Dr. Sinzheimer, the following appears at this point: "It may perhaps be assumed that the motive which most strongly impelled Bethmann-Hollweg to carry on peace proposals by Germany herself, was the hope of diverting from Germany even at the eleventh hour the unrestricted U-boat warfare and all that it might bring in its train, and in this way to keep the path to peace negotiations free from obstacles."

individual peace proposal anything to interfere with the efforts of Wilson for peace. The individual peace proposal might even, as Bethmann-Hollweg believed, advance Wilson's move and bring about cooperation. It was to this effect that Bernstorff was instructed on December 9, 1916, with regard to the meaning of the impending peace proposals of the Central Powers, for the purpose of communicating them to Wilson.¹ Bethmann-Hollweg believed, as he stated in his testimony, that by this means he would have "two irons in the fire" in the interest of peace.²

*It must be assumed in any case, that Secretary of State Zimmermann did not share this view of the Chancellor's, for he stated later before the Budget Committee that Wilson was to be eliminated as a peace mediator by the peace proposal of the 12th of December.*³

IV. WILSON'S PEACE NOTE OF DECEMBER 21, 1916

As a matter of fact, the individual peace proposal of the Central Powers did not interfere with the peace move of Wilson. On the 21st of December, 1916, the American chargé d'affaires delivered to Secretary of State Zimmermann the official peace note of Wilson, to the terms of which further reference will be made.⁴ Its contents coincided with the general outlines which had been contemplated in connection with a peace move on Wilson's part, according to the negotiations between Berlin and Washington. The virtual essence of the note was its appeal made to all the belligerent Powers to make their war aims known so that they might be openly compared.

It may be (says Wilson) that the terms which the belligerents on the one side and on the other would deem it necessary to insist upon are not so irreconcilable as some have feared; that an interchange of views would clear the way at least for conference and make the permanent concord of the nations a hope of the immediate future, a concert of nations immediately practicable.

The President refrains from proposing a peace; he does not even offer his interposition. He only asks, as stated in his note, "that soundings be taken in order that we may learn, the neutral nations with the belligerent, how near the haven of peace may be for which all mankind longs with an intense and increasing longing."

Wilson's appeal to have the war aims made public received a special impetus through a request of Lansing's to Bernstorff which is made the

¹ 39, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, p. 998.

² In the draft of Recording Secretary Dr. Sinzheimer, there is here inserted: "Whether the peace proposal actually fulfilled this function, and whether the fundamental purpose which was hereafter interbound with the peace proposal, was firmly adhered to, is to be seen later on."

³ Added by the committee to the draft of Reporter Dr. Sinzheimer.

⁴ 44, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, p. 1002.

subject of the Ambassador's dispatch on the 21st of December, 1916.¹ Lansing announced to Bernstorff that the American Government was looking for frank replies from the belligerents with regard to their individual peace conditions. He added at the suggestion of Bernstorff that such declarations could also be considered confidential and so lead gradually to a conference.

Wilson's appeal, as appears from the report of the Viennese Ambassador of December 17, 1916,² received the official support of the Pope. According thereto the Pope had commissioned the Nuncio at Vienna to inform the Imperial German Government that "he had good ground to believe that the Entente was inclined to peace negotiations, if we would disclose 'something' concerning our peace conditions; that the Entente was particularly interested in a guarantee for the restoration and complete independence of Belgium."

In any event the Ambassador also mentioned reports, on December 19, 1916,³ that Baron Burian characterizes the above-mentioned communication of the Pope partly of no value and partly as a confirmation of "our impressions." What is meant thereby is not quite clear. In any event, Baron Burian was reputed to be opposed to any peace negotiations through Wilson, and this for reasons very frankly reported by the aforesaid Ambassador on December 3, 1916.⁴ Moreover, the significance of the papal communication is emphasized by additional documents which, on account of neutral States, can not be quoted from here. *They have been submitted to the subcommittee, and it can not share the opinion of Expert v. Romberg with regard to the immateriality of the papal action.*⁵

If we analyze the situation as it reveals itself in connection with the German peace proposal after the issuance of Wilson's peace note, it can be stated that Bethmann's tactical purpose "to have two irons in the fire" was as a matter of fact put into operation. Wilson's peace note was so constructed as to place itself in an intimate connection with the German peace proposal. This latter had only spoken about the war aims of Germany in very general terms. The idea was to present them in detail on the occasion of a conference. Wilson, on his part, volunteered to accept the disclosure of these war aims and to prepare for a conference in which they should be discussed. The answer to Wilson's peace note was capable of bringing about a further and more effective stride along the line of peace development. At the same time the answer was, fortunately, the means of putting in the background many an unfavorable impression resulting not only from the manner in which the peace proposal was drawn up, but particularly from a public speech of the Emperor on the 13th of December, 1916, which

¹ 45, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 1004.

³ 100, Supplements, pt. III, *post*, p. 1079.

² 99, Supplements, pt. III, *post*, p. 1079.

⁴ 88, Supplements, pt. II, *post*, p. 1070.

⁵ Inserted by the committee in the draft of Recording Secretary Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer.

was published as the result of an unexplained discretion, and making clear to all the world, in no uncertain tone, particularly with regard to the Belgian question, the existence of Germany's desire for peace, which was almost despaired of abroad.

Germany answered Wilson's peace note by its note of December 26, 1916. This note avoided in diplomatic form the essential point of Wilson's peace note. The reasons for this action are to be found in pertinent documents. Particularly in this regard shall we call attention to the orders and messages of Secretary of State Zimmermann.¹

It is a significant circumstance that after the issuance of the German peace proposal, the Embassy in Madrid as well as the legations at The Hague, Berne, Copenhagen, Christiania and Stockholm were inaccurately informed that at no moment during the conduct of the war had an attempt been made to influence the United States in the direction of making proposals for mediation.² *But this can be explained by the fact that the German Imperial Government did not wish to make known, for tactical reasons, the actual facts with regard to the origin of Wilson's peace note, both on its own account as well as in the interests of America, and because, as a matter of fact, a peace mediation technically construed from the standpoint of international law, could not be accepted as a subject of discussion. The meager and, to a certain extent, inaccurate announcements of the public press after the fact of Wilson's peace note had been made public, are surprising. His action was simply defined as an autocratic meddling on his part in our affairs, WHICH MUST BE PROHIBITED, in spite of the fact that Bethmann-Hollweg had actually been instrumental in bringing it about.*³ For the above we rely mainly upon the testimony of Editor in Chief Georg Bernhard, whose accuracy in all material matters has not been challenged by Secretary of State Zimmermann, who handled the matter in the press conference.⁴ Finally, it must be noted that the Ambassador at Vienna, on the 26th day of December, 1916, was in a position to report to the Foreign Office that, on the strength of a telephonic conversation with Berlin, he had told Count Czernin that a telegram from Washington indicated that Wilson was exerting himself to stop the calling of a conference in order to get personal control of the peace move.⁵ We have not before us any Washington telegram of this description. Wilson's peace move was in keeping with the demands which we ourselves had made. His note of the 21st of December, 1916, is, according to its terms, drawn up with the purpose

¹ 105, 108, 109, Supplements, pt. III, *post*, pp. 1085, 1087, 1088.

² 91, Supplements, pt. III, *post*, p. 1074. In the draft of Recording Secretary Dr. Sinzheimer, there was inserted the following: "To the same effect were the meager, and for the most part incorrect reports of the newspapers after the peace note came to be known. The peace note is not described as the result of spontaneous wishes consistently carried out, but as an autocratic meddling on the part of Wilson in matters in which he had a personal interest, which could not be tolerated."

³ Inserted by the committee in the draft of Recording Secretary Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer.

⁴ Stenographic Minutes, 5th sess., *post*, p. 405. ⁵ 112, Supplements, pt. III, *post*, p. 1089.

of bringing about a conference, not of standing in the way of one. The testimony of Secretary of State Zimmermann before the investigation committee has not resulted in an explanation of all these events. We are compelled to accept the view that the purpose of all these announcements was to cover up all traces of the origin of Wilson's call for peace, in order not to become subjected to the disagreeable consequences resulting from earlier individual plans which were the very ones that had made this appeal a feature of the general peace plan.

Moreover, Zimmermann's telegram to the Ambassador at Vienna of December 23, 1916,¹ makes it perfectly clear that, in contradistinction to the policy of the author of the answer to Wilson's note up to this time, the purpose for the future was to be the elimination of Wilson's interposition. The message characterizes Wilson's peace move just as does a telegraphic communication of Hindenburg's of even date,² in a manner entirely wide of the mark, in that it expresses the possibility that it was adopted in connection with an understanding with Great Britain, whereas the truth is that it was due to representations made by Germany. The particular passage referred to reads as follows:

It is possible that the peace activities of President Wilson are the result of an understanding with Great Britain in order to make it easier for the Entente to find a way out of the *cul-de-sac* in which it has gotten as a result of the public announcements of its statesmen. We have all the more reason for not allowing the initiative in the peace question to be again taken away from us. A response given as soon as possible, agreeing with the step taken by the President, will make the answering of the note of the Entente easier for us, in case the latter should be of the same tenor as the utterances of Lloyd George. An answer, say, of the following import would also eliminate intervention by President Wilson.

From this stand, it can be concluded as being beyond doubt that the political branch of the government had changed its attitude with regard to Wilson, and that the tactical purpose of having "two irons in the fire" had been given up.

The reasons for the altered attitude of the Imperial Government are to be found in this, that in the meantime the movement which demanded the commencement of an unrestricted U-boat warfare for the purpose of bringing about a termination of the war by a military victory had become dominant. This movement had no interest in any peace move by Wilson, in fact looked upon this peace move as an interference which should be rendered inoperative. Only a short time after publication of Wilson's peace note, Hindenburg had expressed himself to this effect in a detailed telegram directed to the Foreign Office.² The conspicuous change in the Imperial policy in the

¹ 105, Supplements, pt. III, *post*, p. 1085.

² 178, Supplements, pt. IV, *post*, p. 1201.

face of a peace move on the part of Wilson can only be explained on the assumption that the policy in question yielded to that sentiment. If this is correct, it is obvious that the plan of breaking up the U-boat movement by the interposition of an individual peace move was brought to naught, and not only this, but that Wilson's peace move which had been made the subject of much effort was hereby made difficult in the extreme if not rendered altogether impossible. *For the answer which the peace proposal of the 12th of December elicited from Germany's enemies created a situation which subjected the working out of Wilson's peace move to an influence which proved fatal. In this connection the subcommittee agrees throughout with the views expressed concurrently in the opinions of Messrs. v. Romberg, Bonn, and Hoetzsch in the premises.*¹

V. THE NINTH OF JANUARY, 1917

*In the meantime, Wilson continued with his efforts for peace.*² On January 3, 1917, a telegram of Bernstorff of the 29th of December, 1916,³ was received in Berlin, according to which Colonel House, acting together with Wilson, asked for confidential information concerning the conditions of peace. It was not until the 7th of January, 1917—two days before the decision regarding the opening of an unrestricted U-boat war—that Zimmermann answered this new appeal.⁴ The Ambassador was instructed to handle the question concerning our communication of our peace conditions in a dilatory fashion. He was to state that we were convinced that we were able to bring the war to a victorious end, both from a military as well as a political or commercial standpoint. In addition to this, it was to be announced that we were inclined, after peace was concluded, to take part in a general conference dealing with the settlement of international legal questions in which Wilson was interested, and to state that, so far as Belgium was concerned, we "shall not annex Belgium."

We have reached the point at which it is proper to insert a brief remark concerning the question of the expediency of communicating definite peace conditions, because this question frequently played a prominent part at the hearings. Bethmann-Hollweg in particular took the ground that either an open or a confidential communication of definite peace aims would not have been expedient, except in dealing directly with the enemy himself, because such information would have disclosed our hand. On the other hand, attention may be called to the following point: There are circumstances under which it would be injurious to give full information concerning

¹ Inserted by the committee in the draft of Recording Secretary Dr. Sinzheimer.

² This paragraph began as follows in the draft of Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer, the recording secretary: "In spite of the determination to set at naught any further interposition on Wilson's part, the latter continued his attempt to proceed with the peace move."

³ 50, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, p. 1010.

⁴ 53, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, p. 1012.

such conditions if negotiations are just beginning or if the enemy is prepared therefor. If he is not ready for negotiations, then the real question to be considered is how he can be brought to the state of mind where he will be ready for them. One method of bringing about such readiness for negotiation is precisely the setting out of one's own purpose, the practical working out of which is the end and aim of the negotiations. For the rest, Bethmann-Hollweg finally, on the 29th of January, 1917, informed Wilson of the conditions of peace.¹ By doing this, he himself finally recognized the expediency of giving such information.² But already at the time of answering the telegram of the 29th of December, 1916, which had arrived on January 3, 1917, Bethmann-Hollweg gives evidence of vacillation. The records contain the draft of a telegram to Count Bernstorff written by the Chancellor himself on January 4, 1917, giving him the power to communicate to House and Wilson, under the conditions of the most absolute discretion and in limited and literal outline, the main points of our peace conditions. This instruction was not sent. It was supplanted by Zimmermann's message of January 7, 1917, already referred to, according to which here, too, at the instance of the Supreme High Command and at the eleventh hour, the pledge with regard to the provisional restoration of Belgium to which we have referred above was stricken out.

If the German answer of the 7th of January, 1917, avoided the issue of the American endeavors, these tactics do not, in the last analysis, hark back to considerations of expediency of a general order, but to the decision regarding the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat warfare which was imminent. On the 8th of January, 1917, the military leaders had met in council with Hindenburg and had determined unanimously upon the unconditional carrying-out of the unrestricted U-boat warfare. It had been decided that in case the Chancellor would not cooperate, a change of chancellors would be undertaken. On the 9th of January, in Pless, the final determination was formally taken to begin the unrestricted U-boat warfare on the 1st of February. All those who took part saw perfectly clearly that the result of this determination would be war with the United States. "It must be. We are counting on the possibility of war with America and have made all preparations to meet it," are the words of Hindenburg, and he adds: "We are prepared to meet all emergencies." From his point of view, the chief factor to be observed was that the unconditional U-boat warfare should not constitute an operation which "weakens us at any other spot," speaking from the military standpoint. The Chancellor offered no opposition to the resolution reached. Not another word was spent in discussing Wilson's peace move or the fact that it was still in contemplation.³

¹ 72, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 1048.

² The draft of Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer, the recording secretary, stated at this point: "That the communication of this information was without result, is attributable to the fact that it occurred simultaneously with the announcement of the unrestricted U-boat war."

³ 212, 213, Supplements, pt. VII, *post*, pp. 1317, 1320.

VI. THE RESULT

For all practical purposes, Wilson's peace move was destroyed by the adoption of the resolution of January 9, 1917, with regard to the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat warfare. Although the wish had heretofore been entertained to reach peace through a peace move on the part of Wilson, from now on the *casus belli* with America was furnished. This interpretation is voiced by the Emperor's assertion reported on the 16th of January, 1917, that he placed no reliance upon Wilson's peace move, and that in case the break with America was unavoidable, "matters can not be changed; we shall go ahead."¹

Under these conditions, it was practically impossible that any attempt could be made to meet the further step which Wilson in his message to the Senate of the 22d of January once more undertook in connection with the peace question.² For this newest attempt for peace on the part of Wilson was also substantially made impossible by the draft of the note of the 31st of January.³

Helfferich, in particular, has asserted in the course of the hearings that the reasons which led to this action with regard to Wilson's message to the Senate must be found in the waning confidence in Wilson's honorable intention to bring about peace and in the contents of the message itself which, he says, were utterly unacceptable to Germany.

As regards Wilson's peace intentions and our confidence in him, his attitude at the Peace Conference of Versailles can give no final answer in so far as rendering a judgment with regard to his policy during the peace move is concerned. At that time, neither side had fought the war out to a decisive victory. The Entente, too, had ample cause for not placing itself in a position antagonistic to Wilson; the war spirit had not yet seized upon the American people, and the ambition to bring about a just peace founded on the spirit of reconciliation between nations was still a strong and mighty element in the United States. That Wilson himself was ridden by the fear that, if the conflict should continue, America might be drawn into the war against Germany, appears not only from the words which he addressed to the American Senate after the conclusion of peace, but was also suggested in Bernstorff's dispatch of December 21, 1916.⁴ But it is precisely this apprehension of Wilson's which is not an argument against, but for, his intention to bring about peace. For it results therefrom, and this is perfectly obvious, that Wilson did not feel himself swayed by common considerations of humanity alone to attempt to oppose the continuation of the war by means of a peace move, but from purely American interests as well. These were the interests which must have presented to his constant con-

¹ 129, Supplements, pt. III, *post*, p. 1106.

² 66, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 1043.

³ 61, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 1021.

⁴ 45, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 1004.

sideration the thought as to how he could spare the American people from participation in the war. In any event, it is a settled fact that the German Imperial Government most earnestly desired Wilson as a peace negotiator and encouraged him to undertake such a peace move; it is furthermore a settled fact that, in spite of all the arguments which Helfferich marshals against the purity of Wilson's motives with regard to peace, the Imperial Government even on the 29th of January¹ officially declared itself ready to accept Wilson's mediation for the purpose of bringing about a direct conference between the belligerents, which had been confidentially submitted to the government on the 26th of January,² and this contemporaneously with a confidential report of its own peace conditions. Helfferich believes that an outspoken and anti-German attitude is to be detected in the contents of the message to the Senate; that Wilson is to be taken as having adopted the cause of the Entente without qualification. Nothing is to be gained by engaging in an argument as to whether Wilson, in the message, actually referred to the conditions which were submitted by the Entente in their answer to him as conditions capable of discussion, or only as a debating point for the demands of the Entente as well as for the demands of Germany, for the disclosure of which he continued repeatedly to call. *In support of the latter interpretation, we may call attention to the facts referred to by Bernstorff in the course of his hearing, viz., that Lansing had brought to his attention the fact that Germany should not be altogether too moderate in her demands.*³ *Wilson, therefore, was taking into consideration the likelihood of renewed demands on the part of both sides, and*⁴ it must be admitted that in material points the message is directed very plainly against the interests of the Entente. The Entente had announced that Germany must be conquered, but the President stated the principle that a peace must be concluded without the existence of conqueror or conquered. The note of the Entente had denied that the German Empire was entitled to equal privileges in connection with negotiations concerning peace. Wilson announced that only a peace entered into between equals was capable of duration. In November, 1916, the German Chancellor had submitted an answer of an acquiescent nature in the main to a speech of Sir Edward Grey, in which the establishment of an international court and the disarmament of land forces had been demanded, but had added that he must broaden the plan in contemplation to the extent of demanding a similar disarmament of sea forces and the freedom of the seas. Wilson accepted both demands of the Chancellor. It follows that, as a matter of fact, not only were fundamental contentions of the Entente rejected in the message to the Senate, but fundamental demands on the part of Germany accepted. In his testimony, Helfferich did not enter into an

¹ 72, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, p. 1048.

² 68, 69, 73, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, pp. 1046, 1047, 1050.

³ Stenographic Minutes, 2d sess., *post*, p. 271.

⁴ Inserted by the committee in the draft of Recording Secretary Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer.

analysis of these incidental points, important though they were. He limited himself to taking as the starting-point for a basis of his interpretation Wilson's stand on the question of an independent Poland. In the process he has segregated the question from the connected whole of the negotiations with Wilson. From these transactions, taken as a whole, it is apparent that, according to communications had with Colonel House, it was not Wilson's intention to meddle with territorial questions.¹ We must also bear in mind that, although Wilson undoubtedly did place the Polish question decidedly in the foreground, he was prevailed upon so to do by historical precedents in the premises, for Germany in the November proclamation had been the first to suggest, with all possible formalities, the independence of Poland, and it is not at all impossible that it was for this very reason that Wilson took the stand that he did on the Polish question. The discussion was in all probability directed against both Germany and Russia. *It can not be concluded from the words of the message that it was Wilson's actual intention that the German Empire should be physically deprived of portions of its territory.*² *Bernstorff opposes this view, basing his opinion on his interviews with House. Gerard in his memoirs reaches the same conclusion.*³ In any event, he appears to have been interested to a most acute degree by the questions as to how foreign national communities belonging to a numerical minority can be protected by international agreements, and how countries which have no outlet to the sea can obtain it through international agreement. Be that as it may, Wilson certainly had at that time no definite program with regard to the Polish question, and it would not have been an altogether over-difficult task to clarify this question which at that time was still an apparently open one, by agreeing in the main with Wilson's message and at the same time supporting the German standpoint in no uncertain terms. The important communication of Bernstorff of the 27th of January supports this view.⁴ According to this, Wilson, on the 26th of January, before the answer to his message to the Senate had been dispatched, formally, earnestly, and in confidence, renewed his peace offer on the basis of the message and indeed without any interposition in the matter of the nationally domestic peace conditions.

This communication of the 27th of January must be taken as one of the most important incidents of Wilson's peace move, as is clear to anybody who reads the text thereof. When it was received, a certain number of U-boats had already left port under instructions to commence the unrestricted U-boat warfare. The Chancellor was informed that it was not

¹ 69, 73, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, pp. 1047, 1050.

² According to the draft of Recording Secretary Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer: "But that Wilson's expressions point unmistakably to the fact that he desired to sever a part of the German territory from the physical limits of the Empire, can by no means be inferred from the wording of the message."

³ Inserted by the committee in the draft of Recording Secretary Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer.

⁴ 69, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 1047.

technically possible to call them back into port.¹ In the light of subsequently proved facts, some doubt may be entertained as to whether this information was really correct. It is of no further significance. In the light of all that occurred, it must be presumed to be out of the question that even if the recall of the boats had been mechanically possible, the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat warfare would not have come to pass. It was absolutely determined upon, and nowhere was there any visible agency which would have had the power to recall it. Germany had definitely discarded her formerly adopted policy based upon a peace move on the part of Wilson. When in the autumn of 1918 she again turned to Wilson, America with her inexhaustible resources in men and material which she placed and could place at the disposal of the enemy without stint, had turned the tide of war against us. A plea for the guarantee of an armistice had taken the place of the attempt to set in motion, hand and hand with Wilson, a peace move which could lead to a peace of understanding. Instead of the peace without conqueror or conquered appeared the peace of Versailles.

VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The question is submitted to the investigating committee as to what opportunities existed for peace parleys with the enemy, and if such opportunities did actually exist, why they were brought to naught. The question will be answered here with special reference to Wilson's peace move. Before we proceed to individual replies to these two questions, it is proper to remark that the point from which today it is possible to approach the vital occurrences of that critical period is a broader one than that which was afforded at the time of those episodes themselves. Judgment can be rendered today under conditions of simplicity and clearness which were not available for those participating in the deeds of that prior time. Today we may stand and look back upon the whole course of events, and we see effects and counter-effects which naturally were not susceptible to the gaze of those who took part in those events. Thus it happens that the "war machine," concerning which Bethmann-Hollweg has spoken (and correctly), is no longer in operation today, although the passions of those earlier political struggles still leave a tremor behind them. This "war machine" created an atmosphere which subjected decisions to a certain given pressure which today no longer exists. And for that reason it is necessary, when we apply the standard by which judgments of past events are measured at the present time, to bear in mind the circumstances under which these great events passed into history. It will then be made clear that it can not become with us a question of a moral judgment, but merely a question of

¹ Stenographic Minutes, 4th sess., *post*, p. 350.

rendering a judgment as to how, at the present time, taking as a basis the knowledge that we have today, the decisions which were reached shall receive their political appraisal.

A. THE QUESTION OF THE POSSIBILITIES OF PEACE

When we speak of possibilities of peace, it is clear that reference is made only to such possibilities as can be considered as such from the fact that they might have been able to lead to peace negotiations. Such possibilities can only then be considered as having existed if *basic starting points* are found upon which to base a foundation for such possibilities. In this sense the question of whether or not at the critical period the possibilities of peace existed, must be answered in the affirmative. Facts are at hand which show the existence of such a possibility, to wit:

1. It was supposed, during the course of negotiations concerning a peace move on the part of Wilson, that he would undertake a move in the direction of peace only if the situation were such as to justify the conclusion that it would not be rejected by the Entente.¹ One basic point of departure which can serve as a foundation for the idea that the peace move undertaken by Wilson was not from its inception purposeless, but that it could lead to conversations dealing with peace questions with the Entente, consists therefore in the fact of the peace move itself. This idea gains strength through the insistence and pertinacity of Wilson's endeavors on behalf of peace from December, 1916, until the end of January, 1917. At that time also, as Bernstorff reports on the 27th of January, 1917, he emphatically informed the Ambassador through Colonel House that he was convinced that if Germany acquiesced in his aim, he could bring about both peace conferences, that "he hoped with reason to be able to bring about peace conferences, and, indeed, at such an early date that unnecessary bloodshed in the spring offensive could be avoided."²

2. On the 17th of December, 1916, the Pope officially communicated the fact that "he had good ground to believe that the Entente was inclined to peace negotiations if we would disclose something concerning our peace conditions; that the Entente was particularly interested in a guarantee for the restoration and complete independence of Belgium."³ This official communication of the Pope is noted above under IV.

3. As a matter of fact, we know today that at that time the Entente, particularly from a financial standpoint, according to the disclosures of the English political economist Keynes, was in an extraordinarily critical condition, and that, objectively speaking, there were at that time, as a matter of fact, only two possibilities of which the Entente could avail itself in this position: Either to draw America into the war, even at the cost of an unrestricted U-boat warfare which at the time constituted a very welcome instrument in its behalf, or, on its side also, to give very serious thought to a peace of understanding.

¹ Compare with above under III, *ante*, p. 130.
² 99, Supplements, pt. III, *post*, p. 1079.

³ 69, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 1047.

4. *It is established beyond any question of doubt that at that time a strong financial pressure was exerted by the United States upon the Entente Powers not to withdraw from the possibility of peace negotiations. The Federal Reserve Board, by its warning, following hard upon an understanding unquestionably had with Wilson, stopped the further purchase by American banks of British securities. This step constituted the severest kind of a menace for the financing of the English conduct of the war. For England could not, like Germany, meet its shortage in foodstuffs and munitions with the products of a domestic market, but was in the most unlimited sense dependent upon the foreign and particularly the North American market, where it could only pay in dollars. From the moment when the American credit no longer existed, England could not hope to get sufficient food material or war material from the United States.*¹

In the face of these four points, no decisive weight can be attributed to the note with which the Entente answered our peace proposal. *It would not be a far-fetched assumption that the Entente note was specially prepared to bring about in Germany the resolve to commence unrestricted U-boat warfare in order thereby to bring to naught Wilson's peace move and to bring America definitely over to the side of the Entente.*¹ It is easily understood that the form and contents of the note under the conditions which existed at that time, were bound to have an irritating effect upon the feeling of the German people. If today we were again to analyze its contents with a quiet mind and in connection with all prior happenings and occurrences, we would not necessarily reject the view expressed by the Emperor Karl and by Czernin, according to which the note was impertinent in tone, but would see that it did not necessarily preclude the possibility of a continuance along the line of peace.² However that may be, it is quite possible that there had never existed so favorable an opportunity for Germany to win not only the accord of the world but of the hostile States on the question of peace, as existed precisely at the moment in which the tone and contents of the Entente note appeared again to consign the thought of peace to oblivion. The excessive demands of the Entente note had had an unfavorable effect among the neutral Powers. If Germany had seized this moment for coming forward with moderate war aims and with a peace aim which the world could justify for Germany, together with an absolutely unambiguous declaration concerning the unconditional return and restoration of Belgium in the sense of the declaration of the Chancellor in the Reichstag on August 4, 1914, admitting that Belgium had suffered injury and that it must receive full compensation therefor, then, viewed from any standpoint, would the desire for peace, even in the case of hostile nations, have been strengthened in such a way as to bring a result hand in hand with a persistent and consistent carrying out of the German policy along this principle; in a word, a result which would not necessarily have constituted a diminution of Germany's

¹ Inserted in the draft of Recording Secretary Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer by the committee.

² 113, 116, Supplements, pt. III, *post*, pp. 1090, 1091.

territory, but at the same time, things being what they were at that period, could never have been such as to constitute in form what would have amounted to a sacrifice on the part of the Entente. The communication of peace conditions made in this spirit would have provided the means in such a situation to awaken or to strengthen the willingness to negotiate which had either not yet come into existence or was as yet still the object of contention. It is no mere chance that Wilson, who had been approached by Germany as peace negotiator, as well as the Pope, with whom later in the year 1917 the basic principles of a peace move were discussed, made the attempt in the same way and at the same time to prevail upon Germany to make her peace conditions known. By a lucky combination, the way to carry such a step out had been opened to Germany. Her own peace proposal had been announced. The world¹ was making inquiries concerning the conditions of peace of Germany, particularly with regard to a declaration regarding Belgium. At this stage came Wilson's attempt to have all the Powers communicate their conditions of peace. From this time on, the opportunity to have her own peace move brought to the highest pitch of efficiency was not taken advantage of by Germany.

It could not be taken advantage of because the conditions of peace which lay at the foundation of our peace offer and which have become known to us through the documents which have been published were such that they, like the peace conditions of the Entente, could only be carried out after a complete overthrow of the enemy.² In particular it is to be observed that no reference was made to a free restitution of Belgium in the sense of the earlier declaration of the Chancellor. On the contrary, certain definite guarantees were claimed on behalf of Germany, and in the absence of the fulfilment of these guarantees an annexation of Liège with corresponding strips of territory was demanded. It is true that Bethmann-Hollweg considered these peace conditions as constituting the maximum which would be demanded and which would be subject to change in the proposed peace negotiations. But with regard to the nature of the peace conditions, taken as a whole, there was in no sense unanimity. Hindenburg opposed the standpoint of the Chancellor and demanded an exact statement of the minimum territorial demands upon which Bethmann-Hollweg must insist, in view of the then existing war situation, and under all circumstances, even at the price of the possibility of the continuance of the war.³ And what the Emperor thought about it all is to be deduced from the telegram of Counselor of Legation v. Grünau to the Foreign Office on the 2d of January, 1917, according to which the Emperor stated, after being informed of the note of rejection of the Entente, that he, on his part also, was obliged to

¹ According to the draft of Recording Secretary Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer there appeared here: "was struck by this peace proposal in its peace sentiment and."

² 78-85, Supplements, pt. II, *post*, pp. 1059-1068.

³ 118, Supplements, pt. III, *post*, p. 1095.

modify our war aims; there could be no further question of any concessions to France and Belgium; King Albert was not to be allowed to return to Belgium; the coast of Flanders must come under our dominion.¹

With this set-back, any attempt to take further advantage of any supposed possibility of peace was out of the question.

B. THE INQUIRY AS TO CAUSES

If we seek to inquire into the causes of Germany's failure to take advantage of the situation brought about by the Wilson move, in order to reach a peace of understanding, the only answer that can be given, based on the material made available by official documents and hearings, is that the desire to end the war through a victory brought about by an unrestricted U-boat war eliminated the possibility of peace so far as Germany was concerned.

This desire made it impossible to bring about an intimate connection between the individual peace move and Wilson's peace note of the 21st of December, 1916, through continuing along the line marked out by the individual peace measure in a concrete and definite way. This desire was the element which put into execution the order to commence the unrestricted U-boat warfare, which made any further steps along the path of peace perfectly useless at this time. And this desire made it impossible for the formal acceptance of Wilson's peace mediation of the 27th of January, 1917, to have any timely effect.

The fundamental cause of this intention was the belief in the absolutely certain and quick success of the U-boat warfare. This intention obtained its strongest impetus *from the heartfelt wish of a people engaged in a most desperate conflict to end the war by an early victory, and from the view which, in particular, was consistently announced by the Supreme High Command that the enemy likewise was opposed to a peace of understanding.*² It was the duty of those who were conducting the Empire's affairs and of those who counseled them to determine exactly whether or not the adoption of the unrestricted use of the U-boat weapon was really the suitable means for bringing about this victory. The political branch, and particularly Helfferich, whose duty it was to pass upon the commercial side of the question, were of the opinion that this question was to be answered in the negative. The argument in support of the memorial of the Chief of the Admiralty Staff of the Navy on December 22, 1916,³ and the position taken in agreement therewith by the Supreme High Command, were victorious on this point. The result which was prophesied in the course of these arguments "that . . . in

¹ 115, Supplements, pt. III, *post*, p. 1091.

² Inserted by the committee in the draft of Recording Secretary Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer.

³ Supplements, pt. V, p. 1214.

case ruthless U-boat warfare is carried on, England will be forced to sue for peace within five months"¹ and even, as the Navy in particular asserted, by August, 1917, at the latest, did not follow, severe though the losses inflicted upon the enemy by the U-boat war were. The mistake was based upon erroneous estimates. The following points are material in this connection:

1. The assumptions, from the commercial aspect, of a successful U-boat warfare were erroneously entertained, and especially was the commercial assistance on the part of America underestimated.
2. The terrifying effect upon neutral shipping did not reach the extent that it had been assumed would be reached.
3. Sufficient weight was not given to the effect of measures of a military and technical kind which were taken against the carrying on of an unrestricted U-boat warfare.
4. The military resources of the United States as an ally were fundamentally underestimated.
5. The military participation of America in the war in the shape of extensive troop transportation was hardly taken into consideration on account of the belief that the U-boats would be able to stop these transports even if transportation were attempted.
6. The question as to how far the military and commercial equipment of Germany would continue to be sufficient was limited to a consideration of the immediate future, but was not examined from the standpoint that peace might not have been obtained in the summer of 1917, and that, through the entrance of the United States into the war, it could be dragged out for a considerable length of time, and the issues thereof become more acute.

All these errors of judgment must be designated as mistakes of the most fatal kind. The effect of these errors is felt all the more heavily because the preparation of the opinion above referred to was not entered into with the care which was necessarily imposed by the tremendous importance of the question; nor was the proper preparation made to instruct public opinion along these lines with the necessary definiteness. The work of scientific authorities of the first order would have been required to satisfy the purposes of a fully comprehensive opinion, as well as the statements of experts of the very highest type. As a matter of fact, the opinion was made up and worked out by a Heidelberg professor who, by no means, could be considered as an authority of particularly high standing with regard to any question of world commerce or politics, together with several unknown cooperators of inconsiderable reputation. The experts who were heard are mentioned in the report itself. In no event were they leading authorities in the matters of commercial or political relations which were in question. Experts in matters which were of a peculiarly material nature, such, for instance, as the shipping trade, were not called upon to testify at all. The

¹ 190, Supplements, pt. v, *post*, p. 1216.

individuals who were heard were for the most part recognized champions of the policy of unrestricted U-boat warfare. It is to be regretted that steps were not taken which would have made it impossible for this memorial, with its scientific make-up, to have thrust itself into the public view and to constitute even for the purposes of parliamentary debate the only source of information available. No care was taken to see to it that the opinions which expressed an opposite view were likewise and at the same time brought to the knowledge of the Reichstag. In particular, attention may be called to the fact that the important reports of Albert and Haniel¹ which, on account of the intimate knowledge possessed by their authors of American relations, contained the most detailed and earnest warning against the inception of the U-boat warfare, were not known outside of a small governmental circle. *It was, further, not known that Major v. Papen, the military attaché in the United States of America—as he has stated in his testimony of the 16th of April, 1920—addressed in the capacity of military expert the following words of warning against the commencement of an unrestricted U-boat warfare to the then Chief of the General Staff, General v. Falkenhayn: “If you do not succeed in keeping the United States from joining the coalition of our enemies, you will lose the war; on this point there can be absolutely no doubt.”*² *On the contrary, the head of the Department of Information of the Supreme High Command, Major Nicolai, prevented Major v. Papen from making an explanatory statement to the press with regard to the erroneous estimate regarding the amount of material resources of the United States, in accordance with the desire of the then Secretary of State v. Jagow.*³

It was possible for the belief in the unquestioned success of the unrestricted U-boat warfare to become current because the political branch refrained from exercising further opposition against it. This occurred in the critical period. Bethmann makes particular reference to the extraordinary difficulties of such an opposition. But it is not clear that on account of these difficulties the opposition in question had to be or should have been given up. Bethmann and Helfferich called particular attention to the attitude of the Reichstag. As a matter of fact, no majority existed at the critical period in favor of the peace of understanding,⁴ *and on the 7th of October, 1916, a resolution was passed according to the terms of which the Imperial Chancellor was to base his attitude with regard to the U-boat question on the conclusion reached by the Supreme High Command. By this means the decision was, as a practical proposition, placed in the hands of the military authorities, inasmuch as the resolution further declares that in case the decision to be rendered should*

¹ 172, 173, Supplements, pt. IV, *post*, pp. 1183, 1186.

² 211, Supplements, pt. VI, *post*, p. 1307.

³ Inserted by the committee in the draft of Recording Secretary Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer.

⁴ In the draft of Recording Secretary Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer there appeared at this point the following: “A resolution had been adopted whereby to all intents and purposes the decision as to the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat warfare had been handed over to the military authorities.”

*be in favor of the unrestricted U-boat warfare, the Imperial Chancellor might be perfectly sure that the Reichstag would agree with this conclusion.*¹ Nothing more is to be added to the severe words of the two statesmen with regard to this attitude of the then majority of the Reichstag. At the same time, in passing judgment on these events, it must be borne in mind that the Reichstag had not been informed with regard to the true situation to such an extent or in such measure as was necessary, if we are going to hold the decisions of the Reichstag responsible for our national policy. The Reichstag had no knowledge about the military situation of our land forces, as, according to III,² it was represented in the opinions of the military authorities at that time. It had no knowledge of the momentous reports which had been filed with the authorities with regard to the resources of the United States and the prospects of an unrestricted U-boat warfare. And before all, the Reichstag was absolutely without any knowledge that we had incited the Wilson peace move, and it was ignorant of the reasons which had led up thereto. This raises the question as to whether or not, even in the winter of 1916 and 1917, a majority in favor of a peace of understanding would have been found in the Reichstag if Bethmann-Hollweg and Helfferich in the Reichstag had refused to accept the responsibility for further directing the governmental policy and had submitted the question to the Reichstag either to resolve to support Bethmann-Hollweg along the path leading to a peace of understanding or to oppose him and take the road which led to war with the United States.

So far as can be ascertained, the political branch offered no opposition when the fatal decision was made after submission of the question to the Supreme High Command with regard to the commencing of unrestricted U-boat warfare. At this juncture, there was both inducement and opportunity to fight the point. The fight was not taken up. It is probable that Bethmann considered that it would be useless from the very start. The underlying reason as to why no opposition was offered is probably, however, a deeper one. When we think of the way in which the peace conditions which were really to be at the bottom of the peace proposal were drawn up, and particularly when we realize that the political branch made no earnest endeavors to leave the Belgian question outside of the discussion, so far as can be ascertained by documentary evidence and from the hearings, we find ourselves obliged to admit that the political branch does not appear to have been actuated by a real desire to set up an opposition which should have been maintained to the last. The inner consciousness of a definite political object constantly borne in mind and not to be lost to view during the varying fortunes of war, which measured up to the standard of Germany's strength and could stand as her justification, did not exist. The

¹ Inserted by the committee in the draft of Recording Secretary Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer.

² *Ante*, pp. 130 *et seq.*—EDITOR.

political leadership was not only hemmed in between the juxtaposition of certain existing necessities through the dualism created by the military attitude and political insight—not only was a supreme authority lacking which by a determined unity of purpose and a steadily consistent course on the part of the State could and would overcome this dualism; but the political leadership was above all not secure, *not at one with itself*¹ and not ready to render a final decision. *The historical guilt of the political branch lies in this, that in the greatest and the most fateful question which has come upon Germany, its representatives allowed that which they were assured was injurious for the country to occur. At the same time, the Supreme High Command and the Admiralty Staff, both of whom continuously urged the commencement of an unrestricted U-boat warfare, can not escape blame. With full knowledge of Wilson's peace move which was still a possibility, and in the certain consciousness that the commencement of an unrestricted U-boat warfare would inevitably be followed by war with America, they "played their hand," concerning which Helfferich said: "If it is not trumps, Germany is lost for centuries."*¹

VIII. CONCLUSION

Herewith we present the conclusion, briefly stated as follows:

1. In the general situation which was brought about by the peace move of Wilson in the winter of 1916–17, certain conditions existed which made it possible to reach the point of peace parleys. The Imperial Government did not avail itself of these possibilities.

2. The reasons why the above-named opportunities were not taken advantage of are to be found in the resolution regarding the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat warfare of January 9, 1917.²

SINZHEIMER, *Reporter*
SCHÜCKING

GOTHEIN
DR. OSCAR COHN
SCHULTZ-BROMBERG³

ANTONIE PFÜLF
MAXEN

BERLIN, *June 18, 1920.*

¹ Inserted by the committee in the draft of Recording Secretary Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer.

² In the draft of Recording Secretary Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer, there follows at this point: "and in the events leading up to it."

³ With the following reservation:

I protest against the certification of the report made by the majority of the investigating committee, since it does not represent the facts objectively nor does it limit itself to the reproduction of facts, but confuses a one-sided and arbitrarily grouped selection of facts with individual judgments.

I reserve the right, after the completed report and the opinions of the experts, which today are not yet available, have been entered, to submit a minority report to the records of the Commission.

MINORITY REPORT OF DELEGATE SCHULTZ-
BROMBERG WITH REGARD TO WILSON'S
PEACE MOVE OF 1916-1917

On the occasion of the session of the subcommittee of the 18th instant, I handed in the following statement in the nature of a protocol directed against the report completed by the majority of the Second Subcommittee of the parliamentary Committee of Inquiry with regard to the facts relative to its investigations in the matter of Wilson's peace move and the opening of the unrestricted U-boat warfare: I protest against the certification of the report made by the majority of the investigating committee, since it does not represent the facts objectively nor does it limit itself to the reproduction of facts, but confuses a one-sided and arbitrarily grouped selection of facts with individual judgments. I reserve the right, after the completed report and the opinions of the experts, which today are not yet available, have been entered, to submit a minority report to the records of the commission.

In view of the time which remains at my disposal for the purpose of submitting the present separate report, I am obliged to limit myself to calling particular attention only to the most important points with regard to which it appears to me to be proper either to supplement the majority report or to submit a differing opinion.

In the first place, I hold that it is my duty to protest against the methods as a whole used in the construction of the majority report. The requirements applicable to the report of a parliamentary investigating committee demand, first of all, an ordered arrangement of the actual results of the investigation; it must be made perfectly plain as to what facts have been determined beyond any question and what facts still remain matters of doubt. It is the province of such a report to hold itself free from purely personal conclusions. To the extent that conclusions are drawn and judgments rendered on the basis of the facts submitted, they must be made to appear as such, in sharp contrast to the establishment of the facts themselves, and they are to be brought about in such a way as to make it perfectly plain that the question at issue is not the establishment of facts, but the drawing of conclusions and the rendering of opinions. The majority report pays no attention to these elementary principles. The facts which have been established through the investigating committee are almost without exception taken into consideration to the extent only to which they fit in with the conclusions and judgments of the majority of the committee, which for the most part were fixed before the investigation by the committee.

The establishment of facts is confused with conclusions of judgment to support which no substantial evidence has been submitted, and, I may add, which in part at least have not even been made the object of interrogation for the purpose of taking evidence. Finally, conclusions and judgments of a most subjective kind have been continually interwoven in the actual representations made by the report, without its being made apparent in a manner sufficiently clear that the question involved is one of subjective conclusions and judgments. The task of the investigating committee to bring about an *unbiased* clarification of past events can not be fulfilled when the methods adopted here are used. With regard to the subject matter itself, I have to make the following statements by way of supplementing and correcting the majority report.

I. THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT AND WILSON WITH REGARD TO A PEACE MOVE TO BE MADE BY THE LATTER

The majority report begins with the proposition that the "peace move of Wilson was instigated and desired by us." It also asserts that agreement had been reached between Berlin and Washington with regard to the form of the peace move as well; that the Imperial Government had clung to the thought of Wilson's peace move and had constantly worked upon Wilson in this regard. This "point of departure," as the memorial of the majority calls it, is based upon a one-sided and incomplete representation of the facts which have been established in the course of the investigations made by the committee.

In the first place, Wilson's peace move was by no means instigated and wished for by us one-sidedly. It was made perfectly plain by the statements of witnesses and particularly from statements of Count Bernstorff, as well as from public documents, that quite apart from and independent of any inducements on our part suggested to President Wilson, he entertained the wish at a comparatively early stage of the war to play the rôle of peacemaker.

Even at the commencement of the year 1916, this was made perfectly clear by the presence of Colonel House in Berlin. The documents which were submitted to the committee dealing with diplomatic relations between Berlin and Washington begin significantly with the telegram of Count Bernstorff to the Foreign Office on the 11th of April, 1916, which is to the effect that, according to a communication of Colonel House, President Wilson, on the assumption that the case of the *Sussex* would be satisfactorily settled, might bring about peace "in a few months," whereupon Secretary of State v. Jagow answered that this wish of the President was wholly at one with Germany's desires in the matter.¹

¹ I, 2, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 971.

In the second place, it is not correct to say that "an agreement had been reached between Berlin and Washington with regard to the form of the peace move." The agreement was, as the actual course of events shows, merely apparent and deceptive. The German point of view on the question touching a peace move on the part of Wilson was from the outset announced in the clearest terms. As early as the beginning of May, 1916, the Imperial Chancellor himself was prevailed upon, in a telegram to Count Bernstorff, in response to a telegram of Ambassador Gerard, to take the position, communicated by Gerard to Washington, that we were ready to accept a "peace mediation" on the part of Wilson. Bethmann-Hollweg qualified this communication to the extent that Wilson could only be tolerated by us in the light of an "unbiased peace proposer." In the further course of the exchange of telegrams with Count Bernstorff, weight continued to be laid with increasing emphasis on the point that the activity of Wilson must be limited to "*bringing about* peace negotiations between the belligerents"; that otherwise a participation by America and the remaining neutral Powers in these peace negotiations would not be in accordance with our wishes, and that, preferably, such participation by the neutral Powers would be acceptable, if need be, only in the case of a "general peace conference following in the wake of peace negotiations conducted by the belligerents and not devoid of results." The subjects of this "general peace conference" are designated as "general questions of international law and questions arising between nation and nation and those involving the freedom of the seas and disarmament." It is true that Count Bernstorff repeatedly reports that so far as he knows it is not the desire of Mr. Wilson "to intervene in any way in territorial questions, but on the other hand to limit his interests to the question of disarmament and freedom of the seas," and that the United States and the other neutral Powers should only take such part in the contemplated conference at The Hague as was called for by a consideration of both questions above mentioned. But in referring to these communications of Count Bernstorff the majority report should not have refrained from pointing out that President Wilson, from the very moment that he made an actual start along the path of peace, proceeded differently from what might have been expected from his communications to Count Bernstorff. If it is true that in the note of the 21st of December, 1916, Wilson took the official stand that he did not wish to prescribe the manner to be adopted and the course to be pursued by the methods employed for bringing about a comparison of the conditions of peace—that, on the contrary, any method at all was the right method for him if he could only attain the great goal,—it is a fact that at the same time he had Count Bernstorff informed confidentially of his wish to serve as a clearing house for the peace conditions. In so doing, Wilson forsook at the first opportunity for real action the course concerning which, according to the majority report, there existed "complete

understanding between Berlin and Washington," and sought for himself the opportunity to meddle in the affairs of the belligerents with regard to their individual peace conditions—an opportunity which had up to that time been constantly refused him by Berlin. Not the least important is the absence of agreement between Berlin and Washington touching the form of the peace move—the opinion of the majority report to the contrary notwithstanding—as a cause for the development of a situation which was bound to result in rendering still more doubtful the chances for such a peace move, already sufficiently slim even without this complication. How this absence of agreement with regard to Wilson's rôle in the peace question came to be an established fact at the critical moment, in spite of Bernstorff's reports asserting complete agreement on the part of Wilson with our views in the matter, remains unexplained.

Absolutely one-sided and incomplete is, finally, the statement of the majority report to the effect that the German Government, before taking its own step toward peace, unqualifiedly and in a manner bespeaking no limitations "clung to the thought of a peace move by Wilson and constantly endeavored to influence him toward this end." Why, the version of the majority report is such as to impress the ingenuous reader with the thought that not even the attention of the German Ambassador in Washington had in any way been called to certain premises of Wilson's peace move and to the possibility of a peace move on the part of the Central Powers.

The following is to be stated in answer to the above:

Wilson, who in the first part of April, 1916, had caused Count Bernstorff to be informed that he expected "to bring about peace in a few months," proceeded, after the settlement of the *Sussex* case, in a dilatory way with regard to the peace question. Count Bernstorff even went as far as to telegraph to the Foreign Office on June 22, 1916, that it was *certain* that Wilson's peace move was to be expected in the course of the summer;¹ why, even in a report to the Imperial Chancellor of the 13th of July, 1916, he announced his conviction that the President "will make an appeal for peace in the course of a few weeks" in case by that time the uselessness of the offensive on the part of our enemies had been demonstrated.² But President Wilson did nothing.

When the Imperial Chancellor again took up the question of Wilson's peace move in his telegram to Count Bernstorff of the 2d of September, 1916,³ he called the latter's attention particularly to the following: "Otherwise the unrestricted U-boat war will have to be carried on in dead earnest." In view of the fact that Count Bernstorff replied that as the result of the Roumanian participation, action on the part of Wilson would be without effect; and that he, Bernstorff, was of the opinion that if Wilson were

¹ 12, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, p. 979.

³ 16, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, p. 983.

² 13, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, p. 979.

reelected, his mediation was "very likely to occur before the end of the year,"¹ the Imperial Chancellor answered him with the following frank statement:² In view of the necessity of being forced to reckon on the war lasting longer than had been expected, the Navy expects quick success as the result of an unrestricted U-boat warfare; that the Supreme High Command must consider unrestricted U-boat warfare in connection with its own measures; that this situation was subject to change if Wilson would make his peace advances; "that some action of this kind must, however, occur before long"; for a long-drawn-out continuance of the war would be injurious to the military situation of Germany.

Thus, when the peace question was again taken up, Count Bernstorff had his attention immediately called to the fact that a peace move on the part of Wilson would have to follow shortly if there was going to be any purpose in making it at all. In his telegram to Count Bernstorff of the 25th of September, the Imperial Chancellor even went as far as to assert emphatically that *if Mr. Wilson desired to wait until shortly before or after his election, he would scarcely be left any further opportunity for taking such a step.*

So Count Bernstorff was informed that the political branch attributed only a problematical significance to any action toward peace on the part of Wilson which should not be undertaken until after his reelection. To what extent he made use of his knowledge of this attitude on the part of the Imperial Administration in connection with Wilson and his confidential agents, is a matter which has not been cleared up by the hearings before the committee.

Even after Wilson had been reelected as President on November 7, 1916, there came no news from Washington that he had made up his mind to go ahead at this time. On November 16, Secretary of State v. Jagow telegraphed Count Bernstorff as follows:³

Kindly ascertain whether the President is going to take steps in the matter of peace mediation, and, if he is, what steps and when. Question important for decision regarding other possible steps in the same direction.

This telegram, which announced the possibility of individual action independent of any action on the part of Wilson in case of a further delay of his contemplated move, was sent almost four weeks before the peace move of the Central Powers. It was followed on the 22d of November, three weeks before the peace move of the Central Powers, by the communication that we intended, in so far as the military situation should permit it, to announce with our allies in the near future a willingness on our part to enter upon peace negotiations.⁴

These facts are of such a nature as to present the "points of departure"

¹ 17, 18, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, pp. 983, 984.

² 19, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, p. 984.

³ 28, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, p. 991.

⁴ 30, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, p. 992.

established by the majority report in a substantially different light. In looking back not only upon the peace move of the Central Powers, but also upon the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat warfare, it makes a very decided difference whether the German Government kept urging upon Wilson the necessity of a peace move utterly unreservedly and without limitation—as it would seem to have done according to the representations made by the majority report—or whether the administration (as was actually the case) continued to assert with ever-increasing emphasis since September, 1916, that only such a move as should be quickly undertaken would be of any value to us; that otherwise the unrestricted U-boat warfare would become a necessity or that a peace move independent of and distinct from Wilson would have to be considered. However, all the facts which go to construct this picture of past events, which alone is the correct one are simply discarded in the majority report.

II. REGARDING THE PEACE PROPOSAL OF THE CENTRAL POWERS OF DECEMBER 12, 1916

The majority report seeks to create the impression that at the beginning of December, 1916, shortly before the Central Powers^s came forward with their peace proposal, action on the part of Wilson was an assured fact and unqualifiedly imminent. In supposed support of this contention, passages are quoted from Bernstorff's reports to the effect that, in any event, soon, and presumably by the New Year, Wilson would take steps, or that "everything is ready for the peace move."¹ While it is true that the majority report is unable simply to ignore the cautious announcement of Count Bernstorff that in view of Wilson's character "it is always a matter of doubt as to when he will come out with his move," it endeavors to destroy by other assertions the effect of these reservations which, as a matter of fact, plunged everything back again into a state of uncertainty.

With this purpose in mind, the majority report, with no qualifications whatsoever, sets up a communication of the American chargé d'affaires to the Imperial Chancellor of December 5, 1916, to the effect that the President was working out an early energetic move for the purpose of bringing about a rapid conclusion of peace, and to this end requests the cooperation of the German Government.

Thus, continues the majority report, according to the dispatches of Count Bernstorff, Wilson was willing to initiate a peace move only if there was reason to expect that it would be acceptable to the members of the Entente; that Wilson's hesitation in coming forward was to be explained by the fact that Wilson, according to Count Bernstorff, had first come into touch with the Entente. And to this assumption of Count Bernstorff the

¹ Telegram of December 4, 1916.

majority report adds the further assumption: "Therein lay precisely the great significance of Wilson's proposed move. If it were to take place, it could certainly be assumed that he had been in touch with the Entente or, at any rate, that his action was the outcome of a reasonable hope that it would meet with a favorable reception."

Such assumptions have no place in a document purporting to be a report on the facts and, most emphatically, have no place when facts are at hand which stand in sharpest contrast with these assumptions.

An example of such a fact suppressed in the majority report, is the dispatch of the German Ambassador in Copenhagen, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau to the Foreign Office, of December 19, 1916, concerning his conversation with American Ambassador Gerard who had just returned from America.¹ According to this report, Mr. Gerard spoke as follows: "The feeling of the Entente Powers was unqualifiedly against a peace and that the war spirit in France was most bitter; that Ambassador Jusserand was incessantly beseeching President Wilson not to undertake any peace mediation and simply give the Allies time to drag Germany down; that Mr. Wilson could not expose himself to a slap in the face from the Allies." Since Mr. Gerard had left New York on the 4th of December and unquestionably had been received by President Wilson before sailing, it follows from these assertions of Mr. Gerard to Count Brockdorff-Rantzau which, moreover, are in full accord with Gerard's statements in his book, *My Four Years in Germany*, that in any event even in the first days of December, Wilson was far from adopting the resolution to finally come out with his peace move and that there could be no talk of the possibility of a favorable reception by the Entente of a peace move emanating from him.

The Imperial Chancellor proceeded, therefore, upon the supposition which doubtless hit the mark, that he might be placed in the position of waiting indefinitely for Wilson to make a peace move. (For the rest, one is justified in entertaining considerable doubt with regard to the efficacy of any peace move on the part of the Central Powers.) If we may venture to substitute another assumption for the assumption of the majority report, which it is so impossible to bring into harmony with existing facts, there seems better ground for the assumption announced in the book *America as an Enemy* by Professor Dr. Bonn, who was summoned before the investigating committee in the capacity of an expert, to the effect that it was the peace proposal of the Central Powers that "spurred the President to quick action."

The majority report passes over with the most complete silence the reasons which Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg and his coworkers on the occasion of their examination by the investigating committee referred to as of controlling and compelling weight in connection with the selection of the moment by the Central Powers for making their peace proposal, and

¹ 103, Supplements, pt. III, *post*, p. 1081.

particularly the opinion that the fortunate ending of the Roumanian campaign, which was then imminent, constituted a most favorable moment for presenting a peace proposal, and one which might not be expected to repeat itself in the near future. In the place of these reasons which, according to the statements of the participants made under oath, were controlling, the majority report attempts to substitute and place in the foreground an entirely different point of view; that "the political branch in particular had to determine the question of how the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat warfare, which was being urged by military circles, could be avoided by bringing about peace negotiations." In any event, it can not be doubted that the Administration had long been plainly convinced of the fact that the unrestricted U-boat warfare would have to become a military necessity in case of a further duration of the war. The Administration had informed Count Bernstorff to this effect continuously from the beginning of September, 1916, on. There is no occasion, however, basing one's contention on assertions which tend to move in this direction, to argue that the administration did not make its peace move for the sake of peace but for the purpose of preventing the unrestricted U-boat warfare which was desired by military circles. The Emperor's personally written message to the Chancellor of October 31, 1916, speaks against such an interpretation, which, material as it is for the purpose of determining the reasons which brought about the peace proposal of the Central Powers, has been suppressed by the majority report and for that reason is reproduced here.

The proposal to bring about peace is an act of morality which is necessary in order to relieve the world and also the neutral Powers from the weight which burdens all. For the performance of such an act there is needed a ruler who has a conscience and who feels himself responsible to God, and has a heart for his own people and for enemy peoples and who, untroubled by possible purposeful misrepresentations regarding his step in this direction, has the will to relieve the world of its sorrows. I have the courage to do it; I will risk it in the name of God.

III. WILSON'S PEACE NOTE OF DECEMBER 21, 1916

The majority report attempts to make the peace move which President Wilson initiated with his note of the 21st of December appear in harmony with the wishes expressed by the German Government to the President himself. This attempt could admittedly be reconciled, so far as the bare wording of Wilson's note is concerned. The note requested a disclosure of the war aims of both parties to the controversy, whereas the Administration had up to this time, through the communications of Count Bernstorff to the United States, steadfastly refused a definite statement with regard to specific war aims before taking up the question of individual peace negotia-

tions. But since Wilson's note was emphatic in leaving open the method in which the disclosure of war aims was to be made, the German Government was in a position, without receding from its stand previously maintained with regard to the disclosure of war aims, to pave the way for an immediate convention of delegates from the belligerent States at some neutral point for the purpose of bringing about a full and free exchange of opinion. This result was, as a matter of fact, brought about in the note of response of the German Government of December 26, 1916.

If the majority report takes the stand that "Wilson's peace move was in keeping with the demands which we ourselves had made," then the criticism in that report of the German note of response was unjustified, for this response merely held fast to the program which was set up by the German Government at the start, and which, according to the reports of Count Bernstorff, had likewise received the acquiescence of President Wilson, to wit: Wilson limits himself to the act of inducing the belligerents to appear at the conference table without himself in any manner taking part in the negotiations concerning fixed peace conditions; that his participation would commence only at the general conference concerning questions of international law and particularly questions concerning disarmament and the freedom of the seas, which conference would take place after an agreement was reached with regard to the conditions of peace.

As a matter of fact, according to Count Bernstorff's dispatches, Wilson by his peace move was reaching for something more than that which had been agreed upon between the former and Wilson's confidential agent. He was desirous, as above pointed out, of acting as a "clearing house" for the peace conditions. This was merely another way of describing that which, from the very beginning, the German Government had refused, to wit, *peace mediation in the true sense of the term*.

If the German Government even now, when the question became a practical one, was making efforts to "eliminate" this peace mediation of Wilson's which it had avoided—and certainly on good grounds,—this did not constitute, as the majority report asserts, an opposition to the policy hitherto maintained by the Chancellor, but only an adherence to this policy. This must be taken as settled regardless of one's opinion as to the expediency of such adherence. So there is no real cause to seek mysterious reasons for the altered attitude of the Imperial Government, and to find it to consist in this, that "in the meantime the movement which demanded the commencement of an unrestricted U-boat warfare for the purpose of bringing about a termination of the war by a military victory had become dominant." The resolution with regard to the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat warfare was first reached on the 9th of January, 1917, two weeks after the response to Wilson's peace note; even on January 8, in the great General Headquarters, everybody was entirely in the dark as to whether the Chan-

celor would agree or not, as the minutes of the session held on that date in the Headquarters of General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg show.¹ It is therefore an absolute error to state that the answer to the Wilson note which was already sent on the 26th of December, 1916, could have been influenced by the supposed predominance of the movement for unrestricted U-boat warfare.

IV. ANSWERS OF THE ENTENTE TO THE PEACE MOVES OF THE CENTRAL POWERS AND WILSON

The notes of response by means of which the Entente answered the peace proposal of the Central Powers on the 30th of December, 1916, and Wilson's peace move on the 10th of January, 1917, are to be classed as among the most important documents of that period. It is worthy of note that in the majority report which deals with the opportunity for peace which existed at that time these two documents are scarcely accorded a single reference as documents which characterize the total absence of any and every desire for peace on the part of the Entente.

The comment made by the majority report with regard to the note of response of the Entente Powers to the Central Powers which rejected our peace proposal as a "proposal devoid of sincerity and meaning" and accompanied its rejection with scorn and derision, is to the effect that no particular weight is to be accorded this note. The truth is that this report, instead of concerning itself with the establishment of the actual contents of this note and with the analysis of the reception with which it met even in admittedly pacifist circles in Germany at that time, plunges at once into the assumption that the Entente note was drawn up with the precise purpose of bringing about in Germany the determination to commence an unrestricted U-boat warfare for the purpose of driving America over on the side of our enemies and in order to set at rest once and for all the possibility of any peace move on the part of Wilson.

It is only quite incidentally and in the course of a polemic with Helfferich regarding his interpretation of Wilson's message to the Senate on January 22, 1917, that the majority report refers to the answer of the Entente Powers to Wilson's peace note delivered on January 10, 1917, the effect of which was to destroy conclusively any remnant of illusions which we might still entertain with regard to the readiness of our enemies for peace. It is for this very reason that this minority report calls attention to the fact that in its answer to Wilson the Entente not only cast all responsibility for the outbreak of the war and for all the excesses which marked its conduct upon the Central Powers, but that it refused to concede that the Central Powers had the right to negotiate upon an equal footing, declared it absolutely impos-

¹ 212, Supplements, pt. VII, *post*, p. 1317.

sible to bring about the peace desired by it at that time, and finally announced the existence of war aims which were mere forerunners of the peace of Versailles. There is no other document which to a greater extent than this note of response shows the absence of any willingness for peace. If, in spite of all this, the majority report reaches the conclusion that "in the general situation which was brought about by the peace move of Wilson in the winter of 1916-17, certain conditions existed which made it possible to reach the point of peace parleys, and that these opportunities were not taken advantage of by the Administration," we must assume that the committee has brought to light good grounds for supposing that Wilson was resolutely determined to crush the war spirit which was expressed in the note of response of the Entente.

The view that it was only through such action on Wilson's part that an opportunity for peace could have been brought about was put forward by neutral statesmen of note, and at that time when matters generally were in a state of uncertainty. Reports with regard to this were at the disposition of the committee, which, however, could not be permitted to be made public, in the interests of the statesmen of the neutral countries before referred to. In view of the fact that the majority report refers to these reports which can not be made public, it may not be improper to state at this point that, according to the dispatches of one of our diplomatic representatives, a neutral statesman of standing expressed the following opinion: That if President Wilson had really been in earnest in connection with his peace proposal he should have given the Allies to understand in no uncertain terms that their answer made the further prosecution of the war absolutely unavoidable.

V. WILSON'S MESSAGE TO THE SENATE OF JANUARY 22, 1917

Instead of rejecting the note of response of the Entente in such a way as to call but for one interpretation, Wilson issued his message to the Senate of the 22d of January, 1917. The majority memorial attempts by dint of long drawn argumentation to belittle the effect of the evidence, particularly that submitted by Helfferich in his testimony before the investigation committee, with regard to the significance of this message and to the impression that it instantly made upon the authorities of the German Government. Let me state as a fact that, standing in sharp contrast to the attempts of the majority memorial to gloss over the matter, interspersed as they are with numerous arguments, in no place does the message contain a clear-cut, not to mention sharp, rejection of the war aims of the Entente which closed the door to any negotiations, and that, rather, it treated as debatable the peace aims of the Entente which, according to the words of Helfferich, were absolutely unacceptable to the Central Powers.

I quote the material part of the message to the Senate in order to contrast it with the doubt expressed by the majority report:

The Central Powers united in a reply which stated merely that they were ready to meet their antagonists in conference to discuss terms of peace. The Entente Powers have replied much more definitely and have stated, in general terms, indeed, but with sufficient definiteness to imply details, the arrangements, guarantees, and acts of reparation which they deem to be the indispensable conditions of a satisfactory settlement. *We are that much nearer a definite discussion of the peace which shall end the present war.*

The majority report undertakes to make a similar attempt at glossing over the position on the Polish question taken by Wilson in his message to the Senate.

Without any occasion therefor, Wilson, in his message, took sides on this question which was for Germany so delicate a one, in that he stated "I take it for granted that statesmen are agreed that there should be *an independent and autonomous Poland.*" In connection therewith, attention may be called to a further passage in the Senate message which spoke of the necessity of giving to all great nations a direct outlet to the sea, and in cases where this could not be done by the cession of territory, *through the neutralization of direct rights of way under the general international guarantee.*

It was President Wilson himself who insisted upon this proposition which was absolutely irreconcilable with the idea of the territorial integrity of Germany—he who had continually caused the German Ambassador to be informed that he did not desire to meddle in "territorial questions."

For the purpose of rendering a correct judgment with regard to what we had reason to expect as the result of a practical working out of Wilson's peace negotiations, these actual contents of Wilson's message to the Senate are of greater importance than all the general terms of speech the real meaning of which is revealed by what happened in the peace of Versailles to Wilson's fourteen points, which were so solemnly guaranteed to us.

Wilson's real attitude toward Germany is shown not only in his subsequent actions at the time of the Paris negotiations with the Entente Powers with regard to the conditions of peace and at the time of the negotiations with the German representatives at Versailles, which, in solemn truth, were no negotiations at all, but they were also announced by him with a frankness which could scarcely be surpassed on the occasion of the hearing of the senatorial Committee on Foreign Affairs in August, 1919. Over this evidence, of such supreme importance for the purpose of judging Wilson's peace move and, together therewith, the possibilities of peace which existed in the winter of 1916-17, does the majority report ride roughshod to the conclusion that it was precisely Wilson's fear that America might be drawn into the war against Germany which constituted "not an argument against

but a basis for his peace aims." Let us compare a literal report of this hearing of Wilson's with these bold assumptions which again far overleap the bounds of established fact:

Senator McCUMBER: Would our moral conviction of the unrighteousness of the German war have brought us into this war if Germany had not committed any acts against us, without the League of Nations, as, of course, we had no League of Nations at that time?

The PRESIDENT: I hope it would eventually, Senator, as things have developed.

Senator McCUMBER: Do you think if Germany had committed no act of war and no act of injustice against our citizens that we would have gotten into this war?

The PRESIDENT: I do think so.

Senator McCUMBER: You think we would have gotten in anyway?

The PRESIDENT: I do.

If, then, the German political branch and the Supreme High Command no longer believed in the possibility of peace after the answer of the Entente to the peace proposal of the Central Powers, after the answer of the Entente to Wilson's peace proposal, and finally after Wilson's conduct itself, then the further development of circumstances constitutes a justification for their interpretation of the situation.

Absolutely no reason can be put forward of such a nature as to justify a doubt of the correctness of this conclusion.

It follows, therefore, that there appears to be no justification for explaining the attitude of the Administration with regard to Wilson's attempt to carry out his peace move in a manner menacing to German interests and fundamentally different from the principles originally conceived, on any other basis than the reasons which were submitted by the former members of the Administration under oath, consisting in their conviction of the fruitlessness of any further attempts to bring about peace in view of the attitude of the Entente and their lack of confidence in Wilson's intentions. And above all, there has existed no real basis for the assertion on the part of the majority report that the attitude of the Administration toward Wilson's renewed attempt to take up again and prolong his peace move was dictated by the decision in favor of the commencement of unrestricted U-boat warfare. All the testimony taken from the persons who were summoned by the subcommittee and who bore either a political or military responsibility at that time in Germany tends rather to establish the fact that the decision reached in favor of unrestricted U-boat warfare was without doubt brought about through the conviction that the German attempt to bring about peace had failed utterly, and that so far as Wilson was concerned, no peace which would be acceptable to Germany could be expected.

VI. THE OPENING OF THE UNRESTRICTED U-BOAT WARFARE

The majority report gives a picture of the attitude of the political branch of the government with regard to the U-boat warfare which must create the impression that the political branch looked upon the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat warfare as fundamentally and with no qualification whatsoever, destined to failure. It is perfectly true that, in very emphatic fashion and upon numerous occasions the political branch of the government pointed to the tremendous risks of the U-boat warfare and that the political branch, after the reports made by their representatives, had concluded, and this only with a heavy heart after the complete failure of efforts for peace, which failure had been regarded in January, 1917, as permanent in nature, that the use of this instrumentality of warfare was no longer to be successfully opposed. On the other hand, no proof has been submitted to show that the political branch had looked upon the U-boat warfare as being so devoid of possible success as to justify its complete rejection, even taking into consideration the situation which had come about through the failure of the peace moves, and in the face of the compelling military reasons announced by the Supreme High Command for having recourse to this instrument of war.

It is true that the majority report states that "in the words of Helfferich, reasserted later by Admiral v. Holtzendorff," the U-boat warfare would lead to ruin; but Helfferich was positively not asked when and where and under what circumstances he made the statement. Likewise does the majority report refer to the phrase which was actually used by Helfferich at the conferences of the main Committee of October, 1916, that if the unrestricted U-boat warfare did not constitute a card which, when played, was trumps, then Germany would be lost for centuries. But if the majority report desires, on the strength of this phrase, to base an argument to the effect that according to Helfferich's view the U-boat warfare *must* necessarily and under all conditions lead to ruin, this would be in flat conflict with assertions made by Helfferich in the same speech, namely, that the technical situation for carrying out successfully an unrestricted U-boat warfare had noticeably improved and would, as far as could be seen, continue to improve in the future, particularly in view of the poor harvest which had been gathered in the countries of our enemies and in those regions which were providing them with sustenance. To be weighed in the balance against the great risk *was the prospect of success* in combination with the equally great risk of our continuation of the war *without the employment of this fatal instrumentality of warfare* forced upon us against our will, after the efforts to obtain peace had failed.

The majority report makes, here again, no reference to the extent to which, as a matter of fact, the prospects of a successful result of the un-

restricted U-boat warfare seemed to point, to the narrow margin by which we failed to achieve success as a result of unrestricted U-boat warfare, or to what internal events hampered most fatally the efficacy of the U-boat weapon. It makes no reference, either, to the statements of the American Admiral Sims, which were made the subject of comment in the course of the proceedings before the investigation committee, with regard to his conversation with the British Admiral Jellicoe, from which may be ascertained to what extraordinary extent the U-boat warfare really was efficient, and that the British Admiral seriously considered the possibility of the loss of the war by England. Nor does it make any reference to Bethmann-Hollweg's statement that:

The entrance of America into the war finally resulted in our ruin; and yet in the course of your investigations you will constantly come into contact with *facts* which indicate that even *after the entrance of America into the war it did not inevitably follow that necessarily this should spell disaster for us. Even during my tenure of office, toward the end of the first half of 1917, it appeared as if opportunities for negotiations were opening up.*

The investigating committee discontinued the discussion of these later opportunities for peace in the course of the line of questioning which it next initiated, and postponed their consideration until a later time.

A conclusive judgment in regard to the peace move of Mr. Wilson and the opening of the unrestricted U-boat warfare and all questions concerning them can be rendered only when those later steps have been fully and effectively explained.

The majority report anticipates the final decision, in fact to the extent that on the one hand every point which speaks in favor of the policy of President Wilson is brought into prominence, and on the other hand everything is emphasized which can in any way serve to expose to criticism the policy followed by Germany. In a report such as this, it is not to be expected that a clarification of the causes of the misfortunes of our country can be materially advanced.

Finally, I most emphatically call attention to the fact that the taking of testimony which was ordered by the investigating committee was not even carried through to the extent that the majority of the committee itself considered necessary. Thus, the testimony of General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg and General v. Ludendorff was not carried to a conclusion, but, on the 18th of November, 1919, merely suspended according to the statements of the chairman of the committee on account of the fatigue of the witnesses. But no further examination of these two most important witnesses took place. The taking of testimony was not carried to a conclusion either with regard to these witnesses or with regard to other points. If the announcement of the judgment of the majority is to be regarded as per-

missible in the case of a parliamentary report of this kind, it can in any event only be considered on the assumption that complete examinations of witnesses have been made. These elementary principles, applicable to the very premises on which the rendering of a judgment depends, have been in this case grossly neglected. The taking of testimony which was commenced, but which was in no way terminated, was suddenly discontinued so that, for instance, not only was the completion of the testimony of Ludendorff and Hindenburg not accomplished, but one even went so far as to leave uncompleted the examination of Minister Helfferich, to whose statements the report makes constant reference, to the extent of failing to examine him with regard to the occasion and significance of the remarks made by him. If this had been done, it is quite certain that the meaning to be attributed to his statements would have been viewed in a light quite different from that on which the report seeks to base its arguments with regard thereto.

Even the most experienced judge can not render a correct judgment without a clear conception of the facts which are to form the basis of his judgment. The committee which was called upon to investigate one of the most difficult problems of the World War—the significance of the peace move of Wilson—failed to exhaust the possibilities of the most important sources of evidence which were placed at its disposal, quite aside from the fact that according to the unanimous opinion of the experts, in the absence of knowledge of the acts and projects of our enemies, an acceptable answer to the question submitted to the committee would seem to be impossible.

Accordingly, the report of the majority of the committee which, to the detriment of its own country, and looking at the matter from one side only, underscores and emphasizes all those facts which appear to be derogatory to the policy of Germany, does not deserve the name of an objective judgment. It consists of nothing more than an assertion based on mere party politics and parading in the guise of a parliamentary announcement of the guilt of Germany, to the effect that those of its agencies which governed at that time are responsible for the prolongation of the war; an assertion which uncontradicted testimony of foreign origin is not the last to challenge.

SCHULTZ-BROMBERG,

Member of the National Assembly.

BERLIN, *June 23, 1920.*

OPINIONS OF EXPERTS RENDERED IN THE SESSION OF JUNE 18, 1920

I. PROFESSOR DR. DIETRICH SCHAEFER

Two general remarks should precede the report. In the first place: The Reichstag majority of the legislative National Assembly which, on the 20th of August, 1919, determined upon the institution of a parliamentary committee of inquiry, proceeded upon a mistaken assumption. This majority was of the belief that, by means of a purely objective investigation into all of the activities of the German Government bearing on the war, the opinion of foreign Powers, particularly those of the hostile Powers, could be influenced in favor of Germany and of its new order of things—that we could expect the “purifying effects of truth.” This purpose was not accomplished and can not be accomplished within any definite period.

Again, it was perfectly clear at the beginning that the material which would be made available to the investigating committee in the prosecution of its work would be insufficient to base judgments of a conclusive kind upon. In order to accomplish this result, the cooperation of all the Powers which had participated would have been necessary. This circumstance increased the danger of making the most of the results of the investigation to the detriment of our own country. This danger has become realized to a notable extent.

The absence of material made itself similarly felt on the occasion of the hearings of the Second Subcommittee with regard to Wilson's peace move. In order to obtain a well-founded judgment, it was absolutely necessary to have clear insight into the aims of the American policy directed by the President. Without such knowledge it is difficult to ascertain with certainty what weight to give to the probabilities of peace—if they in fact existed. The discussions which were undertaken for this purpose have not met with satisfactory results. The Washington Ambassador answered the questions which were put to him in this connection in such a way as to render it a matter of doubt as to whether he himself has come to entertain any fixed opinion on the subject. In the absence thereof, it is impossible to conclude a definite judgment with regard to the peace discussions which were carried on from April, 1916, up to January, 1917. It is highly essential that a fixed opinion should be found, and it is my contention that it is possible to do so with the help of the facts which have been made known.

No one can entertain the slightest doubt that the feeling of by far the greater number of the inhabitants of the United States was hostile to Germany at the time of the beginning of the war. There are numerous facts

which prove this; but for present purposes it will be sufficient to refer to the statement of Professor Eugen Kühnemann of Breslau who for two and three-quarters years during the war was on the other side, and who made not less than one hundred and twenty-one speeches in English and two hundred and seventy-five in German, all having the war for their subject, and this in one hundred and thirty-seven different cities in the Union. It is certain that this opinion was based in part upon the English propaganda of lies which was at once and most energetically set in motion under the direction of James Bryce, who was until 1913 the British Ambassador in Washington and Knight of our order *Pour le Mérite*; and in part this feeling was due to community of race. However, the existing world condition and American interests furnished a strong and firm background for this feeling.

A whole array of American works dating from the last decades, particularly those appearing in the period following the Spanish-American War of 1898 and the difficulties with Castro of Venezuela in 1902 and 1903, express not only a dislike for, but actual hostility toward, Germany. This feeling was continually strengthened through the fact of the commercial superiority of Germany over the United States with regard to South and Central America. The Monroe Doctrine in the last generation has gone through a most extraordinary broadening process. Germany was even accused of a desire for conquest. Wilson and his Ambassador Gerard worked along this line of opinion; one of the two last exchange professors, Archibald Cary Coolidge, issued a warning against Germany's projects with regard to Brazil in his book, *The United States as a World Power*.

Next came the South Sea question. The trip of the American fleet in 1907 had shown that the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants of the shores of the Pacific Ocean were filled with similar feelings with regard to "the Yellow Peril." This caused England to remove from the treaty with Japan of 1911 so much of what in 1905 had constituted a threat against the United States. In case of any complications with Japan, the Union could count upon the cooperation of Great Britain. This would have been impossible if England's fleet was tied down to European waters. But that would have been the inevitable result of a German victory. Even before the war, England had considered the necessity of concentrating her fleet in home waters and had not been without concern regarding her position as a World Power.

This situation must be borne in mind if one is desirous of forming a judgment with regard to America's relations to Germany during the war. *America did not want a German victory and believed that she would not be able to tolerate the results of one.* The ruling popular feeling demanded a victory for England. It would be an insult to the intelligence of our leaders to assume that the situation was not more or less clear to them.

The situation was already made perfectly recognizable by Wilson's answer to the Imperial letter of the 8th of September, 1914. If in spite of all this, America's mediation was desired, this is to be explained by the general situation of the German policy which, moreover, could never quite throw off a feeling of lack of confidence with regard to Wilson's ultimate aims.

Before the war, Bethmann-Hollweg persistently strove for an understanding with England. He was perfectly willing to make concessions with regard to the question of the fleet in order to obtain this result. And when this policy, according to his own statement, had fallen like a pack of cards, even then he did not give up his intentions. He placed narrower restrictions upon the use of our war craft than the experts held to be justifiable. It is perfectly true that he is responsible for the declaration of the U-boat war on commerce of the 4th of February, 1915; but as a concession to America's claims with regard to the *Lusitania* and again after the case of the *Ancona*, he delivered to the use of this weapon a crippling blow in sharpest contradiction to the attitude of the Minister of the Navy. The thought of a conflict with America, but also the fear of introducing features into the war with England which would make an understanding impossible, were elements which brought this about. He rejected the request of Colonel House after the commencement of the U-boat war on commerce in the year 1916 with the remark that he could not allow his most powerful weapon to be wrested from his hands, and, at the urgent request of the Navy Department and under pressure of public opinion, on the 8th of February, 1916, he announced the so-called intensified U-boat war and the placing of armed enemy merchant ships on the same basis as war-ships; however, on the occasion of negotiations in Charleville on the 4th of March and after the case of the *Sussex*, he again made concessions and answered the protest made by Gerard on the 20th of April, 1916, with the note of May 4, which concluded with the suggestion that the Government of the United States endeavor "to bring about an observance of the laws of humanity by all the belligerent nations." At this time, Gerard sent word to Washington that the German Government was ready to accept the President's peace mediation.

The condition in question was curtly rejected on the 10th of May. America was unwilling to tolerate any interference when insisting upon the rights due her citizens by binding herself in any way to influence the attitude of any other government. It was an answer which was wholly harmonious with the attitude heretofore observed. That the United States handled its own question of neutrality in a way which was friendly to England and hostile to Germany can not, according to my convictions, be questioned. That Wilson himself was not willing to raise his hand for the purpose of doing away with the difficulties which arose from the U-boat war against commerce, is to be observed from the fact that he prevented the passing of

the resolution to prohibit taking passage on vessels of the belligerent Powers in favor of which an overwhelming majority of the speakers both in the House and in the Senate had expressed themselves. By means of a prohibition of this kind, America would have been able to remain practically free from any losses. However, Wilson knew that the U-boat weapon might well become fatal, so far as England was concerned, and he did not desire England to be defeated. The opposition against the U-boat war readily assumed formally and outwardly the appearance of a fight on behalf of humanity; it was carried on under a slogan which came easily to the use of all of Germany's enemies. That Wilson sympathized with the wish of Germany for negotiations is easily understood. He had long since recognized that the World War had sounded America's hour; he was determined that its termination should be used to America's advantage. Those at the head of the political branch of our government have scarcely attributed enough weight to this fact. Even if here again the welfare of humanity were placed in the foreground, this plea is too well known an instrument of diplomatic art to leave open to discussion the question of whether Wilson, when he made it, did so in a spirit of honest conviction. In any event, it was absolutely essential in order to gain the necessary backing for his policy at home.

The activities entered into for the purpose of bringing about negotiations made further headway in the autumn of 1916. It is worthy of note that their progress was not interfered with to any appreciable extent by further U-boat incidents. Even a certain kind of agreement with regard to the form of the mediation was reached. So far as Wilson is concerned, his only desire was for the time to bring the belligerents to a point where they would negotiate; on the part of Germany care was taken to avoid the suggestion of becoming committed on the question of peace conditions by accepting mediation. General questions involving international law were to become the subjects of a conference in which the neutral States were to participate only in case the peace negotiations should not have proven devoid of results. Among these questions, the freedom of the seas occupied a position of the utmost prominence. The more Germany pressed for a beginning of negotiations, the more America hesitated; among the reasons assigned for this hesitation, the presidential election was cited as the most important which, on the other hand, in the opinion of the German Ambassador, should at times have served rather as a stimulus toward hastening on the negotiations.¹ On December 4, 1916, the Ambassador reports to Berlin that everything is ready for the peace move, but that at the same time, in view of Wilson's temperament, it is a question of doubt as to when he will actually set the machinery in motion.

But in the meantime, the situation in Germany had undergone a change. Roumania had entered the war; and simultaneously the Supreme Command

¹ 12, 13, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, p. 979.

of the Army had changed hands, and this change had at the time not remained without influence upon the differences of opinion entertained by the military and political leaders with regard to the U-boat war. In view of the burden of the new enemy to be opposed, the danger of the entrance of the Union into the war which might possibly lead to similar action by Denmark and the Netherlands, had to be considered from all angles with the greatest care. When the victories won over Roumania and the preparation and establishment of a force sufficient for the guarding of the boundaries of both countries above named, called for a renewed estimate of the situation, the new Supreme High Command began to urge the question of the handling of the U-boat weapon without regard to consequences. It appeared to those now in command of the military branch, as it had to their predecessors, to constitute the only instrumentality whereby the war might be brought to a successful issue by military means.

It was at this juncture that America indicated that the Belgian deportations constituted an element of obstruction. The Pope too, at the same time, thrust the Belgian question into the foreground at Vienna. As a matter of fact, it was the crux of the whole war. During the period when the *Sussex* case was still unsettled, on the 5th of April, 1916, Bethmann-Hollweg, as the leader of the Center party and supported by the great majority in the Reichstag, had announced that he had understood that Belgium must remain under German control politically, commercially, and from a military standpoint. A claim was thereby set up which, if carried out, would necessarily have brought about such a weakening of the power of England as America was not willing to tolerate. It would also have given Germany such a position as a World Power as to have made it extremely difficult, if not actually impossible, for the Union to displace Germany's influence in South and Central America. At the end of the year, the Supreme High Command still held, generally speaking, to the demands which the Imperial Chancellor had made in the first days of April. And moreover it was natural, having in mind the negotiations conducted with the United States for the purpose of bringing about mediation, that the desire should exist not to leave the world in a condition of doubt with regard to Germany's wishes concerning the peace. And in addition to this came the suggestion by Austria-Hungary which was energetically supported by the allied Central Powers. This resulted in the German peace announcement of the 12th of December. This announcement does not constitute an intentional thwarting of the desired interposition on the part of the United States for peace purposes.

And as a matter of fact, according to Bernstorff's testimony, it was not so regarded in America. In view of the vacillating course pursued by Wilson, Germany could not afford to wait, since it was obvious that time played into the hands of her enemies. If Bethmann-Hollweg wrote on the

27th of November that Wilson would in all probability launch his appeal only if he had no cause to expect its curt denial on the part of the Entente, this conclusion could have no other effect than to strengthen the determination to bring about a decision. Bethmann's words are of no assistance as evidence on the point as to whether or not the United States was actually in touch with the Entente with regard to the peace question.¹ Even if such contact had actually existed, it would have constituted no inducement to Germany to hold back with her own peace move. If Mr. Sinzheimer states in his report that at this time there existed the urgent necessity of bringing the war to a close by political rather than by military means, this is not correct. The only question is, whether or not the object of the war, with regard to which both the political and military leaders were in general accord, was to be followed up at this time by the use of the political or the military arm. Should it turn out that political methods were impracticable, then, at least in the opinion of the war department, nothing remained but a U-boat war carried on *à l'outrance*. Bethmann-Hollweg and Helfferich even at this time, when the peace proposal met with no result, did not withdraw from the opposition which as early as February and March they had directed against Holtzendorff's memorial, but they finally acceded after the peace proposal had proved fruitless.

In his peace note on the 18th of December, 1916, Wilson emphatically denied any connection with the advances made by Germany. But his announcement went beyond the limits reached in the course of former exchanges of opinion. Its "characteristic essence" consisted of the appeal addressed to the belligerent Powers to disclose their respective war aims, in order that it might be made possible to submit them to an open comparison. By this demand he called the belligerents before the forum of neutral nations. Up to this time the only question had been one of the bringing about of negotiations concerning the material parts of which it would be the purpose of the belligerents to reach a mutual understanding. Now the idea of the clearing house was to be substituted. On the 29th of December, House requested from Bernstorff confidential information with regard to the conditions of peace.² The brief German answer of the 27th of December made to Wilson's peace note harks back once more to the "direct interchange of opinions."³

Wilson had reason to know that his request would meet with serious objections. This anticipation was met by the Entente in its announcement of the 12th of January, 1917,⁴ in such a way as to exclude the possibility of further negotiations. Germany, on its part, did not follow it up in any way. On December 30, the Entente sent a reply to the German peace note which utterly destroyed the opportunity for further negotiations.

¹ 86, Supplements, pt. II, *post*, p. 1068.

³ 47, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 1006.

² 50, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 1010.

⁴ 55, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 1014.

This answer reviewed the old accusations, based on gross misrepresentation, and announced that Germany was unworthy of belief and declared that every attempt at negotiation was perfectly useless.¹ Although Emperor Karl and Czernin, in spite of this, believed that such an attempt was feasible,² Germany was quite right in failing to put any faith in such a possibility. On the 9th of January, 1917, the policy of an unrestricted U-boat war was adopted.

The report of Mr. Sinzheimer criticizes the manner in which the opinions concerning the possible outcome of such a war were obtained. On the other hand, we may point to the fact that Holtzendorff's reply to Helfferich's adverse expert opinion of February, 1916, lays particular emphasis on the point that, in the nature of things, neither military nor political conclusions could be considered as absolutely guaranteeing the certainty of a successful outcome, and that in any event it was a question of the taking of hazards. Whether the best experts were summoned to pass upon political and commercial questions is to no small extent a matter of opinion. For an official body to consult persons who are known to be in sympathy with its views is such a common occurrence that it can not simply be thrown into the discard. In view of America's attitude toward England's starvation policy, the military department was confronted with the choice of either allowing Germany to bleed to death, drop by drop, or to risk all on one throw. *If this hazard had not been undertaken, our enemies would have been in the position to impose upon us a peace of their own making; they knew this, and America would not have stopped them.*

It must also be pointed out that Mr. Sinzheimer's report is incorrect in asserting that the Embassy in Madrid, as well as the legations at The Hague, Berne, Copenhagen, Christiania, and Stockholm received misinformation of a definite kind in the shape of reports to the effect that no attempt had ever been made during the war to persuade the United States to make a proposal with regard to mediation. The mediation proposal concerning which Zimmermann's note of the 14th of December³ speaks is one which concerns peace conditions and not the preparation for negotiations. This is shown by the *Times* article of the 12th of December, the effect of which it was the purpose of the announcement to destroy. The further criticism in the report of the course taken by the German Government at this time loses weight through the fact that Wilson's peace move was not such as the foregoing transactions had caused to be anticipated. There was good reason for speaking of "an autocratic meddling on the part of Wilson in our own affairs." With regard to the question, whether or not the communication of definite conditions of peace was expedient in view of the existing situation, I agree thoroughly with the stand expressed by Bethmann-Hollweg during

¹ 48, Supplements, pt. I, *post*, p. 1006.

² 113-16, Supplements, pt. III, pp. 1090-1093.

³ 91, Supplements, pt. III, *post*, p. 1074.

the investigation. That on the 29th of January, 1917, he surrendered it in the course of confidential communication with the United States, happened under the pressure of circumstances and was a step which was bound, under existing conditions, to result in nothing and which therefore would have remained better untaken. It was self-evident that there could exist no longer any possibility of a peace move.

Two explanatory incidents occurred between the reaching of the decision to carry on unrestricted U-boat warfare and the actual commencement of this policy, which throw a clear light on the situation, to wit, the Entente's answer to Wilson's peace note of January 12, 1917,¹ and Wilson's message to the Senate of the 22d of January.²

The answer of the Entente, also, postpones the discussion of details to the time when negotiations should be actually taken up. But in its remarks about the "liberation of peoples" it leaves no room for doubt that it was its intention to destroy the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Turkish Empires. If the Entente denies having entertained the intention of destroying the German peoples (it takes cognizance in accordance with its attitude maintained during the whole war only of German peoples, not of the German nation), this must be recognized as merely designedly calculated talk. It declares it to be impossible to obtain a satisfactory peace at this time, reasserts the old calumnies with regard to Germany's and Austria-Hungary's desire to be the aggressors for the purpose of securing their overlordship in Europe and with regard to their commercial control over the entire world, and solemnly protests against being placed on the same basis with the Central Powers, so far as credibility is concerned.

Wilson's message to the Senate deduces from the announcement of the Entente a step in the direction of peace. Did he really believe that the Central Powers would make their own ruin the subject of negotiation? According to his own announcement, there must be "a peace without victory." Does the destruction of the Central Powers set the stage for such a peace? Can he be considered an honorable peace negotiator who finds no word by which to appropriately restrain the savage lust for violence exhibited by the Entente? Wilson demands a united, independent, autonomous Poland and for every great people a direct outlet to the sea. I must reject, as failing utterly to meet the mark, what the report has to say with regard to these announcements. With the exception of Poland, there existed in Europe no great nation which did not already have a direct outlet to the sea. We can not say that Switzerland, Serbia and Luxemburg are to be classified as great nations; and certainly Wilson did not have them in mind. We would insult American statesmen if we were to assume that it was not perfectly clear to their leader that Poland could obtain a direct outlet to the sea only at the cost of Germany. I do not doubt for a moment

¹ 55, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, p. 1014.

² 61, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, p. 1021.

that it was perfectly plain to him and to those who counseled him that herein was to be found an easy channel of traffic leading into the heart of Europe, of which the American spirit of enterprise might obtain the benefit. Proofs of the existence of familiarity on the part of America with European relations are certainly not few in number. The unfortunate declaration of the Emperors of Germany and Austria of the 5th of November, 1916, certainly did not point to the existence of a purpose prescribed by Wilson. Helfferich is absolutely correct when he interprets the message to the Senate as an expression of a standpoint thoroughly hostile to Germany. This message stands in crass contrast with Bernstorff's dispatches of the 16th and 19th of January,¹ that Wilson was possessed by no other thought than to bring about peace and that he believed that it could be reached on the basis of the principle announced by Germany of the equal claim by all nations to equal rights and privileges. It was all merely a question of an empty twisting of words in order to win time; after all, it was impossible really to know what the results of the unrestricted U-boat warfare would be, and every delay placed further obstacles in the way of a German success. That the freedom of the seas and the disarmament of sea forces which Germany demanded were mentioned in the course of Wilson's broad amplifications with regard to the future reorganization of humanity on the basis of the law of nations, is wholly without meaning. The years that have followed have shown what his real opinion was with regard to disarmament of sea forces and the fact that the freedom of the seas can not be assured by international agreements was certainly as plain to him as to any thinking man.

That the resolve of Germany reached on the 9th of January was justifiable, is shown by the answer of the Entente of the 12th and by Wilson's message of the 22d of January. Although the news reached us from America that Wilson considered the demands of the Entente to be mere bluff, Bethmann-Hollweg was perfectly right in not participating in this view. It was plain that Wilson's negotiations could not lead to an acceptable peace; it was our duty to have recourse to our last resort. That was not only the opinion of those in power, but of the great majority of the German people. To assume that temperate conditions of peace put forward by Germany would cause a good impression among the neutral nations would be counter to every experience of their judgment and attitude during the war. America was the only neutral Power which was in a position to develop an independent policy; but the Union certainly would not have stirred a finger to save Germany from being slowly bled to death in case she had decided to carry on the conflict without using all possible weapons which lay at her disposal.

The opinion is expressed in the report that detailed reports to the Reichs-

¹ 59-60, Supplements, pt. I, pp. 1020-1021.

tag concerning the negotiations which had been carried on with America and concerning the military situation, would have brought a majority of that body to a condition of mind in which they would have favored opening negotiations for peace. It must be remarked in respect to the above that such communications, a common knowledge of which could not have been prevented, would have only resulted in making the Entente more obdurate in its desire for destruction. The answer the Entente made to Wilson's peace note on the 12th of January merely expresses the desire which was entertained by the Entente from the beginning of the war. I must enter a denial with regard to the point that in the winter of 1916-17 the possibility existed to bring about successful peace parleys. Count v. Wedel, Germany's Ambassador at Vienna, is correct when he says that it was not the fact of the U-boat war of itself, but the knowledge that it would lead to the defeat of England, which was the cause for America's participation in the war. He who would argue that it was the resolution of the 9th of January, 1917, which cast the die in the matter of the fate which ultimately became Germany's, is to be met with the statement that there are other elements to be considered in the matter.

SCHAEFER.

2. OPINION OF MINISTER BARON v. ROMBERG

In view of the limited time which has been allowed the experts in which to deliver their opinions, I regret to state that it is not possible for me to take sides on the general results of the investigation before the committee duly submitted by the Reporter, fascinating as it would be for me to pass upon his impressive account in detail. In rendering an opinion, I am forced to limit myself to the observations made in conclusion of the report.

The recording secretary records the questions which are to be answered by the investigating committee as follows:

1. What opportunities existed for bringing about peace parleys with the enemy?
2. If such opportunities were in existence, why were the opportunities brought to naught?

In my opinion, it would be more accurate to phrase the first question thus:

Were opportunities in existence for bringing about peace parleys which would have held out to Germany and her allies the assured prospect of maintaining intact their territorial sovereignty?

It is quite possible to assume from the context that the recording secretary entertains the same conception or a similar one with regard to the possibili-

ties of peace. At the same time, it seems to me necessary to express this thought plainly.

It seems to me to be impossible to give a definite answer with regard to the question put in this form, since without any knowledge of American and enemy documentary evidence and purposes, we can scarcely be in the position to determine what progress a peace move would have taken under given conditions. Recognizing this circumstance, the recording secretary puts the first question within the following limits: Whether basic starting points are found upon which to base the proposition that opportunities of such a nature as to justify the assumption that they would have led to actual negotiations, were not lacking. In this way, the recording secretary finds himself in a position to answer Question I in the affirmative and gives as evidence three such basic points. In my opinion, arguments exist which are at least equally applicable and which necessarily lead to an answer of Question I in the negative.

The first point, according to which Wilson was only willing to undertake a peace move if there was reason to believe that it would not be rejected by the Entente, does not seem to me to be altogether convincing. Has it not come within the experience of us ourselves that scarcely a word was spoken at Versailles concerning Wilson's fourteen points, in reliance upon which we agreed to the armistice? And do not Count Bernstorff's assertions with regard to Wilson and his lack of familiarity with European affairs indicate strongly that he would have been just as unprepared and as unsuspecting and just as devoid of backbone if he had continued with the peace move, as, according to the impressive picture drawn by Keynes, he was during his activities at Versailles? For this reason, I can not find in the conduct of the peace move itself sufficient evidence to justify the conclusion that it opened up the opportunity of success.

Another point on which to base the assertion that the opportunity for peace existed is seen by the recording secretary in the communication of the Papal Nuncio reported by dispatch from the Vienna Embassy. As the recording secretary informs us, there is in evidence also a second dispatch from Vienna which denies any significance at all to the communication above referred to. Unfortunately the investigating committee failed to proceed further with this incident—a matter all the more to be regretted because it was publicly used for the purpose of showering the sharpest reproaches on the former government. Unexplained as it is, the incident in question is not in my opinion entitled to weight as a basic point of inquiry, and all the less so because, according to my sources of information, further investigation would have brought to light material of a very convincing nature, in that the second message from Vienna would have received full confirmation.

The third basic point, which, to be sure, was unknown to us at the critical

period, namely, the financial difficulties of the Entente, is undoubtedly the strongest and the one most deserving of our consideration. At the same time, when all is said and done, I can not believe, taking into consideration the tenacity of the English and the burning patriotism of the French, that at a time when it was basing its conviction of victory on such certain grounds, the Entente would have been daunted at the task of carrying out their war aims on account of financial difficulties and would not have been equal to the same sacrifices to which Germany was brought in connection with its financial arrangements.

I shall now present the arguments which I offer in support of my opinion that question No. 1 should be answered in the negative. The grounds therefor as I see them are to be found in the cold attitude of non-receptivity on the part of the Entente toward the peace moves of the winter of 1916-17, and then again in the perfectly justifiable uncertainty which might well be entertained as to whether Wilson was at once able and willing to force the acceptance of his interposition by exerting the necessary pressure on the Entente.

It is probable that throughout the war no German representative in foreign parts was more often so situated as to follow up peace possibilities, in the sense of the term as used by the recording secretary—i.e., situations which might serve as the basis for the existence of opportunities for peace—than I. And I have become convinced by the results of my numerous experiences and disillusionments in this field that the Entente, with the exception of a few moments of weakness which were absolutely unknown to most of us, never swerved from its conviction of ultimate victory which found its expression in the following language: *Les Allemands gagneront les batailles, mais nous gagnerons la guerre.* It is, moreover, well known that the Entente repeatedly informed neutral governments that it would look upon a peace mediation as in the nature of an unfriendly act. With regard to the so-called opportunities for peace, these must be considered mostly as combinations or fumbling attempts on the part of mediocre personalities who desired to do something for peace and who with this point in view sought to prepare the ground in advance. But as soon as these efforts claimed the attention of the leaders of the Entente, the result was inevitably a curt dismissal. Not once were we ever able, in spite of our continual efforts, to bring about an exchange of opinions between unofficial representatives of both parties which should commit neither party. I repeat that the Entente also had moments of weakness when it would have perhaps felt inclined to negotiate, but in my opinion the winter of 1916-17 is not to be considered as one of those occasions. And this is supported, too, by the bluff tone of mockery in which the Entente rejected the opportunities for peace at that time. I can not agree with the conclusion of the recording secretary, who accords no particular significance to the forbidding attitude

of the Entente. If there really had existed the slightest willingness to enter upon negotiations on the side of the Entente, then it is hardly believable that it would have done everything possible to crush such a tendency throughout its territories, and have rejected our offer and Wilson's note in such a way as to make perfectly certain the destruction of the possibility of the further progress of the move. Moreover, the Entente made a habit of paying very little attention to the attitude of the neutral Powers, for it knew that so far as the neutrals were concerned it had at its disposal means which would enable it to bring unquestionably effective pressure to bear.

At this juncture, the conclusions of the recording secretary with regard to the question of the public disclosure of definite peace aims call for remark. It seems to me that he has not accorded the requisite weight to the significance of this point. For my part, I took the stand again and again during the course of the war that an unmistakable declaration should be made with regard to Belgium. I did this, however, merely as the result of a conviction that the annexation of Belgian territory would have been a positive misfortune, and because I considered it a dangerous thing to strengthen our people in such desires for annexation; moreover, because as each day passed I realized what tremendous harm the Belgian question was doing us in foreign countries; and, finally, because I knew that no neutral would for a moment have anything to do with a peace mediation before taking measures for holding himself free from the reproach that he might in any way become identified with the "Belgian crime." And I see plainly in this last situation the real reason why everybody who wanted to do anything for peace demanded from us as a preliminary an announcement concerning Belgium. But I have never entertained the belief that we would have succeeded in bringing any of the Entente Powers to a point where they would have been willing to entertain the peace idea by offering them a satisfactory announcement with regard to Belgium, with the exception perhaps of Belgium herself. To have brought about such a result, it would have been necessary to proceed upon the premise that the war was being waged on Belgium's account, whereas it certainly does not need to be demonstrated with proof that the Entente Powers prosecuted the war for very definite and very personal war aims, for the accomplishment of which they worked from the very first day of the war with a persistence which was not to be shaken, which called for the greatest admiration, and in which they had their peoples behind them in overwhelming preponderance of numbers. Aside from its effect upon the neutrals and upon the unfortunately very weak pacifist party in the hostile countries, I could have wished, from the standpoint of domestic policy, for the announcement of moderate war aims, in order to prevent the boundless ambitions of our annexationists among the German people from obtaining the upper hand. But looked upon from the standpoint of their effect upon the enemy, there is absolutely no doubt that moderate war aims were con-

sidered as an indication of weakness on our part, and in this way encouraged our enemies and had the effect of prolonging the war, particularly after we, to our own disadvantage, had forsaken the original plan of a war purely of self-defense. I remember that the Americans themselves, according to Count Bernstorff's report, counseled us not to take too modest a stand before the Entente with regard to war aims, and warned us above all else not to appear to be weak.

Again, I can not attribute to our individual peace program of the winter of 1916-17 the qualities so menacing to peace as the recording secretary does in his final remarks. I am rather firmly of the opinion that as soon as we should have taken our seat at the conference table, at least in the year 1916, we would never again have drawn the sword in defense of a single one of our demands regarding annexation, and the Emperor would have been the last one who would have made up his mind to do so. Unless I am very much mistaken, this consideration was also of controlling influence for Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann in making concessions to the military heads on the occasion of determining upon war aims.

But our enemies likewise employed this same line of reasoning, and on that ground they unintermittently exerted themselves against the necessity of taking a seat at the council table, whereas we always repeatedly showed our readiness to ourselves assume this risk. The statement of the Emperor referred to by the recording secretary and reported in the telegram of v. Grünau on the 2d of January, 1917, has not the elements of an official program, but is merely the spontaneous expression of dissatisfaction and disillusionment concerning the blunt and mocking rejection of our peace proposal which was offered in good faith.

I return now to the basic points which speak both for and against the existence of possibilities of peace, and particularly to the significance which is to be attributed to the Entente's answer to our peace proposal in this connection. In this regard too, as, generally speaking, in estimating the results of our peace proposal, I take a different view from that of the reporter. He places no particular weight to the answer of the Entente to our peace proposal, just as, generally speaking, he calls no attention to any detrimental effect of our offer; in fact he credits it with having rendered a service to the extent that, he says, it accelerated Wilson's move. Even in December, 1916, I opposed the general plan of our peace proposal, and experience has taught us that, as a matter of fact and considered *from the standpoint of foreign politics*, it was a grave tactical mistake for the Central Powers, in contrast with the Entente, to publicly announce their readiness for peace, however much this action may stand to their credit. I am thoroughly in agreement with the recording secretary with regard to the motives which lay at the bottom of our peace proposal. Although some have gone so far as to assert that our peace proposal had for its purpose the thwarting of the American

mediation, it has been definitely proven as the result of the investigation that the Imperial Government would have preferred the American move, so that the German peace proposal had only the significance of a second iron in the fire. I can bear witness myself that as the result of my personal experience at that time our peace proposition was not looked upon as a move in opposition to Wilson's move, but that it was considered in Berlin as a suitable method for bringing about peace negotiations, and that great hopes were attached to it. It is true that the recording secretary finds it difficult to bring intentions such as these into harmony with the instructions which the Foreign Office sent to the foreign missions after the issuance of the peace proposal, and in further harmony with the communications of Secretary of State Zimmermann to the representatives of the press. I must admit that the statement made by Secretary of State Zimmermann in the presence of the committee has not wholly cleared up the seeming conflict. The explanation for his attitude at that time seems to me quite obviously to be found in the following considerations. The Imperial Government desired under no conditions that it should become known that it had had anything to do with Wilson's move. This the government certainly owed to Wilson, whose peace efforts were doomed to failure from the very start, once the Entente was informed of the fact that he had been approached by us. But at the same time the Foreign Office had to take into consideration the sharp feeling of resentment which existed against Wilson throughout broad circles of the German people. To have made known the existence of any cooperation between the Imperial Government and Washington would, therefore, have called for the most vehement disapproval, and at the same time would have affected unfavorably the prospects of Wilson's move. Different opinions may well be entertained with regard to the appropriateness of the choice of methods by which the seemingly necessary privacy was obtained.

Although the motives which lay at the foundation of the peace proposal appear to have been clearly defined, it has still not been explained why the Imperial Government, in spite of the favorable outlook for a peace move on the part of President Wilson, decided to take this step. The representatives of the former Imperial Government have in their hearing before the investigating committee given as the grounds therefor that they entertained serious doubts as to whether the President's move, constantly put off from time to time, would really ever be made, and, if it were made, whether it would open favorable opportunities for Germany. In view of the vacillating reports from Washington, we could not decide to let the favorable juncture of the defeat of Roumania pass over without taking advantage of it and removing the second iron out of the fire, although we might well have argued that our peace offer might result in affecting Wilson's move unfavorably. If it is true that the Imperial Government did not perhaps

sufficiently estimate this last danger, it can call attention to the fact, and not wholly without justification, that even the Ambassador in Washington had not expressed an unfavorable opinion with regard to the contemplated action of the Central Powers. He had already been informed several weeks in advance that the Central Powers had a certain plan of action in view in case the constantly deferred move on Wilson's part was not finally made. The Ambassador did not react to this information.¹ It is certain that the dangers of our peace proposal did not escape the attention of so shrewd a judge of the world situation as Count Bernstorff has proven himself to be. Like other foreign representatives of ours, it is quite certain that he did not indulge in any very strong hopes with regard to the success of our action, and it is equally certain that he did not overlook the fact that our move might well interfere with the American mediation move, which was so eagerly sought by him and which he conceived to be the only means of keeping America out of the war; and, further, that our action might bring us into the disrepute, so far as Wilson was concerned, of a government engaged in carrying on a policy of duplicity. If in spite of all this he maintained silence, in my opinion the only explanation that can be offered is that he himself at that time—that is, at the critical moment—did not foster so firm a belief in the initiation of action by Wilson as to enable him to assume the responsibility of recommending to the Imperial Government to take its second iron out of the fire. In any event, whether I judge the motives of Count Bernstorff rightly or wrongly, the effect of his silence upon the Berlin Government must have resulted in strengthening it in its resolve which, according to my conviction, was a fatal one. The damaging effect of our peace proposal with regard to Wilson's action must be considered as

¹ Count Bernstorff remarked as follows with regard to this: The first reference which reached Washington with regard to "possible further steps" in the peace question in connection with Wilson's action is to be found, according to the public documents, in the inquiry of Jagow's of November 16, 1916, telegram No. 114. The obviously immediate answer which followed is contained in telegram No. 154 of November 21, 1916, which, in connection with telegram No. 153, describes Wilson's mediation as imminent. The condition was added that as little as possible should be spoken by us about peace mediation. From the reference which reached Washington, it could not be inferred that the Administration was entertaining the plan to issue a peace proposal. Washington was informed for the first time by telegram No. 116 of November 22, 1916, which went off before the arrival of this answer that "it is our purpose, acting in conjunction with our allies, to announce forthwith our willingness to enter upon peace negotiations." Nothing is said about the form of the announcement, and an error has been committed if Bethmann-Hollweg announced on November 4, 1919, that "on November 22d the Ambassador was already informed that we are making our plans to announce our readiness for peace publicly." Even on November 26, 1916, immediately after the arrival of telegram No. 154 in Berlin, the announcement was retracted: "We would be glad to give Wilson's peace move the preference over our action referred to in our telegram No. 116 of November 22"; but Wilson should act soon. The Embassy was thus instructed to the effect that individual action was set back in favor of Wilson's, and was again instructed by telegram No. 123 of December 1, 1916, that Wilson's peace move must be initiated promptly and answers with regard to this question on December 1 and 4 (telegrams Nos. 164 and 169). That in accordance with our wish, we could depend upon the fact that Wilson's action would be taken at the opening of Congress. (28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, Supplements, pt. 1, *post*, pp. 991, 992, 993, 994, 996, 997.)

being beyond question. It is true that in spite of our move Wilson undertook this step; it is even certain that he did not vary from his original project. But, on the other hand, it has been learned from other sources how deeply he was annoyed by the fact that we anticipated him, and, above all, that on this account he was placed in the unpleasant position of defending himself against the reproach that there must be some connection between his move and ours. But what appears to me to be by far the most injurious consequence is that our peace proposal called forth the offensive rejection of the Entente which destroyed every hope of bringing about peace through political means, and at the same time every belief in the possibility of a favorable result from any mediation which Wilson might undertake. The conclusion will be found in connection with the answer to the question as to the reasons why the mediation move failed. Here the conclusion primarily to be reached is, in my opinion, that the position taken by the Entente with regard to our peace proposal affords the weightiest reason for concluding that the "possibilities of peace" expressed above did not exist.

As a further reason for this interpretation, I have referred to the doubts which were entertained as to whether Wilson would exercise himself sufficiently to bring the Entente to accept his efforts in behalf of peace in such way as to guarantee our territorial integrity. It is not my desire at this point to again open the question of whether or not Wilson was entitled to the confidence placed in him, a point which has been so widely discussed in the hearings before the investigating committee. Nevertheless, it has been clearly established that the distrust toward America in that critical period had a very great effect upon the policy pursued by the Central Powers, and that this feeling was not altogether without cause has been nowhere indicated in as clear a manner as in the statements of Count Bernstorff, according to whom it was precisely this mediation by the United States which would have constituted the only means of keeping America out of the war.

In the second part of his closing remarks, the recording secretary answers the question inquiring into the reasons why Germany did not take advantage of the situation which was created by the Wilson move, to bring about a general understanding, his answer being to the effect that it was the willingness on the part of Germany to bring the war to a close by the military means of the initiation of an unrestricted U-boat warfare, which destroyed the possibilities of peace. As I regard the matter, this answer is not satisfactory. Who was it that entertained this desire? Without doubt it was the fleet, moved by the very natural ambition to bring about victory. And to a certain extent the Supreme High Command of the land forces, which naturally preferred to have the end of the war brought about by military means rather than by political endeavors. But to attribute such a desire to those who were responsible for the Imperial policy is, in my opinion, to

go completely astray. On the contrary, here we find the announced desire to arrive at an understanding with the enemy. Even the recording secretary expressly recognized in the course of our debate the conscientiousness with which the Imperial Government caught at and followed out every opportunity for peace or even for a *rapprochement* which offered itself. It is certain that, in the last analysis, the initiation of the U-boat war destroyed the possibility of peace, but the Imperial Government only reached the determination to pursue this course with a heavy heart and after it had come to realize beyond any question that, as the result of the scornful answers of the Entente, the political understanding which it was so urgently striving for at that time was simply not to be had. And, moreover, the political leaders did not entertain the intention of "bringing their opponents to their knees" and to dictate a peace to them; they only clung to the hope that the U-boat weapon would bring about what their peace proposal and Wilson's note had failed to bring about, to wit, a readiness on the part of their adversaries to negotiate. I certainly do not care to pose unqualifiedly as a champion of the decision reached by the political leaders, and have, in particular, nothing to suggest in connection with the remarks of the recording secretary with regard to the insufficiency of the information which was accepted as a reason for the resolve to enter upon the unrestricted U-boat war, true though it may be that the last word in this regard can only be spoken after it has been possible to get a perfectly clear conception of the political effects of the U-boat war on the possibilities of peace. The investigating committee has left itself open to attack in this connection, since it has failed to take up this point. I think, however, that justice demands that the tragic and compelling situation in which the authorities found themselves when making their decision should be set out in a manner absolutely clear-cut and free from doubt in undertaking the task of answering the question, why the possibilities of peace were destroyed, which situation Professor Bonn characterized aptly as follows: We should not forget that the authorities had to reach their decisions with a watch, so to speak, in their hands. We must try to picture the situation in the light in which it would have had to be considered by the Administration at that time in case it should have decided against the unrestricted U-boat warfare—a situation which would have been positively the best which could possibly have been conceived, speaking from the standpoint of the Entente. The battering effect of the war then being waged on two fronts would have continued—a war which, in the opinion of the Supreme High Command of the Army, we were no longer able to endure. Our military situation would have grown weaker with the passing of each day. Simultaneously an exchange of notes with regard to the possibilities of peace would have been instituted which it would have been absolutely within the power and to the interest of the Entente to drag out as long as it chose. The weaker

our military position became, the less likely would be the opportunity of any success on Wilson's part. We must entertain no doubt about the fact that a decision amounting to a refusal to go ahead with the U-boat war would even at that time have had the significance of a military capitulation. In these days it was wholly impossible to foresee that the Russian revolution, not the United States, would have rescued us from this terrible situation.

It is perhaps unnecessary to call attention to the fact that precisely that witness, Count Bernstorff, upon whose statements, dispatches, and counsel the investigating committee has with thorough justification placed the very greatest weight, was not informed about our military situation at that critical time and, according to his statement, constantly proceeded on the false premise that we could not be conquered unless America entered into the war, and as the result of this that we would have had time to let an American peace action run its course.

The recording secretary reproaches the Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann in the course of his concluding remarks, on the ground that he, in concert with the Reichstag, did not continue the fight against the unrestricted U-boat warfare. In my opinion, the recording secretary here fails to give sufficient consideration to the situation which existed at that time. What prospects did such a controversy hold out? Did not the rejection on the part of the Entente destroy every basis for such a conflict? When all is said and done, the Reichstag would have been confronted with the following alternative: Capitulation, or the putting into operation of an instrumentality of warfare which had been described by our military authorities as absolutely effective. Can it be doubtful how this question would have been determined in view of all the circumstances? But in spite of all this, it may be suggested that the Imperial Chancellor was bound as by a moral duty to take up the fight. This view, however, overlooks a very important point, to wit, the effect on the enemy, a point which is all too often overlooked by the critics of today, but which was peculiarly obvious to the representatives in foreign countries who, like myself, spent the war period in neutral States. The effect which such a controversy between Bethmann and the Reichstag, on the one hand, and Hindenburg and Ludendorff, on the other, would have had upon our enemies, can be judged by the manifestations of glee with which the objectively correct Reichstag resolution of the summer of 1917 and the reasons therefor were received by our enemies. As we of course are aware, the existence of such a controversy and of its causes could not by any possibility have been kept from the knowledge of our enemies. The result would necessarily have been the prolongation of the war.

If I may venture to adduce another statement applicable to the report generally, it is the following. In my opinion, the report does not distinguish with sufficient definiteness between the situation which was presented to the

consideration of those in power in the winter of 1916-17, and that situation submitted to our view today. It is true that, in direct connection with this circumstance, the recording secretary has announced in a spirit of loyalty that there can be no talk of the rendering of a moral judgment upon the acts of the government existing at that time, and that the task of the investigating committee can only be that of clearing up facts. But in my opinion, the German people have less interest in the establishment of historic proof (which as a matter of fact is not possible today and may perhaps never become so) than they have in being able to form a judgment as to whether or not the government was at fault. For this reason, it seems to me to be the chief task of the investigating committee—and this, too, in the interest of the authorities in charge of the conduct of the war—to reconstruct the situation to the utmost possible point of exactness, as it existed at the time those great events occurred; and from case to case to differentiate between what was a matter of knowledge at that time and what has not become known until the present time, so that everyone may be in a position to put the question to himself as to how *he* would probably have acted if he had been occupying a position of responsibility.

I am at the point of concluding, and am perfectly aware of the fact that I have fallen far short of carrying out the task which should have been mine as an expert, of rendering an expert opinion with regard to Wilson's peace move. It was a physical impossibility in the short time available to prepare so exhaustive an opinion. If in spite of this I decided to take the stand with regard to what appear to me to be the most material features of the concluding remarks of the report which is before us, this is done in the hope that the committee may perhaps have opportunity to amend or amplify the report in regard to this or that item. My suggestions in the matter may be stated in the following concrete form:

1. Question 1 should be more definitely stated, as, for instance: Did possibilities for peace negotiations exist of such a nature that the expectation of Germany and her allies with regard to maintaining the integrity of their territorial possessions might be met?

2. Replying to this point: This question can be definitely answered neither in the affirmative nor in the negative, since there exist basic grounds which could serve as the foundation for either conclusion.

3. The causes which resulted in the failure of the Wilson move are to be principally attributed to the non-receptivity of our enemies.

4. A reference to the fact that the investigation could not be extended to include the political and military results of the U-boat war, and that therefore even today the resolve of the Imperial Government with regard to carrying out the unrestricted U-boat war can not be exhaustively studied.

ROMBERG.

3. OPINION OF DR. M. J. BONN

In view of duties of an urgent nature which have been assigned to me, it has not been possible for me to work out a special expert judgment. I have had to limit myself to setting down a few notes, since in the ten days which were granted us I should not have been able to write the book which I would have had to write in order to do full justice to the questions arising in the course of the discussion.

I give my unqualified approval to a number of the basic principles announced by Councilor Schaefer. That a complete and perfect picture can not result from our investigations, is a matter which is beyond question; and it is equally true that for this purpose a knowledge of American affairs is above all things requisite. To the extent that this knowledge can be obtained from the material which has been placed at our disposal, I believe that I can lay claim to be so informed. But I desire to state that even that does not mean that the last word has been spoken. On this account, my statements will, viewed from this standpoint, prove to be much less positive in nature with regard to many matters than those of Councilor Schaefer who, although he has emphasized the lack of reliability of the material before us more positively than any of us have done, has nevertheless deduced results of a decidedly more definite nature.

I

1. The first question appears to me to be this: Were we, at the critical period, desirous of making peace, or did we believe that the prolongation of the war would bring about better results? To this question there can be, in my opinion, but one answer. An early peace was desired in all circles, military as well as civil. Therein consists the tragedy of the entire peace move. His Excellency Mr. Romberg just cited a remark which I made, namely, that those who undertook the peace move stood from beginning to end with a watch in their hands. It was in the fall of 1916 that the conviction had been reached that the war could not be won on land by military means. (Interruption: Already in January, 1916!) Certainly, but it was energetically reasserted in the autumn.

2. Now there were two available possibilities. We could either obtain peace through negotiations by use of political means, or we could play our card, which consisted of the U-boat war—a card which Helfferich designated as the last in case it was not trumps. At the very moment when we came to consider the last-named possibility seriously, the necessity, based on calculations which are before us, arose of successfully bringing about peace negotiations by the first of February, 1917. For the reasoning of the supporters of an unrestricted U-boat warfare was as follows: It was on February 1 that the U-boat war must begin. If it did not, then England would have the

necessary time to bring in her supplies; then the matter would not be finished by the first of August, and we would be forced into a new winter campaign which we should not be able to endure. I believe that I have stated these arguments correctly from an objective point of view. Now this meant that a limited time only was given to every attempt to obtain peace through political ends. It is perfectly obvious to everyone familiar with political matters that peace negotiation, quite irrespective of what its material prospects were, would probably come to naught as the result of this; for it is not possible to conduct politics with a watch in your hand. (Interruption: One often plays in luck, your Excellency, but you can not rely upon it.)

3. A new element enters here. There was general agreement with regard to the purpose about reaching a peace, but not over the kind of peace to be reached. We had to be perfectly clear on the point that if political methods were used we could obtain nothing but a peace of understanding. By all means, a peace of understanding meant a clear-cut solution of the Belgian question. Any man who, urged on by no matter what motive, considered it necessary to exceed the *status quo*, above all regarding matters in the west, simply could not believe in the successful outcome of a peace of understanding. As the result of examining the peace conditions which were submitted to us, I am not inclined to reach such far-going results as the recording secretary has arrived at. I believe that the political leaders would have been absolutely disposed to limit themselves on the whole to the question of a simple peace of understanding, once they had taken their seats at the conference table. At the same time, I am quite in agreement with the recording secretary when he finds that the military authorities were opposing this idea with might and main. If the political authorities had been successful, they would only have been able to attribute this result to the use of the same methods which we were anxious to employ with regard to our opponents. The idea was to bring the parties to the conference table because of the conviction that the military authorities of the Allied Powers, as well as those of Germany, would then no longer be in a position to go beyond the modest demands which a peace of understanding held out.

4. If what was wanted was a peace of understanding, there were of course two methods available. We could either ask for it directly or we could make use of mediation. Matters had gone so far in this war that with the exception of America there was no Great Power which was not arrayed on one side or the other. The bitterness of feeling was such that peace could not have been brought about as would have been possible in the days of the past, that is, by the method of having a neutral Power address soothing remarks to two governments. Let me present a simile to you in this connection. The war had become on both sides a war of the people, and he who was desirous of bringing about peace had to handle the belligerents as you

handle two fighting bulldogs when you separate them; he had to be in a position to sprinkle pepper in their noses. He was bound to have the means of exerting pressure. Therefore it was quite obvious from the start that secondary neutral Powers could accomplish nothing. The only Power which could do it was America.

As a matter of fact, there were very many weighty reasons why we should have made use of the American mediation. We had constantly had disputes with America which had only been half settled. We were perfectly well aware that America would not be in a position to exercise true neutrality with regard to both sides, either practically or formally, after matters had developed up to a certain point. Therefore it was essential to overcome the difficulties in the way that President Wilson once expressed: That he hoped to be able to offer us a sensible peace; that that would be much easier (I am quoting from memory) than a restoration of international law in its entirety, also with regard to England.

II

The second question which we have to consider is this: Did Wilson desire peace mediation, that is, the arrangement of a peace which did not undermine the *conditions of Germany's existence*? With regard to this point, matters were as follows:

I. From the very first day of the war, President Wilson entertained and expressed the desire to negotiate for peace. His step of August 10, 1914, is well known. Besides this, we are informed by documentary evidence that a web was constantly being spun over Constantinople by Ambassador Morgenthau in the fall of 1915. We further know that House came to Europe on missions again and again. It is evident from the whole nature of the President and from all the policies previously expressed by him (for the purpose of rendering a judgment having a bearing on the years 1916 and 1917, it is necessary to take as the basis of judgment his previous policies and not those subsequently adopted by him), that he was a man who had made the idea of the juridical determination of disputes and of the settlement of conflicts by means of mediation the guiding star of his foreign policy. The note of idealism which he sounded drew him along this path. But he was drawn along it by some very real interests of the practical politician as well. In this regard, his is a very complicated make-up. He is without doubt a man subject to the influence of general ideas who frequently knows but little about details, and who, in spite of all learning, is lacking in knowledge of things not American, an attribute common to the American. But he certainly is not a dreamer walking with his head in the air, particularly with regard to domestic American questions. As has always been said about him: "He keeps his ear close to the ground" in order to hear what the public opinion of America has to say.

2. Now things had developed in such a way that it was henceforth impossible for him to avoid a breaking off of relations with Germany, if not a declaration of war, unless peace should be concluded at an early date. I will not again go into the question as to how the U-boat war came about, or picture the long list of differences. But in any event, Wilson had put himself in a position where he was bound to break off relations with Germany if Germany engaged in another U-boat action, unless he was to make himself a laughing stock for all time. It is without doubt that this move would then have been followed by a declaration of war, in view of the existing circumstances, especially if those circumstances were not altered. Furthermore, he was bound by the purely selfish reasons of a party politician to attempt to prevent the recurrence of the unrestricted U-boat war, in order not to be driven into declaring war himself—for he had been reelected as the one who had “kept us out of war” and not only out of war with Germany but out of war with Mexico. Therein lies the real meaning of the statements of Count Bernstorff, that war with America would have come except for some move in the direction of mediation. This does not mean that America would have declared war in any case—for instance, because her pride had been injured—if the mediation move came to nothing; but it does mean that the unrestricted U-boat war would have been renewed if the mediation move did not prove successful, and that the resumption of the unrestricted U-boat warfare must lead to war.

3. But (and this is the third point) the only right thing for President Wilson to have done as a patriotic American was to bring about the end of the war in such a way that no far-reaching fundamental disturbance of the balance of power in the world could occur. When he spoke about a war without victors, he was not simply playing in a sentimental vein; on the contrary, from the American view-point he was standing on firm ground; he was advocating peace, he was advocating adjustment, he was advocating disarmament, not because America was not in a condition to arm, but because he wished to spare his people the expense of armament and the difficulties attendant upon militarism in a democracy.

4. In this effort he was without any doubt whatsoever (and this is my fourth point) supported by the opinion of the American people as it had come to develop itself in the fall of 1916. We can ask whomsoever we please—anyone who was over there and is vested to even a small extent with political understanding—it is always reported that in 1916 the attitude toward Germany had become materially more favorable. That does not mean that the Americans had become pro-German; simply that they were no longer passionately pro-Ally. They never were pro-British; that can be seen today, when the anti-British feeling is more pronounced than ever. But they were pro-Belgian and pro-French—pro-Belgian from sentimental recognition of an injustice done, and pro-French partly as a result of old

traditions and partly because there were not many Frenchmen in America; and because a man is accustomed to hold in higher esteem that nation which he has had less opportunity to study than the nation which has furnished him with many opportunities for observing its nationals.

III

At the same time, it must be thoroughly understood that from the standpoint of the German Government it was justified in having a feeling of the greatest distrust with regard to President Wilson.

1. Whether he was anti-German or not in his inmost being, nobody knows. We could not know what he was thinking, and his whole temperament is, moreover, leaving aside for the moment the purely political, opposed to ours. It is further not to be denied that during the course of the entire war he endeavored to maintain the forms of neutrality, but that he did not keep neutral in spirit.

To these was added the third reason, to wit, that he was a vacillating character. He only acted when he was absolutely convinced that public opinion was with him and that success was certain. He is unusually capable of so manipulating public opinion as to have it reach a given point at a given moment in accordance with his desires. But he who is accustomed to calculate upon the effects of public opinion knows that it will not do to work with a watch in his hand. It requires time. And it was always a question of requiring more time, since incidents one after another kept coming up continually to prevent Wilson from acting.

2. This distrust is very fully justified through another and more deep-rooted cause. It was evident, according to Wilson's statements, that he had far-reaching designs for a reconstruction of the world. At the same time, we are not to understand by this that he was willing to trouble himself to any appreciable extent with regard to the details of the peace program. If Versailles has proved anything, it has proved the following: That President Wilson was of the opinion that the idea of the League of Nations and of the new world order was of far greater importance than the actual fundamental principles which should form the basis for this new order of things. In Versailles, Wilson showed no particular interest for details, although he had there at his beck and call a staff of experts of unusual ability. He never listened to them. This we learn not only from Keynes, but I know it as the result of statements from individuals. They simply did not interest him. It was his league of nations that interested him. Naturally, before he had his experts about him, his information was much slighter still.

We must also admit that the inquiry as to whether or not it was expedient to entrust the mediation move to Wilson, was a question which we might well call doubtful, if we take into consideration Wilson's character and the

entire field in which he moved. This is a question which should have been answered before any agreement was entered into with President Wilson concerning a mediation move. But from the moment at which we entered upon this move, when we—if I may be allowed to express myself bluntly—had bestridden the horse of our choice, we had to maintain our seat. If we had not done that, our entire policy would have described a zig-zag course.

3. Now it came to pass that through circumstances attributable not only to his own character but to other happenings, the Wilson move was constantly delayed. First came the declaration of war by Roumania. He who is endowed with even a little common-sense knowledge of men must admit that Wilson's peace mediation, or any other peace move, would surely have been destined to failure if it had been submitted to the Allies at the very moment when a new army was placed at their disposal. Of course he could not do that, and we do not need to make this point the subject of further comment. When matters had proceeded to the point where the Roumanian hand no longer played trumps, the American presidential election was so imminent that Wilson could not undertake anything else. Under conditions which existed at a time quite definitely antedating the election he would have been able to use his peace move as a plank in his election platform—it was concerning this that Count Bernstorff expressed himself. But when once it occurs that political parties stand over against each other in ordered battle array, then it is too late to inject a new and important question without the danger of setting everything topsy-turvy. So it was necessary for him to wait until after the election.

Then came the Belgian deportations. There is no question but that they outraged public opinion to the greatest degree.

So I admit the fact that the Imperial Government had every reason to be suspicious. It had very weighty reasons for its anxiety lest Wilson would not come forward at the right time with his peace move. Then came the question as to what it was to do. In this connection v. Bethmann-Hollweg said to me that to indicate to Wilson that we would take other measures if he did not come forward with his mediation within a definite time, would have been folly. I must admit that I am less convinced of that fact today than I was at that time. If we desired the mediation of President Wilson—and it had been as a matter of fact accepted—and if he who had undertaken the task hesitated all too long in his attempt to put it into operation, the only recourse left was to give him the sign "quickly, please." I am convinced that Count Bernstorff would have found ways and means to present the matter to President Wilson in such a way that he would have bestirred himself; for the idea of the peace mediation lay close to his heart. This appeared later.

4. Now it is very characteristic that the distrust in the mediation activities of President Wilson rose to its height when he had actually moved in

the matter. After he, urged on by the German peace proposal, set his own plan in motion, he made no further stops by the way. He proceeded from stage to stage with absolute consistency and, in fact, with astounding rapidity for a man of his characteristics. I remind you of Count Bernstorff's various telegrams bearing upon this course of events. I remind you that Wilson did not allow himself to be warned off by the policy of rejection adopted by the Allies, that he came out with his message of the 22d of January, and that even after that he submitted his mediation in a far-reaching and even semiofficial form. I believe, then, that we must admit that this distrust of Wilson was justifiable. And justifiable, too, was the displeasure caused by his hesitating methods. But from the moment when we determined to work in conjunction with him, we were bound to do so in actuality, or we were bound, if he delayed too much, to give him to understand that matters could not proceed on this basis. To allow him to keep on calmly negotiating after we had given up belief in his mediation activities and in his desire to mediate was intrinsically an inconsistency of logic.

5. Concerning which we may remark: This inconsistency is due to the fact that Wilson proceeded over and beyond the mark which he had originally set for himself. But, I believe, that is not quite correct. It is not a question of whether or not Wilson had the intention of meddling in the details of European affairs; this can not be too strongly stated. He was not acquainted with them and he did not want to trouble himself about them. He wanted to be the great messenger of peace who would give the world a lasting peace. Perhaps in the peculiar intermingling of sober thought with imagination which is his, he dreamed that sometime he would stand before the world in the position of his predecessor, George Washington, to whom Americans refer as being first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen. It is wholly probable that he hoped that people would say of him, "first in peace, first in the hearts of men."

But if he desired to limit the part which he was to play, and not to cooperate to any material extent in the matter of working out the details of the peace agreement, but was willing to be satisfied to guarantee, through a league of nations, the new order of things which had come into existence between belligerent and belligerent, it naturally followed that, first of all, the readjustment of Europe must be made to assume such a form as to give promise of permanence. For this reason, Wilson was under the obligation of bringing the participants to the conference table. And in this connection this was the situation: We were unwilling to announce outright our peace conditions, because we proceeded on the fundamentally correct theory that once we sat about the conference table a way would be found for everything. The Entente on its part was just as clear on this point as we. The Entente knew that from the moment when we should have taken our seats together at the conference table, no power on earth could have

brought its peoples out into the trenches again, any more than our people. Accordingly, they did not wish to take their places at the conference table, and it was Wilson's task to direct them there. He could attain his ends by the use of various methods. Of course the simplest method would have been for him to have said to the English: "The Germans are ready to take their seat with you at the round table. Are you willing to do that also?" But it was absolutely out of the question that matters would proceed in any such manner as this. He could only hope to get results on the condition that the Belgian question, which in a sense would have to be in the nature of a credit delivery at any and all conferences, was cleared up. Hence it is quite easy to understand that Wilson sought information about the German conditions—he was already acquainted with those of the Entente—and offered his services as a clearing house. By doing this, he decidedly did not overstep the part of a mediator. He who is acquainted with the most elementary principles of international law knows that mediations of this kind can not be made in the following form: "A is ready to speak with B; let me suggest that this room is at your disposal; the gentlemen will meet there"—but that there is always quite a group of preliminary questions to be met. Wilson's plan was to have the starting point of these conferences consist, on the one side, of the conditions which the Allies had referred to in the most arrogant manner in their announcements and, on the other side, the conditions which we were then to announce to him. The mere fact that we were advised by him not to be too modest is a certain indication of the circumstance that he was of the opinion that the Allies were demanding too much. It seems to me that Wilson's wish, to proceed further with the matter, must not be looked upon as an indication on his part that he desired to meddle unduly in the material conditions put forward. On the other hand, the wish to know more about things may perhaps have been indiscreet. Nevertheless, it is in any case an indication that Wilson desired to proceed in an energetic manner, after he had once made up his mind to undertake the negotiation of a peace.

I believe that there is no need for entertaining any doubt about the existence of the good will to bring about a peace at that time—a peace without victory, as is stated in the message of the 22d of January.

And I am also of the belief that in the case of so astute a politician the announcements which President Wilson made before the committee of Senators, in answer to Senator McCumber, must not be taken too seriously. It is a characteristic of all politicians to declare after the fact: "I pursued my purpose in all consistency; it was bound to come out so." And moreover it is apparent from our documents on file¹ that these statements made to the Senate were of so cautious and qualified a nature as to admit of any conclusion. Their purport is in the main simply this, that Wilson assumed

¹ Stenographic Minutes, 3d sess., *post*, p. 308.

in 1919 that things were bound to take the course that they later did. This is the usual justification by means of a hypothetical approach to the question. And when Minister of State Helfferich declares with the utmost abandon of pathos: The Wilson of Versailles is really the Wilson of 1916, I should not like to be the one to turn the tables and inquire as to whether Mr. Helfferich, the author of the opinion against the U-boat war of 1916-17, was really the Helfferich who testified before the investigating committee. In a gathering of serious-minded politicians we really should not be obliged to discuss these matters in detail. It is quite clear that if the policy carried out by a man as anxious to have his own way as Mr. Wilson is, did not bring about the results which he wished to be brought about, he hates with all the hate that his soul can contain those who have made it impossible for him to effect it.

IV

A different question appears to me to be of much greater importance. Was it possible that in the year 1916-17 Wilson entertained the hope that he would be able to bring the Allies to a peace of understanding? I believe that we must all be perfectly clear about one thing; in the political field, it is for the most part impossible to represent exactly even an occurrence which has taken place, for the motives are very frequently different from those which are assigned. It is naturally very easy to assert, but never to prove, that that which was never carried out would undoubtedly have met with success. I agree with his Excellency v. Romberg on the point that I would not go so far as to state so emphatically that, since Wilson was only willing to act if the outcome was certain, the conclusion must necessarily be drawn that since he did act the outcome was assured. This conclusion is not wholly convincing for the following reason. On the 18th of December, Wilson was no longer acting in the capacity of an untrammelled man. At that time he was put in a more or less difficult position as the result of our proposal. But we should not forget one thing. As a matter of fact, America had at that time tremendous resources, and even then—it must have been in December, 1916—had already made the attempt to exercise this power in the realm of finance. Even at that time the Federal Reserve Board, which was the American central bank, had warned the banks not to buy English securities. That was no mere accident, but a very definite political move. We are informed not only by Keynes, but we have known since the year 1917, as the result of announcement of the then Chancellor of the Treasury, Bonar Law, that without American financial aid, the situation of the Allies would have become difficult in the extreme.

This statement can not be deprived of its force by pointing to the situation in Germany. Germany could finance itself because it had the money to pay for its own production. It could, therefore, pay either with treasury

securities or with bank notes. The entire war market of the Allies was situated in the United States and in other parts of the world. It was only by having credit in those localities that the war material could be paid for.

This situation must be made clear. If America was opposed thereto, the matter of providing foodstuffs, as well as war material, was absolutely out of the question. Without the help of American financiers, financing in South America, as well as in part at least in the English colonies, would have been quite impossible.

It is only necessary to call to mind again the agitation which took place in America when the first Allied loan in the United States went through. How did this loan come to be made? The banker for the Allies, vested with supreme powers in the matter, was the banking house of J. P. Morgan & Company. The entire American industry made deliveries only on a cash basis, and the cash had to be immediately forthcoming. It was provided by Morgan. The day came, however, when the obligations were so tremendous that even a house like the Morgan house could no longer carry the burden. So it came about that the attempt had to be made to shift the burden of the banks, which up to that time had given the credits in question, onto the American public. That was the cause of the great Allied loan of August, 1915, which had no marked results. For it is true that up to the present day foreign loans have never met with great success in the United States, and for a very simple reason. You can take out a mortgage on any American farm, which earns 8 per cent interest, and then you can pass every day and look the farm over and see how safe the money is. Why should they give the European debtors credit on the strength of a poor security and at 5 per cent—the Americans despise the Europeans and particularly do the common people despise them—if they can get 8 per cent at home? Thus it was quite out of the question that the Allies would be in a position to carry on the war unless the financing of the Allies in the United States had been carried on with the most reckless energy.

This should above all convince those who take the ground that England is a cool and calm calculator, and was not to have been forced to her knees through the U-boat war but only brought to the point of being made so "reasonable" as to realize that "the business is getting bad and I refuse to participate any more." He who entertains this opinion must admit, without further argument, that through the mere denial of American credit, the opportunity was afforded for causing such a slump in business as to result in the English being brought very quickly to these views, provided that they were accessible to them at all. It was not likely that America would take sharp embargo measures against England, because that would have jeopardized enormous American interests, although even that was perfectly possible in view of the public opinion prevailing at the time. For it was then that the great increase of prices began in America, it was then that

it became difficult to erect new buildings, because steel and iron, which play a far more important part in American building than they do in our country, had risen in price to a tremendous extent. At that time the poor harvest the world over had driven the cost of living up to the sky. In a word, the situation was such that even an embargo on exports would have been conceivable. However, it did not appear likely. So far as a limitation on credit was concerned, President Wilson would have had practically all America on his side without making an effort; for the credit rates had been advanced with regard to everybody as the result of the war.

The situation, then, was as follows: During the critical period it was safe to assume that Wilson desired to bring about, through mediation, a peace of understanding at which the United States would have taken no part in territorial questions; and this assumption could have been safely maintained until the 27th of January. For at that time he again made the effort and in fact in an unusually far-reaching manner. We were also justified in assuming that he would have had sufficient power back of him to have his efforts bring some results.

V

But suppose I take the following position and state that, assuming that we remained distrustful, what should our proper course have been? It is perfectly obvious that under those conditions the German peace proposal was not the proper step. On this point I am in entire agreement with his Excellency v. Romberg. I consider the German peace proposal in the light of a ruinous mistake—mistake, I say, not guilt. For in the capacity of an expert who made it his constant rule to express his views with regard to these things in an unabashed way, even prior to the meeting of the committee, I have always maintained the ground that in the political field the word "guilt" should be eliminated as far as possible—because, if I may make use of a homely form of speech, lack of capacity is a misfortune, but no crime. In any event, this peace proposal (Delegate SCHULTZ-BROMBERG: Of the 12th of December)—of the 12th of December—was for the following reasons a terrible mistake:

1. Whether it insulted Wilson personally or not, is a question which I shall not pursue. We could have well said at that time: It is no longer a question of running the risk of hurting Wilson's feelings; we must go forward ourselves. That is an argument which, so far as it goes, is worthy of consideration.

2. But as regards the following considerations the situation is quite different. We were informed by America that a German peace proposal would be looked upon as a sign of weakness. At the moment I have not the document at hand, but if I am incorrect my memory must be very much at fault. (Expert v. ROMBERG: Should not speak of peace, that is the only thing.) I have simply paraphrased a cautiously asserted announcement in

clear-cut terms, for it is quite apparent that if we were not permitted to speak of peace and the word peace were not to be mentioned, the fact that we were making a peace proposal would go much further and be a much more serious matter. I do not believe that there will be any resulting difference of opinion.

This error was not made good by the fact of our coming out with a peace proposal at the time that the military situation was favorable, because the people to whom it was addressed, i. e., our Allied opponents, were at least as well able as we to make a true military estimate of the situation. It might have made an impression upon German newspaper readers, but not upon the Supreme Command either in the case of the French or the British. These commands looked upon the situation in the light in which it actually existed, to wit, as had, of course, already been recognized by us at that time, that while it was true that the situation in Roumania had been saved, we had not by as much as a single step thereby approached the ultimate decision. The very fact that this peace proposal assumed more or less the form of a challenge made its rejection by our opponents all the easier. It was possible at this time to work up a psychological disturbance on the part of the belligerents through their statesmen to an extent quite different from that which had formerly been the case. (The CHAIRMAN: The Emperor's speech!) The Emperor's speech operated naturally along the same lines.

Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg has emphasized the fact that it was his wish to have two irons in the fire. In my opinion, the situation existing at that time was such that one iron operated as a hinderance to the other. I am willing to admit without further argument that in the absence of the German peace proposal of the 12th of December, it is possible that Wilson would not have come out with his move on the 18th of that month. We can not prove, however, that this is or is not the case. But even if Wilson was not held back by the German peace proposal, yes, even if it is possible to argue that his move was stimulated by it, the chances of the success of his mediation were to such an extent broken up that they could not be again restored. In this way we played into the hands of the Allied war party.

3. But there is another point which seems to me to be worthy of consideration. Assuming that the position was taken by us that it was not within the power of President Wilson to bring about the peace even if he were inclined so to do, in what other way would peace have been brought about? Would we have accomplished this by sounding a general peace call? The Roumanian victory was a fact the significance of which was recognized by the Allies exactly as it was recognized by us, regardless of whether we should make a peace proposal or not. If we were convinced that President Wilson could not make good in the affair because, in spite of his good intention to do so, he simply lacked the power (we must do him the justice of

assuming that he had the good intention as long as we were working hand in hand with him), where were we to obtain the means of making the Allies ready for peace as the result of any declarations that we could make?

4. But in addition to this, there is still another very important point to be considered. This announcement followed immediately on the heels of our peace proposal: "The Germans are making this proposal simply to use as a spring-board from which they may again take up unrestricted U-boat warfare." It is well known that it was from time to time a matter of debate as to whether the U-boat war could or could not be resumed after the rejection of a peace proposal. Since the entire U-boat debate in Germany had been carried on behind closed doors, but still in such a way that, on the whole, everyone always knew how the current was heading, it is natural that that, too, did not remain a secret. It is without doubt that the circumstance that we came forward with a peace proposal gave our opponents the opportunity of saying "this is only a feint."

5. All of this resulted in the fact that Wilson's peace move of the 18th to the 21st of December was, so far as we can tell, very much more unfavorably received than it would have been received otherwise. I am therefore of the opinion that the German peace proposal of the 12th was the decisive error which was made. And in accord with the statements of his Excellency v. Romberg, whose exact knowledge with regard to these matters comes from his personal experience, and precisely because our belief in the results to be expected from the peace proposal was so great, the following conclusion must be reached: The issue before us does not consist in the placing of blame on anybody, but in determining the existence of a ruinous political mistake. It can be properly said that the possibility of peace became extinct at that moment when the German peace proposal was sent out. It led directly to the result that, outwardly at least, Wilson's move was received very much more unfavorably than it would have been otherwise. The consequence of this was that our hope of being able to bring the war to a conclusion by a peace of understanding was for the time being banished. The last responses of the Allies had not even reached us before we were assuring each other that "this card is not trumps, our only trump is the U-boat war." The currents of opinion, which had alternated between the question as to whether to attempt to bring about the termination of the war by a peace of understanding or to bring it to a victorious end by means of the U-boat warfare, settled at that time definitely in their course in the direction of the U-boat war. The result was that Wilson proceeded with his peace move, that it was our opinion that this peace move—it was probably on the 7th of January—should be handled in a dilatory fashion; but that we gave up our belief that a peace of understanding could be expected in the near future, and deliberately determined to go ahead with the U-boat war. And then came the 27th of January, the date on which Wilson actually

provided us with the proof that he did not deserve to be treated with the lack of confidence in this matter which had been felt toward him. He pressed his peace negotiation with energy and expressed the hope, or at any event House did so, that he would be able to bring the peace to a conclusion within a comparatively short time. At that time the die had already been cast. Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg attempted to interrupt the course of events once more. But he allowed himself to be satisfied by a technical opinion coming from the Navy, the effect of which was that it would be impossible to recall the U-boats. I am not of the opinion that these technical opinions covered the situation in its entirety, and that it would have been impossible to make the attempt to recall the U-boats. And I am, above all, not of the impression that, even if this attempt had not met with complete success, in the face of all this, the breaking off of relations with the United States would necessarily have come. But these are assumptions which can not be submitted to the test of proof.

6. To my mind, it is perfectly conceivable that Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg hesitated to take the responsibility of halting both Army and Navy with the exclamation "You have got to wait," after the peace mediation had developed to such an extent as to show that a tangible result could not be expected by the 1st of February. For in this case he would have been held responsible for the fact that the U-boat war, which even then might have begun a few months later, might have failed to bring results on account of this delay. The old arguments as well as additional appeals would have been brought to bear, such as those that are even today dinned into our ears—that the U-boat war would have been successful if it had been carried on in the year 1916—an assertion which, submitted to logical analysis, simply amounts to the statement that the U-boat war would have brought about the most successful results just at the time when we had the fewest U-boats. But I believe that, speaking from the political standpoint, Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, and with him Mr. Helfferich, should logically have declared: "We can not be responsible to the world for the fundamental change from that policy which we have advocated up to this time." He would have had to resign. I am perfectly clear in my own mind that he was acting very largely under the inspiration of patriotic influences when he stated that his resignation could have been looked upon as indicating that he entertained some doubt about the possibility of the success of the U-boat war, and that he did not wish to express his disavowal of the military policy in that critical hour. I am, however, of the opinion that this extreme conscientiousness was wasted, as the records themselves indicate. For the military authorities were perfectly ready, as is shown by the protocol of the 8th of January, 1917, to accept the retirement of Mr. Bethmann-Hollweg as part of the bargain if he had stuck to his point; and, on the other hand, if he gave in to them, to hold him up to all the world as

a champion of their course. But they were, as was made perfectly plain during this conference, perfectly ready to let him fall or, better yet, to force him out if he failed to meet their wishes.¹

It is obvious that he would not have been responsible if he had been forced out from another side. But I do not believe that the question as to who would have been responsible for the retirement of the Imperial Chancellor is material, but that the real point is, how would his resignation have affected military operations? And in view of the fact that the military authorities apparently were of the opinion that his resignation could in no way have resulted in any injurious effect upon military operations, I must state that I very deeply regret the fact that he did not at that time draw the conclusion above referred to.

For us who, after the event, take our seats about a green table, it is comparatively easy to indulge in reasoning of this kind. But I am of the opinion that if Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg had reached this conclusion, the entire situation of the German Government would, at the time of the resumption of the U-boat war, have been entirely different from what it was, so far as foreign nations were concerned. But here, too, I should like to announce emphatically what I have already stated more than once: to estimate a political situation incorrectly, can constitute a national misfortune which can and must be made subject to a political penalty, that is, retirement politically, deprivation of the further exercise of political power. That is the consequence in all States subjected to parliamentary rule. But in my opinion the erroneous estimate of a situation does not entail either moral or juridical consequences. No one of us can assert the claim that he will always recognize the correct thing to do in every situation, and that if he visualizes as correct that which is erroneous, and proceeds accordingly, he subjects himself to being penalized to that extent.

The result of my arguments, which have occupied so much space because on account of other engagements I have been obliged to speak practically extemporaneously, seems to me to be this:

I believe that in the year 1916-17, an opportunity for peace was offered or that—I will express myself still more cautiously—there existed the possibility of setting in motion a real peace mediation by America. If America had taken hold of this move fully and effectively, and it had come to naught as the result of the opposition of our enemies, and not as the result of our mistake, that alone would have been a great political victory. The reason why this peace mediation was bound to fail consisted, on the one hand, in the necessity which constantly forced us to make rapid decisions—and good results need careful reckoning. But above all else it is definitely established that it was the manifestation of this quick decision which we reached, to wit, the peace proposal of the 12th of December, 1916, which materially lessened

¹ 212, Supplements, pt. VIII, *post*, p. 1317.

the chances of success resulting from a peace mediation undertaken by the Americans with the Allies.

BONN.

4. OPINION OF PROFESSOR DR. OTTO HOETZSCH

Gentlemen, I too have lacked the time to submit an opinion which has been prepared word for word, and on this account I ask the usual permission to be allowed the opportunity of making verbal changes in the protocol. Naturally, I should not undertake to make any material changes in the text.

I shall confine myself strictly to the two questions which have been submitted to the investigating committee and for the purpose of answering which the experts have been summoned. The first question: Did opportunities for peace—that is the expression of the committee of the National Assembly—exist, so far as America and Wilson were concerned? And the second question: If this was the case, why is it that they were not taken advantage of by the German Government—by the German political branch?

I believe that the task of rendering an expert opinion can be limited to an analysis of the period ending with the final failure of the peace negotiations, that is, the end of January, 1917, and I do not agree that a complete expert opinion dealing with "errors with regard to the results of the U-boat war, etc.," has been rendered in the course of the Committee's report, column 8.¹ These things, do not, in my opinion, come within the province of the work of this investigating committee. In any event, I shall not take sides on this point.

It is precisely in this connection that the expert must, in his capacity as a historian, be completely familiar with the limits within which his judgment is to be contained and approach it with acuteness and foresight. The stand which I take with regard to the material which is before us is the following: For the most part, the material which the *German* side could submit in answer to the questions of the Second Subcommittee consists in the printed information and in the statements of witnesses now clearly spread before us. I have compared everything which I made the object of study and which I heard on that occasion, with my personal recollections set out in writing and would scarcely be able, so far as the German side is concerned, to base another material question on the subject matter. The situation is less clear with regard to the material connected with the *Austrian* policy, in connection with which a number of questions still appear to me to remain unexplained. It of course follows that we are most in the dark with regard to the other side, that is, the hostile side, and to an extent which makes a

¹ Report, *ante*, p. 147.

final judgment quite out of the question. It follows that I can base my judgment merely on the results of my own observation of things and on my study of the American papers which I was in a position, during the year 1915, to carry on with unusual care; and, further, on what has been told us from the dispatches of such experts as Professor Bonn, who was in America, Count Bernstorff, and other gentlemen who were on the other side. But a great mass of questions remain unanswered, such as questions concerning the political currents in America itself, the commercial situation, the relations with England, the interplay of political currents between London and Washington, and finally the great conundrum of President Wilson's character.

With these premises, to which I call attention most emphatically and to which I naturally return at the end, I beg to submit my judgment with regard to two questions, in all brevity, as follows:

As to the first question: *Opportunities for peace*. I submit my conviction that the term "opportunities for peace" seems to go too far, but that—and in this connection I agree with the expression of Dr. Sinzheimer—basic points of departure which might have served as the foundation for peace parleys unquestionably existed up to January, 1917, as between Germany and the United States. Three circumstances, or rather three combinations of circumstances, are to be considered in connection with this first point.

First, the relation of President Wilson to the point in question. If we examine his attitude from 1914 until 1917, when the final failure came, even as early as the spring of 1915, from the time of the first visit of Colonel House to Berlin in March, 1915, the political branch of the government could entertain no doubt that the President of the United States would authoritatively participate in the reestablishment of peace in Europe, and desired and was determined that his will should be carried out. By that visit of Colonel House in the spring of 1915 among other things the political branch of the government was unqualifiedly informed about the existence of this desire. Too little weight was paid to these announcements, not only by Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg but by Mr. v. Jagow.

Reference has already been made to the fact that Wilson carried on the presidential campaign of 1916 from the standpoint of one who, although he might not have been the one who had brought peace to the United States, was the one who had maintained peace and would continue to remain so. Accompanied by the slogan "He kept us out of war," the presidential campaign was carried to a successful conclusion by the democrats. Judging as far as is possible from without—I can get no glimpse of the baffling inner personality of Mr. Wilson—everything indicates the adoption of a deliberate policy to take a predominating part in the restitution of a European peace. We do not know to what extent this desire was expressed in confidential communications with the English or perhaps also with the French political

leaders. We know that he expressed himself to the German political leaders, as the result of the quite complete list of authentic documents which lie here before our eyes. Therefore the possibility of consulting with the United States with regard to arranging for an early peace through President Wilson—for to bring peace quickly was naturally the chief aim of the American executive—must be conceded to have existed.

At the same time, the question, whether or not it would have been possible for the German political leaders, without doing irreparable violence to the conditions on which the existence of Germany depended, to agree to the course which Wilson expected would result from the establishment of such a peace in Europe, is naturally open to every doubt. It is impossible to render today a final judgment as to whether he merely pursued the program "no victor and no vanquished." Equally impossible is it to reach a definite conclusion based on the material before us with regard to the greatly debated point of what Wilson actually desired with regard to Poland. On the other hand, every lack of confidence in Wilson's character, and all the distrust in the American policy, which was bound to increase to an extraordinary degree in the course of the delay of his move from month to month, is necessarily justified, but I repeat there is no doubt with regard to the fact that the United States was inclined to peace from 1915 until January 1917, and that as a matter of fact this desire for peace constantly increased in intensity. The first question which was put to us is, in my opinion, to be answered in the affirmative, if presented with these limitations both as to wording and meaning.

The second combination of circumstances applicable to this first question is that the German Imperial Government received perfectly lucid information regarding the situation in the United States which was brought to its attention. This is to be found in the dispatches of Count Bernstorff and his subordinates, which are now, as a whole, available for examination. Whatever may be said with regard to the diplomatic representation of Germany in Washington, it is in any event not to be contested that from the very beginning it announced itself in two fundamental propositions asserted in clear-cut terms, and did not leave the political branch of the Imperial Government in doubt with regard to their deep significance: First, the declaration of the unrestricted U-boat warfare would automatically lead to war with the United States, and, secondly, the resources of which the United States could avail itself, both material, financial and in man-power, must be considered as inexhaustible. Although—if I may venture to suggest a point of personal recollection—it is undoubted that isolated members of the budget committee of the Reichstag entertained the thought that America would merely break off relations and not declare war—an impression which doubtless was based on expressions of opinion of officials of the Imperial Administration—it is nevertheless the fact that this impression

was a mistaken one. This impression was created—at that time the dispatches of Count Bernstorff were not available to official circles outside of the political branch—although the latter had been informed fully and with no qualifications whatever, in clear-cut terms with regard to the seriousness of the situation, and even by an unbroken line of dispatches covering the years 1915 and 1916.

The third group of facts bears upon the question, what attitude the political branch took with regard to the possibility of the conclusion of a peace with the assistance of the United States. The documents which have been made public and, in part, the statements of witnesses, and my personal recollections as well, establish the fact that the political branch, that Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, was from an early date impelled by, and busied himself with, carrying out the purpose of keeping in reserve and holding fast to the United States as a peace mediator, so to speak. In the face of all the arguments raised against it—the delivery of war material, the growing financial connection between the United States and the Entente, etc.—the political branch (and this was one of the fundamental reasons for its opposition to the early attempts on the part of the fleet to increase the severity of the U-boat war) clung fast to the proposition that “it is possible that we may need the United States as a peace mediator. We must hold this possibility open for our use; the peace move which may be expected to come from the other side should be turned to our advantage.” This became stronger in the year 1916 as the German situation became more serious. The terrible danger of Germany's position during the whole of the year 1916 made its strongest and even terrifying impression upon me—which I did not feel to such an extent in 1916—as the result of information received from documents which have been submitted to our inspection. And this impression created by the documents of 1916 corresponds absolutely with all the subsequent revelations of the military and political leaders of this period. The situation was such that the attempt either had to be made to reach an early peace or the last instrumentality of war of which we could avail ourselves, the unrestricted U-boat war on the sea, would have to be used.

The following are the combinations of facts which in my opinion are to be considered in connection with the first point: The attitude of President Wilson and of American political leaders, the true representation of the situation by the German diplomatic representative, and the appreciation of the seriousness of the situation which induced the political branch, in spite of the great opposition which existed against a peace mediation on the part of the United States, to propel this mediation idea along its course with constantly increasing impetus. From all of which it is to be concluded that, even if the peace mediation was not definitely initiated by us—in my opinion this expression on the part of the report goes too far,—it was at least most certainly desired and encouraged by us, and, in fact, to an ever-increasing

degree, the more serious the situation appeared to the responsible parties in Germany.

Now the second question: Why were these opportunities which served as bases for peace parleys brought to naught by the German side?

In this connection, I too must state that the question of guilt, either in a moral or juridical sense, is not thrown open to discussion. A most careful study of the records has convinced me, as had my personal knowledge of these matters already convinced me, that the question of negligence, of personal culpability, does not enter here. On the other hand, the historian can not, in my opinion, set aside the conception of *blame*, as Professor Bonn has done. The question of historical guilt will have to be raised, and the historian will have to answer the question, whether it exists and why, with particular reference to the point as to who is to blame. My judgment from the outset is that the blame for not having taken advantage of the opportunity afforded for peace parleys is to be attributed to the political branch, and indeed to Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg personally. Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg has always, previously to and also during the entire hearing, maintained the proposition that, so far as he was concerned, he would accept the responsibility for these occurrences in its entirety. He has never from the start availed himself of the opportunity of pointing out that the stupendous mass of burdensome tasks which are placed upon the shoulders of an Imperial Chancellor demand relief, eventually a less burdensome position such as the secretaryship of state for foreign affairs, etc. During the course of events, he has constantly claimed this responsibility for his own, he has even held it clutched in his hand with anxious care, and he has always thereafter continued to claim it as his own. For this reason, he must reconcile himself to the fact that history will, in rendering her verdict, lay the blame, historically speaking, at his door—but always with the reservation which I announced at the outset.

That peace move which was contemplated by Wilson, and which was doubtless supported and assisted by us, did not run its course. What were the reasons which, on the German side, prevented this from taking place? Primarily, the ignorance of the force of American feeling, which to a certain extent could have been understood in Germany, and, even more than this ignorance, the erroneous psychological estimate of the United States. The seriousness of the situation, which already in 1915 had been brought by Colonel House to the attention of the political branch, was not given the consideration it deserved. Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg and his associates did not succeed in realizing entirely that a European peace would not have been possible without the United States, irrespective of who emerged victorious from the war, and this, I take it, is the result of an insufficient estimate of the American political situation, an insufficient knowledge of American psychology, of its relations to England, etc., etc. It doubtless

was assumed in a casual sort of way that in the end the Americans would keep out of it, and would be glad if the whole affair resulted in good business for them, and that they would leave Europe to manage her own affairs. At the same time, there could be no real doubt that the United States would take part in the termination of the war. *How?* remained an open question; that peace *could* be concluded without the participation of this tremendous commercial and political entity which was constantly coming into closer relations with the war in Europe, could never be seriously believed.

The next reasons why this action was blocked are to be found, speaking from the German side—I am making no reference to the American—in various U-boat incidents and in the theory of Bethmann-Hollweg regarding his two irons in the fire and—I shall use a harsh term—in the fact that the German statesman overrated his own powers. He ventured, when occupying a position the delicacy of which was known to him, to carry out a delicate diplomatic double negotiation—on the one hand, with the American President and, on the other hand, by means of the German peace proposal. I shall never forget the impression made upon me when I heard the speech of the Imperial Chancellor on the peace proposal of December 12, 1916. I felt as if I had received a blow; I had the instinctive feeling that a fatal error was being made. If we take further into consideration all the information which we have only just received from the records, the information with regard to the American peace mediation which, let me repeat, was followed up in full agreement with us and received our continued support, and in relation to which Ambassador Count Bernstorff doubtless did full justice to the intentions of Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg—if we take into consideration this information, which only later came to our knowledge but of which v. Bethmann-Hollweg, in December, 1916, and in connection with all phases of the question which bore on the conclusion reached by us with regard to our peace proposal, had full knowledge, it appears even more plainly to what monstrous extent this peace proposal was an error. It was necessary that a perfectly unbelievable psychological underestimate, not only of the American President, but of an American President of Wilson's vanity, should enter into the situation, in order to permit the belief that the German Imperial Chancellor could carry off the palm in this diplomatic conflict. And with this would have ended the play with the two irons—a game which, in this ticklish situation, even Prince Bismarck himself would not have undertaken.

It came to such a point that, so far as practical details were concerned, this peace move was handled by the German statesmen as if the very purpose was to bring it to ruin. That is the misfortune of Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg. He is, in my opinion, one of the most unsullied characters on earth, but he has succeeded in bringing himself, his policies, and the policies of the German Empire into a position of disrepute before the whole world,

so that they are looked down upon as standing for that lack of frankness, for equivocation, and double-dealing against which we are obliged today to battle to the full extent of our power. We know that it was not a conscious absence of honorable dealing on the part of Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, but we know that it was his lack of determination, his weakness, and a certain Machiavellism with which he played, that led to his over-estimation of his diplomatic capacity.

The most characteristic manner in which this is shown is in connection with that element which was the natural pivot for these negotiations, namely, the conditions. If Germany's situation was what it appears to have been, so far as the records show—if Germany had any interest in having the peace action of the American President run its course, it was essential to inform the other side in some way of the conditions under which Germany would be ready to enter upon peace parleys. Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg did not do this, whereupon the other side had a certain right to entertain doubts as to the desire or, shall we say, the distinct readiness, on the part of the German political branch really to make peace.

Now for the last point, concerning which we are in accord: That is, that the announcement of the unrestricted U-boat war definitely extinguished the peace movement when, it seemed, it was about to reach the point of its first practical effect, consisting of the well-known declaration of Mr. Wilson, which was communicated by Count Bernstorff, when, according to the view of the political branch, it was too late. It results from an examination of the records and from the testimony, that the political branch never presented to the Emperor the full seriousness involved in the decision of the question which it itself looked upon as of the most tremendous difficulty and as fraught with fatal possibilities. In the second place, it is established that the political branch did not give the military branch sufficient detailed information on this question which, as I repeat, it considered to be fraught with fatal issues. The chapter of the relations between the military and political branches, as familiar to these gentlemen as to me, was clarified through the testimony and the publications, which showed that the information given to the military branch by the political branch was insufficient. And the blame attaches in this connection to the political branch which, from the very beginning, was unconditionally bound to see to it that generals of the General Headquarters should have attached to their staffs a member of the political branch equal to them in rank, authority and experience, and not a young counselor of legation. To my own personal knowledge, a change of this relation originating with the military branch would hardly have met with difficulties. For instance, it would have been possible to suggest Zimmermann, who was on very good terms with Hindenburg and Ludendorff, and who would have been in a position to maintain the liaison which was essential. Irrespective of where or how we take our stand with

regard to this point, this fact will still remain, that General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg, as well as General Ludendorff, had full reason to complain that they were not sufficiently informed concerning the situation. I should like to refer to the fact that Field Marshal v. Hindenburg expressly states in his memoirs that he knew absolutely nothing about the proposal of the 27th of January. And this fact is, thirdly, again established in its application to the Reichstag. There is no question that the Reichstag was not sufficiently informed about all these occurrences. Even the circumstantial testimonial statements given in the presence of the committee have not altered the picture in this regard. It certainly was one of Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg's characteristics to keep things as much as possible to himself. This finally reacted with a vengeance. Lastly, the political branch held the resolution to enter upon the U-boat war to be fraught with fatal consequences because it jeopardized the relations with America. I believe that the terms in which Professor Bonn has just pictured the situation do not exactly describe it: "In this case, Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg should have given up his office and retired." Of course he should have done that. But it is not in this fact that the historical blame is to be found, but, as I repeat, in the circumstance that before he reached this conclusion he failed to present the decision, in all its seriousness, to the Emperor, the military branch, and the Reichstag. And neither does the above lose force by a reference to motives, spotless as they may be of themselves, that, when the determination was reached, he did not resign his post out of patriotic considerations, which I naturally respect. In my opinion, later historians will express the severest condemnation with regard to this capitulation of Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg in the critical days *before* the determination to enter upon unrestricted U-boat warfare.

I sum up with the following points: First, according to my conviction, the question as to whether basic points of departure which might have served as a foundation for the possibility of peace, that is to say, as a foundation for discussions with regard to the termination of the war, etc., existed, is to be answered in the affirmative. Secondly, neither at that time nor today is anybody in a position to answer categorically the question, whether, if such conferences had actually been held, these conferences would have brought about the result sought. With regard to the obstacles which can be suggested as standing in our way, such as the rejection by the Entente, its lust for destruction, the distrust of Wilson, and all similar moving considerations, I consider them all naturally entitled to the greatest weight. In the third place, considering all sources of information in their entirety, and basing my conviction in the matter on a study of documents, as well as on my participation in the hearings, and on my personal recollection, I conclude that as the result of weakness, the lack of powers of decision, and the incapacity on the part of the political branch, in other words—since the

responsibility is placed beyond any question of doubt—on the part of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg, these opportunities for bringing about peace parleys were not taken advantage of to the full extent afforded, and not to the extent of reaching an unbiased and definite judgment as to the consequences of success or failure.

If I express this opinion, I may add that the judgment which I should render would be practically the same if the investigation by this committee of the *Polish-Russian* question had been possible. During the entire year of 1916, I made the following estimate with regard to the matters in question: basic opportunities for peace parleys in this field (now substitute Russian for American) existed beyond doubt. In the second place, no one can tell with certainty whether these opportunities could have resulted in success. But, thirdly, in view of Germany's situation, it was necessary for the statesman to strain every nerve to use such basic opportunities to the fullest advantage. And, fourthly—this was my attitude at that time, and I disclosed it to Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg,—to wit: had the negotiations (with Wilson or Russia) come to naught, then the possibility would have existed for the statesman to issue a call to the whole nation to unite in a fight for life and to announce in clarion tones to every class of society that the only possible recourse was the U-boat war, and to fight it out to the death. My judgment, then, is, that I find not moral but historical guilt in this connection—repeating the distinction which I made at the outset.

I may now be permitted, in view of the fact that Dr. Sinzheimer's report will be used as a basis for the final report, to add a few remarks in the course of which I differ from his report.

Referring in the first place to the assertion in column 3, paragraph 1:¹

It may perhaps be assumed that the motive which most strongly impelled Bethmann-Hollweg to carry on peace proposals by Germany herself, was the hope of diverting from Germany even at the eleventh hour the unrestricted U-boat warfare and all that it might bring in its train, and in this way to keep the path to peace negotiations free from obstacles.

This conclusion is not justified by the historical course of events.

It is stated in column 5:²

In case the Chancellor would not cooperate, a change of chancellors would be undertaken.

Professor Bonn has agreed with the above assertion. But all that we have in the way of supporting authenticated statements are merely statements thrown out in the course of casual conversations between Holtzendorff, Hindenburg, *et al.*, and I can state as a matter of personal recollection that the determination to force a resignation by the Chancellor was never deci-

¹ Report, *ante*, p. 132, n. 5.

² Report, *ante*, p. 138.

sively reached. For my part—if I may speak from the standpoint of statesmanship—I looked upon this very circumstance as an error on the part of the military branch, in that it failed to transmute the deep-felt desire into action and carry it out. For that reason, I desire to eliminate the sentence in question.

Then, column 6:¹

But that Wilson's expressions point unmistakably to the fact that he desired to sever a part of the German territory from the physical limits of the Empire, can by no means be inferred from the wording of the message.

The above refers to the Polish question. This conclusion, although cautiously enough worded, goes too far, in my opinion.

Column 8:² This is the decisive point of difference resulting from the methods which have characterized my opinion:

If we seek to inquire into the causes of Germany's failure to take advantage of the situation brought about by the Wilson move, in order to reach a peace of understanding, the only answer that can be given, based on the material made available by official documents and hearings, is that the desire to end the war through a victory brought about by an unrestricted U-boat war eliminated the possibility of peace so far as Germany was concerned.

According to my conviction, this is incorrect, for on the contrary this desire was the secondary cause. The first was the attitude of the political branch of the government, already so designated by me, and for this reason, in my opinion, the question as to who was responsible is, according to Dr. Sinzheimer's conception, distorted in a fashion which, historically speaking, can not be justified.

It follows that I shall have to remonstrate against the conclusions reached regarding columns 9, paragraphs 1 and 2.³ I agree as to point 1, as I have already stated—the historian will have to admit that fundamental points of departure existed on which it was possible to predicate success in the matter of peace parleys.

But the reasons why the opportunities before referred to were not taken advantage of are, beyond question, not to be found in the determination concerning the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat war of January 9, 1917. The failure to make use of these opportunities goes back to a date far in advance of this period—it extends over the whole year of 1916, and even through the year 1915. For this reason I have adopted the other conclusion, that which traces back the failure to take advantage of the opportunities which might have resulted in peace parleys, and which presented themselves on repeated occasions, to the weakness, lack of ability

¹ Report, *ante*, p. 141, n. 2.

² Report, *ante*, p. 146.

³ Report, *ante*, p. 150.

to reach a decision, and incapacity on the part of the political branch, in other words, on the part of the person responsible therefor, the Imperial Chancellor, v. Bethmann-Hollweg.

OTTO HOETZSCH.

[Here follows an Index of the Publications of the Second Subcommittee, which is not printed because it is identical with the Summaries to the two following sections of this translation.]

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FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1919

The session was opened at 10:17 o'clock by the Chairman, Delegate Warmuth.

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, the session is opened.

The Committee of Inquiry was created by an act of the National Assembly, in accordance with Article 34 of the Constitution. Its purpose is to clear up a number of designated questions concerning the time leading up to the war and the history of the war itself—in a word, questions of prevailing political interest. In this connection, the task assigned to the Second Subcommittee, which is meeting here, is: "The investigation of all opportunities which existed for bringing about peace parleys with the enemy, and an explanation of the reasons why such opportunities or plans and resolutions adopted to meet that end on the part of Germany were brought to naught, and, particularly, if such parleys took place, why it was that they were unsuccessful."

The Second Subcommittee has applied itself first of all to the task of investigating Wilson's efforts towards mediation.

And now, at the outset, I should like to make a request of the gentlemen of the press. It is that they will be good enough to exercise a certain amount of caution in the expression of their judgment until the taking of testimony has been completed with regard to every point at issue; for it is only by so doing that a decisive judgment becomes a possibility. All the original documents which are in any way material will be introduced at these hearings, and all the witnesses shall be heard. It is only when this has been completed that a definite picture can exist which is susceptible to the exercise of judgment. And it is further to be borne in mind that the purpose of this investigating committee is simply to establish the existence or non-existence of facts, not to render a final judgment. The province of rendering a judgment in cases where, perhaps, the subject-matter would seem to cumulate unfavorably against a given individual, is that of the national court, provided of course that the law looking toward the establishment of a national court is extended to include such matter within its operation. Of course, the press has always proceeded on the theory that it is a point of honor in court matters to withhold its own opinion until judgment is rendered. The situation here is analogous, and I hope that my appeal will be met by the gentlemen of the press.

. We shall now proceed to the real business of the committee. His Excel-

lency Count v. Bernstorff has been called as a witness, and I shall ask him to remain here during the present proceedings and to listen to the preliminary statement which will be made, since it is precisely this statement which will give him the opportunity of calling attention, in his later statement, to this point or that, or to clear up this point or that.

But first of all, I shall administer the oath to the experts who have also been called, in order that they too may have an opportunity at every stage of the proceedings, and even, if necessary on the occasion of the preliminary statement, to inject possible questions and answers.

Privy Councilor Dr. Schaefer, Professor Dr. Hoetzsch and Professor Dr. Bonn are called. I will ask the gentlemen to step forward in order that I may administer the oath for experts. Privy Councilor Schaefer is not yet present, so far as I can see, but he will make his appearance; there is still time.

(Experts Dr. Bonn and Dr. Hoetzsch take the oath for experts. In the meantime, Expert Dr. Schaefer arrives and he is also administered the oath.)

I will now retire in favor of Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer in order that he may make the preliminary statement.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Ladies and gentlemen, the Chairman has already designated the work of this committee as "the investigation of all opportunities which existed for bringing about peace parleys with the enemy, and an explanation of the reasons why such opportunities or plans and resolutions adopted to meet that end on the part of Germany were brought to naught, and, particularly, if such parleys took place, why it was that they were unsuccessful."

In carrying out this task, the immediate subject of the deliberations of this committee will be the so-called peace proposal of President Wilson. All the secret records of the Foreign Office have been made available to the committee, and your recording secretary, as well as the members of this investigating committee, have been given the opportunity of acquainting themselves with all the records which have any bearing upon this peace move. The records of the Admiralty Staff, of the War Department and of the General Staff have, it is true, not been submitted, but they will be produced at a later stage of these hearings and their production will be found perfectly practicable. The statement which I have the honor to make at the present time will, therefore, refer merely to the records of the Foreign Office.

It seems advisable to consider the material which forms the basis of these deliberations in its application to four distinct periods.

The first period which interests us here is the time included between the outbreak of the World War up to the *Sussex* note issued by the German Government which, as is well known, was addressed to President Wilson on May 4, 1916.

The second period deemed necessary for the purposes of classifying the material is the period from May 4, 1916, to December 12, 1916. The 12th of December was a historic date of the peace proposal of the German Government addressed to its enemies for the purpose of bringing about direct negotiations concerning peace between the belligerent Powers.

The third period for us to consider is the period extending from December 21, 1916, to January 9, 1917. On December 21, 1916, Wilson proposed to us and the other belligerent Powers that we consider a peace move. This period is to extend up to the 9th of January, 1917; on January 9, 1917, it was decided at the Headquarters in Pless to launch the so-called ruthless U-boat war.

The fourth and final period begins at this date and extends to the beginning of the ruthless U-boat war which commenced on January 31, 1917. On the 31st of January, 1917, Wilson, through the medium of the American Ambassador Gerard in Berlin, was handed the note in which Germany announced her intention of launching the ruthless U-boat war. On January 31, the breaking off of diplomatic relations between the United States and Germany immediately followed.

These, ladies and gentlemen, are the four periods which must be clearly kept in mind if a classification of the material before us is to be undertaken.

Taking up immediately the first period, that space of time which, as before stated, ends with the delivery of the *Sussex* note on the 4th of May, we may state that, according to the records, there is no mention of any definite peace move during this period. It is perfectly true that general conversations of a theoretical or practical kind with regard to the possibilities of peace and the conditions of peace, took place between the Emperor and Ambassador Gerard, and between representatives of the Imperial Government and Gerard. Count v. Bernstorff, too, announced on various occasions during this period that Wilson was interesting himself in the cause of peace; and above all, even at this time and particularly in the winter of 1915-16, there were various conferences between Colonel House, who was sent to Berlin for this purpose, and representatives of the government. The records contain only two entries on this point: One report by the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Solf, about a conversation which he had with Colonel House, and again, a report of a conversation which the then Imperial Chancellor, Mr. v. Bethmann, had with Colonel House. We shall have the opportunity of referring to these reports in the course of the proceedings; it does not seem necessary at the present preliminary stage to go into the contents of these *résumés*. I can only state, generally speaking, that these *résumés* give no evidence of a definite peace move, but that they are limited to general discussions of possibilities of bringing about peace and mainly on the basis of international regulations having a particular bearing on the question of the "freedom of the seas."

I now come to the second period, a period which is far more important and far more significant, which commences with the 4th of May, the day that the *Sussex* note was delivered, in which, as we all know, Germany announced her willingness to limit the operations of the U-boat war to the methods of the so-called war on commerce, so far as the neutrals were concerned, and that President Wilson on his part should persuade England to desist from her blockade measures which, in the opinion of our government, were in violation of international law. In this period, running from the 4th of May to the 12th of December, the day on which our peace proposal was made, came the development of the preliminary steps to a definite peace move on the part of Wilson. On the one hand, we have, as is made plain by the public records, the instructions of the Imperial Government to our Ambassador in Washington, Count v. Bernstorff. In the course of the hearings, occasion will arise for making known in detail the contents of these instructions, all of which lie before us; in the course of this preliminary statement, I shall, therefore, limit myself to a general statement of the contents and the spirit of the instructions of the Imperial Government to Count v. Bernstorff.

In the course of these instructions, and after a certain amount of vacillation, which appears particularly in an instruction given by Secretary of State v. Jagow and which we shall be able to examine in greater detail, the Ambassador was informed and instructed to bring about an appeal for peace on the part of Mr. Wilson. The main instructions to this effect can be traced back to a definite conference with the then Emperor, who particularly authorized instructions to the effect that this peace call was to be suggested and encouraged. This encouragement and instruction to bring about a peace call on the part of Wilson is repeatedly and most urgently renewed in the course of numerous instructions which were sent to Count Bernstorff. In one instruction, the former Imperial Chancellor Mr. v. Bethmann even went so far as to bring it to Count Bernstorff's attention that, if Wilson should hesitate to do this, it should be suggested to him to bring about an appeal for peace by joining with him the King of Spain and other neutral Powers. Count v. Bernstorff, on his part, kept us fully informed from America about the possibilities of peace and laid emphasis upon the fact, from the very start, that President Wilson was willing to mediate in the cause of peace, that public opinion in America desired peace, and that continually incidents and facts kept making their appearance which kept turning public opinion against us. In particular was attention called to the Belgian deportations and to the fact that all such methods and, especially, too, the result of the U-boat war, constantly changed public opinion, once it had turned our way, into an attitude inimical to us. Count v. Bernstorff points out that, in the conferences which he had with Colonel House, the desire existed to bring about a move for peace. And it is true

that, in answer to an instruction which required Count v. Bernstorff to exert his efforts in the direction of such a move, he stated that, as long as the election contest was in progress in the United States and was undecided, it was not to be expected that President Wilson would undertake such a peace move or could undertake it; that a definite proposal would have to be made to President Wilson to take steps toward the mediation of peace. To this Mr. v. Bethmann answered at that time that he was unwilling to make such a proposal; that what was really expected was that Wilson would simply issue a peace appeal to the belligerent Powers, but that it was not desired that Wilson himself should take part in a peace conference with the belligerent Powers, but, at most, take part in a peace conference to follow the real peace conference between the belligerent Powers, which should have for its purpose the settlement of only such international questions as would be of general interest to the whole world. Particularly did the Imperial Government constantly cause it to be recognized that the thing to be avoided was for Wilson to make definite proposals of peace, particularly such as had any bearing on territorial matters. Mr. v. Bernstorff stated in reply that Wilson had no idea of exercising any influence with regard to regulations concerning territory; that he, too, had no desire to take part in the real peace conference of the belligerent Powers, but that he agreed with us thoroughly that his participation was to be limited to a peace conference following the real peace conference, which should have to deal with questions of a general international nature, such as freedom of the seas, disarmament, etc.

We now come to the step leading to our peace proposal of the 12th of December, and these peace proposals hark back to a conversation which Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg had with Baron Burian at the Headquarters at Pless on October 18. This conversation between the Imperial Chancellor and Baron Burian on the 18th of October laid the foundation, according to the records, for our peace proposal of the 12th of December. In the course of this conversation, concerning which there is to be found in the records a detailed *résumé* by the then Imperial Chancellor, Baron Burian pointed out the fact that we could not expect that the war could be decisively terminated by the use of the military arm, and that the time was fast approaching for taking up the question of peace negotiations of some kind. As is further shown by the *résumé*, Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg was fully agreed on this point, welcomed the suggestion, accepted it, and let it be understood that he himself at an earlier date had entertained this idea.

As time went on, these preparations became more concrete in form. Various different questions concerning which the statesmen entertained different views, an examination of which must be gone into in the course of the proceedings, were satisfactorily settled, and, as the result of these preliminary negotiations, which led to our peace proposal, Count v. Bernstorff

was informed at the beginning of December (even at the end of November) that such a peace move was in contemplation, and he was instructed to do his utmost to have Wilson take at the earliest possible moment some step having a bearing on the peace move which he had in view. There follow dispatches of Count Bernstorff's, in which he announces in the most definite terms (on November 25) that a peace move on the part of Wilson is to be expected by the New Year at the latest. As is well known, it followed on the 21st of December. A further communication from Count v. Bernstorff reached this country at the precise moment before our peace proposal of the 7th of December, to the effect that everything was in readiness for the peace move. Shortly thereafter, Count v. Bernstorff was informed that our peace move would take place on the 12th of December, and did take place. As you all know, it was taken up in the Reichstag on December 12 and made public.

Ladies and gentlemen, it will not be necessary for me to recapitulate the details of this peace move which we undertook on the 12th of December; it is fresh in the recollection of everyone here. For, as I have stated, it was an historical occurrence of the greatest import, and was so looked upon by us at that time. In discussing the peace proposal of the 12th of December, various questions will have to be taken up here. It is in this connection that we are concerned with a particularly close investigation of the question as to whether and how it can be explained that, in spite of Wilson's peace move which we ourselves suggested and in spite of the information which had been sent in by Count v. Bernstorff, that a peace move by Wilson was practically imminent, our peace move of the 12th of December was unhesitatingly pushed through by us. I believe that this question must be one of the chief questions which we shall be called upon to settle during the course of the proceedings, that is, in what relation this peace proposal of the 12th of December stands to that peace move on the part of Wilson initiated by us and which was then in prospect.

I now come to the third period. This includes the time from December 21, the day that Wilson's proposal of mediation in the interests of peace was handed over to the belligerent Powers, up to January 9, the day of the resolve or of the determination reached at the Headquarters at Pless with regard to the launching of the unrestricted U-boat warfare. Ladies and gentlemen, it is uncalled-for to recapitulate here facts which are of common knowledge; I assume that the contents of Wilson's proposal of the 21st of December for mediation in the interests of peace are clear in the minds of all present. The material essence of this proposal for mediation in the interests of peace is that Wilson made no definite proposal, that, particularly, it was not his purpose to participate in the real peace conference, that his proposition was merely an appeal for peace, and that he was merely announcing his interest primarily in questions of general international law.

The main feature of Wilson's proposal was the request directed to the belligerent Powers to communicate concrete peace conditions, because it was only by being informed of these concrete peace conditions that the question as to whether the possibility existed of bringing the belligerent parties together could be tested, and because peace could only be reached by means of a compromise between the interests of those on both sides of the conflict.

The members of this audience remember the answer which was officially given by us on the 26th of December in the form of a note of Secretary of State Zimmermann. President Wilson was thanked in most courteous terms; but this note of the 26th of December did not meet the President's request of disclosing concrete peace conditions; such a communication was not sent, either officially or unofficially, at that time.

And at this point I have an important statement to make: in addition to the reports of Count v. Bernstorff that the feeling in America was strongly in favor of peace and that public opinion supported Wilson's peace proposal, on the 18th of December a communication was received in Berlin from one of our Ambassadors who gave us news of an official announcement made by a neutral Power, which it would not be proper for me to mention here, according to which there was good prospect of a peace appeal being issued by Wilson, and that the Power in question had good ground "to believe" that the other side as well was inclined to peace negotiations if we would be willing to give "some" information regarding our peace conditions, with particular reference to the guarantee, restoration and complete independence of Belgium. This official step taken by the neutral Power was, as has already been stated, known here in Berlin on December 18, immediately before the official receipt of Wilson's note on December 21. On December 26, there followed, as you know, Zimmermann's reply to which I have just referred, consisting in this, that it could not agree to the main point of Wilson's peace proposal, namely, to communicate concrete peace conditions. One of the main tasks of this committee consists in going into the question as to why these peace conditions were not communicated to Wilson at that time.

And in this connection, two questions are material: The first question is the following: What were those concrete peace conditions upon which our views of peace of the 12th of December and later, were based? A definite answer to this question is provided by the records. The peace conditions are set out in the record; but at present I shall not go into a reading of them because it is absolutely essential to examine, in connection with our investigations, the significance and nature of the peace conditions which were drawn up and on which our peace proposal was based, and which had been agreed upon between us and Austria with the approval of the Emperor and the Supreme High Command of the Army. The mere reading of these peace conditions which were agreed upon might give the impression that

a wrong significance had been attributed to these matters of agreement, and we therefore desire to communicate these peace conditions and to make them known as soon as the opportunity to take up this question is afforded, through the testimony of the witnesses on these points. But I remark that it appears from the records that specific agreements with regard to our peace conditions, which are more definitely set out in the records themselves, lay at the bottom of our peace proposal. Whether these peace conditions were those of the *status quo*, as has been publicly asserted, or whether they were other peace conditions, will be made plain if they are examined in connection with the statements which will be made by the witnesses who will take the stand. So I say that the first question which is to claim our attention in connection with the investigation of the answer of Secretary of State Zimmermann of the 26th of December is the question as to the contents and the significance of the peace conditions which at that time were already drawn up by us.

The other question which is to explain the reasons why we did not communicate the exact peace conditions, is whether or not *influence was at that time brought to bear upon the answering of the peace note* by the military establishment. It appears from the records that such influence was brought to bear. But we should not discuss at this time the amount or the significance of this influence, basing our remarks upon the documents alone; on the other hand, even in this case we shall examine these records only in relation to the statements of the persons to be examined in connection therewith, in order to throw the right light upon the significance of these expressions of opinion indulged in by the military. For it is only possible to have the right light thrown upon the significance of those communications as they lie before us in the records, by examining them in connection with the statements to be made—and by this I mean to study the matter from the objective view-point. A mere communication of the contents of the documents in question might give the impression of an existing intention on the part of the committee to adopt a one-sided view, and for this reason we will take up the question of this document too only in connection with examining the witnesses whose statements have a direct bearing on the document in question.

I stated that this period comes to an end on January 9, a date which brought about the determination regarding the launching of the unrestricted U-boat warfare. In the meantime, Count v. Bernstorff had repeatedly made the most energetic attempts to bring the Imperial Government at least to the point of communicating its peace conditions confidentially to Washington. He reported his conversations with Colonel House, in the course of which Colonel House repeatedly requested at least a confidential statement of the peace conditions. Thus, in spite of the official attitude regarding the peace move which refused to communicate concrete

peace conditions, the United States continued its attempt, through negotiations with Count v. Bernstorff, to induce us at least confidentially to communicate our peace conditions. At that time, Secretary of State Zimmermann was the one who carried on the exchange of correspondence with Count v. Bernstorff. He gave no immediate reply to Count v. Bernstorff's suggestion. The first answer is wholly general in terms. In the third answer, of January 7—the unrestricted U-boat war was settled upon on January 9—he requests Count v. Bernstorff to handle the question of the confidential communication of the exact peace conditions "in a dilatory manner."

And so this period comes to an end. On January 9, the unrestricted U-boat war was determined upon, and the final period, that is, the period from January 9 to January 31, the date of handing over the announcement of the unrestricted U-boat war, commenced. During this period, Count v. Bernstorff takes particular pains to announce repeatedly and in the most earnest manner, that the declaration of the unrestricted U-boat war means a break with the United States, and this after he has been informed on various occasions that the announcement of the U-boat war was imminent. This opinion had already been asserted by Count v. Bernstorff on previous occasions and in the most energetic way, and continued thereafter to be stated by him, namely, that the announcement of the U-boat war—in other words, the withdrawal of the guarantees contained in the *Sussex* note of May 4—would without any question mean a break with the United States; and it may be mentioned here, in passing, that these assertions sent in by Count v. Bernstorff, made in detail and constantly reiterated, are supported by various reports in the records, reports of a most detailed nature and very well-founded, emanating from the present Under-Secretary of State Albert and Under-Secretary of State Haniel; they point out in most earnest fashion that the announcement of the unrestricted U-boat war means war with the United States; and, most particularly, in the opinion which, according to the records, was furnished by Under-Secretary of State Albert with regard to this question, attention is called to the limitless resources of the United States, which were inexhaustible and must be reckoned with in considering the question as to whether the unrestricted U-boat warfare should be launched against America.

On January 16, Count v. Bernstorff was informed that the determination had been reached to launch the unrestricted U-boat warfare, and that he was to perform the service of making the necessary official statements to this effect on February 1. Count v. Bernstorff telegraphed repeatedly that this meant a break with the United States. The matter was gone into no further in the instructions which followed. It would seem that Count v. Bernstorff from now on worked with redoubled energy; for it is now that the significant act makes its appearance which is partly a matter

of public knowledge. On January 27, Count v. Bernstorff telegraphed (the telegram arrived here on the 28th of January) that Colonel House approached him at Wilson's express instructions, with the information that Wilson was again coming to us and proposing to take still further steps in the direction of peace; that it was not his purpose to interfere in territorial questions; that the Entente had announced impossible conditions, and that he asked first of all that our conditions be communicated to him confidentially.

You know, perhaps, from the statements which the various gentlemen who took part therein have made, that at this point Mr. v. Bethmann visited Headquarters where there resulted a conference regarding Count v. Bernstorff's communication, the outcome of which was that former Imperial Chancellor Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg informed Count v. Bernstorff by telegram that it was too late, and that Wilson should have come out sooner with such a move (it will have to be explained what the term "sooner" means, for, as a matter of fact, moves in the direction of peace had taken place before), and that it was no longer possible to recede from the position taken on the U-boat war because it was simply physically impossible to recall the U-boats which had already gone to sea; but that he might make the following announcement, that the German Government was, however, ready to communicate its peace conditions to him in confidence. These conditions were communicated to Count v. Bernstorff on the 29th of January, with the instructions to bring them confidentially to Wilson's knowledge. On this point we shall have to examine word for word the report of Count v. Bernstorff of the 27th of January and hear the reply of Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg; this will occur in the course of Count v. Bernstorff's hearing. I note that, on examining the dispatch of the Imperial Chancellor, it does not appear that the peace conditions which he communicates are the conditions on which he is ready to conclude peace, but that it appears from this dispatch, as you will later see for yourselves, that the conditions there mentioned are those under which Germany "would have been" ready to conclude peace on the 12th of December if the enemy had accepted our peace proposal.

Whether this answer meets Wilson's request is a question which depends upon further discussion and deliberation and upon the decision of experts. And now, on the 31st of January comes the delivery of the note announcing the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war, and at the same time the handing over of the peace conditions. You know the result. America broke off diplomatic relations with us.

I have now concluded, and only desire to make two more statements.

Wilson obviously hesitated about going into the war. Two facts, which are to be deduced from the records, make this clear. One is that he kept secret that announcement made by the Austrian Ambassador Tarnowsky

which was identical in terms with our U-boat note; he did not wish to face a declaration of war with Austria because he desired to keep the Austrian road open, as the Austrian Ambassador informed Count Czernin, in order to continue with his peace move. Count Czernin thereupon went into the matter, expressed his satisfaction, and stated that it was advisable to bring about such a move in the nature of peace mediation, that they, he and the German Government, took the common ground that a peace without conquerors and conquered would be desirable. Ambassador Wedel informed the Foreign Office of this communication of Count Czernin, and Secretary of State Zimmermann thereupon wired that he did not accept the view announced in the Wilson platform "peace without victory," but that he stood for the principle of peace with victory; adding that he was convinced that the U-boat war would make this possible for us. I shall later refer to this note of Secretary of State Zimmermann.

In addition hereto, the German Government was at that time informed by way of Switzerland that Wilson was endeavoring to proceed further in the way of bringing about peace; that he only desired a statement on the part of Germany that she would not contemplate launching an unrestricted U-boat war against America, or that she withdraw from the stand if taken. On our part, we answered these various Swiss communications (I can speak of these Swiss communications, for they were published by the press, and gentlemen who followed the press in those days will recollect the fact) to the effect that the conduct of the unrestricted U-boat war made it essential that we make general use of all available instrumentalities in conducting the same in an unrestricted way, and that a one-sided announcement applying to the United States was impossible. This is followed by denials; and finally this trail, too, is lost.

War was later only declared after the so-called Mexican telegram of Secretary of State Zimmermann was published, which had already left here in January. This is all I have to say.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall proceed immediately to the—

Testimony of His Excellency Count v. Bernstorff

I shall request your Excellency to step forward and be sworn.

(Count v. Bernstorff is sworn as a witness.)

The CHAIRMAN: It would be advisable for your Excellency to give us a connected picture of everything within the range of your knowledge concerning the peace move and the peace mediation. We would suggest to your Excellency to follow historic lines, that is, the order of events which has just been set out by the recorder, and at the same time to observe the division into the four groups. I shall endeavor not to interrupt you by questions, and shall request you to state to us, as a connected whole, what you know, and perhaps to speak of events which preceded the first period

which, according to the statement made by the recorder, begins with the *Sussex* note, if you feel it necessary to go into occurrences of an earlier date.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I should prefer at the start to go a little more in detail into matters of the first period, because the policy which Mr. Wilson carried out during the entire war, and was desirous of carrying out consistently, had already been manifested at that time. At the beginning of August, 1914, immediately after the outbreak of the war, Wilson made a first attempt at mediation looking toward peace, which mediation was declined by both parties to the conflict. Then, in September he had Secretary of State Bryan come to me in a second attempt, which failed because the Entente did not even answer it. At least, I never heard anything about such an answer; it is possible that an answer reached the American Government, but in any event I never received any. Then, too, President Wilson issued a proclamation in August to the American people, in which he adjured the Americans to remain neutral because, even at that time, feeling in the United States was so high that even personal relations were to a certain extent disagreeably affected by it, and he believed that serious differences might result in the United States if he did not caution everyone to be neutral. It was in this proclamation that Wilson stated that the American people were the only nation which would be in a situation to end the war if it remained outside of the conflict, and that the United States constituted the sole great Power which would have sufficient strength and influence to bring about this result. This had been Wilson's policy during the entire period. When the second peace proposal handled by Bryan had proved a failure, he thought that it was necessary to hold himself more aloof, because he believed that nothing could result therefrom. But in spite of this, he sent his friend Colonel House to Paris, London, and Berlin in the winter of 1914-15 (he was in Berlin in the month of March), in order to prepare the way for peace mediation by Wilson. When the former returned from Berlin on that occasion where, so far as I know, he had spoken with all the government authorities, he said to me that the time had not yet come, and that nobody was ready to take up the question of peace; but that he would return to Europe at a later date as Wilson's representative to find out whether anything was to be done.

President Wilson himself spoke with me about peace for the first time when I asked for an audience with him after the *Lusitania* occurrence, because at that time the danger of war with Germany was very great and for this reason I desired an opportunity of expressing myself at length. At that time, Wilson (perhaps I may be allowed to read this excerpt from my telegram) said:

We should make an appeal to morality by giving up the U-boat war, since the war could only be definitely decided by an understanding, and not by the use of arms. If we would give up the submarine warfare, he

would press for the cessation of the English starvation policy. According to reliable sources from London, the present cabinet would agree to this. Wilson hopes that this will lay the foundation for a peace move on a great scale, which he would like to initiate at the head of the neutral Powers.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the date of the telegram?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: The telegram is dated June 2, 1915. The telegram was the result of the first interchange of notes about the *Lusitania*. The notes are well known. An answer had been returned to the first note by Germany, which neither made any concessions nor gave any definite announcement, but simply sought to supply the motive for or to explain the sinking of the *Lusitania* on the ground that the *Lusitania* was an auxiliary cruiser, armed and provided with munitions of war. After this first exchange of telegrams about the *Lusitania*, war seemed to be unavoidable. For this reason, I went to Wilson and, in order to gain time, requested that a gentleman who was then active with the Red Cross in the United States, the present Under-Secretary of State Meyer-Gerhardt, should go to Berlin in order to explain the contents of this telegram here orally and in detail. Wilson agreed to this, and besides promised at that time that, until the mission of Mr. Meyer-Gerhardt had met with some kind of result, he would take no serious steps which could lead to a break.

The exchange of notes in the *Lusitania* case went on without leading to any positive result. In the meantime, another British ship, the *Arabic*, was torpedoed. For the second time, we were on the verge of war. In this case, however, we made concession to the extent of agreeing that passenger steamers would not be sunk without previous warning.

The CHAIRMAN: May I be informed with regard to the mission of Mr. Meyer-Gerhardt?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: He went to Berlin for the purpose of discussing Wilson's plans further over here by word of mouth. But I am not able to say what the result was, for I never heard anything more about him afterwards.

After the first danger of war on account of the *Lusitania* and the second scare on account of the *Arabic* had passed over, the American Government believed that it could begin to work out its program. It sent the first note to England, which, according to my recollection, bore the Washington date of the 18th of October and the London date of the 5th of November, in the terms of which the English blockade was denounced as illegal and indefensible. Soon after the sending of this note, negotiations were again taken up in Washington concerning the final settlement of the *Lusitania* question, which for the third time brought us to the verge of war, because the United States demanded that we should recognize the fact that the sinking of the *Lusitania* was illegal. This word "illegal" was unconditionally rejected

on our part. We almost went to war again over this word. But finally Wilson gave in on this matter, and stated that without this it would be sufficient if we should state that, while reprisals were proper (for it was as such that the sinking of the *Lusitania* was characterized), at the same time neutrals should not suffer as the result thereof, and that recourse to reprisals was only justifiable if neutrals were not injured as the result thereof. This arrangement had just been concluded, and Secretary of State Lansing and I were just about to exchange the requisite documents, when the intensive U-boat war was declared. As the result, nothing came of this settlement of the *Lusitania* question. So it became absolutely impossible to further Wilson's greater plans to any extent.

The CHAIRMAN: The intensive U-boat war is, of course, not the ruthless U-boat war?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No, the intensive U-boat war was an intermediate phase whereby it was declared over here that armed merchant ships should be attacked without warning, but only armed ships. If they were armed, the principles of the unrestricted U-boat war were to be observed.

Shortly hereafter occurred the torpedoing of the *Sussex*, and as the result of this occurrence a definite agreement was entered into by both governments, the result of which was that in the future the U-boat war should be conducted according to the principles of war on commerce.

The CHAIRMAN: That was the note of May 4; shall we have it read now?

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: It is not necessary.

The CHAIRMAN: It has been published. If your Excellency would like to have a document read, or if you need a document in order to refresh your memory on the point of the terms employed, I hope you will let me know. I have practically all the documents in question before me.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It was only by virtue of the agreement reached by the *Sussex* note that a free field was provided for negotiations with the United States concerning the freedom of the seas and the eventual concluding of a peace, as the recorder has already stated.

In the course of the winter, Colonel House went to Berlin for the second time; he was here in January, 1916. When he came back from Europe the second time, he told me that, judging from his experiences, the main opposition to peace at the present was still in Paris, that he had found a certain willingness in England and that he had been told in Berlin, too, that at the proper time we would be ready to go into the question of peace mediation by the United States. But none of these statements were binding assurances; on the contrary, they were simply general conversations.

I heard for the first time about the willingness on the part of the Imperial Government to take steps in the direction of Wilson's wishes by a telegram which Ambassador Gerard had sent to Washington after the settlement of

the *Sussex* affair. According to what Mr. House told me, it was stated in this telegram that the German Government was now ready to take up the question of peace mediation with Wilson. I thereupon inquired in Berlin as to whether this understanding was correct, and received a telegram in reply, to which the recorder has already referred. It was stated in the telegram that, in view of the excited state of public feeling in Germany, a certain amount of time would have to pass, but that in general the wish that Wilson might undertake peace mediation existed. Had we better not read this telegram?

The CHAIRMAN: What was the date of the telegram?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: It must be sometime in May, 1916.

The CHAIRMAN: It is probably the telegram of the 4th of May, your Excellency's telegram to the Foreign Office. It reads as follows: "House informed me that Gerard had telegraphed that we were willing to accept peace mediation by the President and that House's visit to Berlin for this purpose was looked upon with favor. Nothing is known here about the settlement of the submarine question. Peace mediation naturally depends on whether the road is clear. This could be brought about most easily by a temporary cessation of the submarine warfare during negotiations."

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: That was my telegram.

The CHAIRMAN: That is your telegram. Now comes the answer.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: v. Bethmann to Count v. Bernstorff, dated May 6.

The CHAIRMAN: Bethmann's dispatch reads, in its material portions as follows:

We hope that our note and great concession have finally put an end to the state of distrust and have opened an era of relations of mutual confidence. Public animosity on this side against Wilson on account of tone and contents of his note and on account of the impression that he is taking sides against us, is in every event so marked that some action against England openly recognizable as such must be taken before he could be accepted by the German people as an unbiased person submitting his good offices in favor of peace. To this extent, Gerard's telegram premature. In the absence of some such action on Wilson's part, there is danger that animosity toward him will grow and possibility of peace mediation be relegated to remotest future. Of course in the last analysis adoption of means leading to peace is always welcome. . . .

This dispatch also contains the following: "A visit from House very welcome at any time." This is Bethmann-Hollweg's answer to Count v. Bernstorff of May 6. Please continue.

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: It is to be observed from the date of this telegram that it was sent off two days after the agreement had been reached in the *Sussex* question. In our note of the 4th of May we had re-

served the right to have a free hand in case America should not succeed in forcing England to recognize the principles of international law. This reservation, it is true, was not recognized by the American Government, but, nevertheless, it was on the ground of that reservation that it was later possible to base the declaration of the unrestricted U-boat war without revoking antecedent promises. Colonel House, who desired always that Wilson should bring about peace, is the individual with whom I carried on negotiations during the entire period. It is perhaps remarkable that I carried on these negotiations with a private individual. But the reason for this is to be found in existing conditions in the United States, since Colonel House was the most intimate friend of President Wilson and since it was absolutely essential to keep all the negotiations with regard to peace absolutely secret. For to keep negotiations secret in Washington was utterly impossible. If I drove to the State Department or went myself to see the President, I could be certain that both buildings would be surrounded by newspaper men and that questions which I could not avoid would constantly be addressed to me. It made no difference how I answered them; under any and all conditions something would be twisted out of them in the way of information of some kind, and if I subsequently denied it, it was absolutely certain after all that something would finally come out which was not supposed to come out. For this reason, it was President Wilson's wish that I should negotiate these absolutely confidential questions continuously with his friend Colonel House, who lives in New York, and whom I was able to visit in his home in that city and negotiate with for months at a time, without its being known in America, I believe, even up to the present day. He told me at that time that, as matters had turned out, Wilson no longer had the power to compel England to adhere to the principles of international law. That the reason for this was that American commerce was so completely tied up with the interests of the Entente that it was impossible for Wilson to disturb these commercial relations without calling forth such a storm of protest on the part of the public that he would not be able to carry out his intention. On the other hand, that Wilson was in a position, and had the power, to bring about a peace without victory; that he had the intention of using this power as soon as the opportunity arose. But in view of the fact that such a step would be characterized as being pro-German in the United States, where the Entente propaganda was very strong, he could only undertake such a step if public opinion in the United States became somewhat calmed down with regard to relations with Germany. For this reason, he proposed that an intermission might be created during which we should neither negotiate nor in any way speak about German-American relations, so that the press, too, might calm down. He told me at that time that by the end of the summer he thought it quite certain that the movement in the direction of peace might be initiated.

Then I did not see Colonel House for two or three months, and expected that Wilson's peace mediation would follow sometime in September. In the meantime, Roumania entered the war. I then went to see Colonel House in the country and visited him there.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Roumania did not enter the war until August, 1916. I believe that the following is of importance: The fundamental instructions of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg followed on the 18th of August. It might be of importance to hear what the original text of this instruction is. It was agreed to by all hands and was personally authorized by the Emperor. If the Chairman is willing, it might be read.

(Interruption: read it all, please.)

The instruction reads as follows:

We would be glad to accept mediation by the President, with a view to initiate peace negotiations between the belligerents. Kindly encourage the President in his activities along this line. Of course the acceptance of such mediation is not to be considered as binding us to any concrete conditions of peace resulting therefrom. A general peace conference in which the neutral Powers will participate and which will consider general international questions, questions arising between nation and nation, and questions of the freedom of the seas and disarmament, will be acceptable, if need be, provided it follows peace negotiations between the belligerents which have been successful.

This is followed by further communications which will be analyzed in the course of the hearing.

The CHAIRMAN: Please continue.

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: At the beginning of September, after this instruction, the contents of which I communicated to Colonel House, House told me that a mediation by Wilson would now be impossible and would have to be postponed because, as the result of the entrance of Roumania into the war, the Entente was absolutely certain of victory and consequently Wilson's advances would be rejected.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Count v. Bernstorff, a telegraphic inquiry of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann of the 2d of November preceded. It seems to me that it would be worth while to have it read here. For what you were just saying. . . .

Consul MÜLLER: The telegram to which his Excellency Count v. Bernstorff just referred appears to be dated the 18th of August.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: No, what he just said was the 12th of September.

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: That must be a wrong date.

(Consul MÜLLER hands the Chairman a document.)

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The telegram has been taken from the records, it is the answer of the 18th of August—what you just stated was of the

18th of August—the answer to the instruction of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann, which I have read.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I believe this telegram which, according to the records, is dated August 18 must have been so dated by mistake; for the telegram says: As the result of Roumania's entrance into the war.

The CHAIRMAN: That had not yet taken place.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: For that reason, I wanted to read the answer to the telegram. On the 2d of September, after the entrance of Roumania into the war, a telegram was sent by Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann to you, which reads as follows:

Our west front holds fast. The east front is naturally somewhat jeopardized by Roumania's declaration of war. Rolling up of the front or collapse of Austria not to be expected. Turkey and Bulgaria to be relied upon. . . . Hope to conclude peace before winter as the exhaustion of Russia or France by the war is lessened by this development. In case no major catastrophe should occur in the east, would peace mediation by Wilson be possible and successful if we were to guarantee Belgium's unconditional restoration? Otherwise, unrestricted U-boat war will have to be carried on in dead earnest. I ask merely for your personal opinion without side references of any kind.

Your telegram is in reply to the above.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I return to the occasion when Colonel House said to me that Wilson's peace mediation would have to be postponed because the Entente was certain of victory as the result of the entrance of Roumania into the war, and for this reason Wilson's advances would be rejected. This announcement of House's to me seemed to be particularly important later on, because I assumed, as the result of this earlier announcement, that when Wilson really came out with his offer to mediate, he was definitely convinced that his offer would be accepted by the Entente, whereas he had stated previously that there was no prospect of its being accepted.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask that that telegram, too, which arrived here on the 12th of September, the date of dispatching of which, however, is not to be found in the record, be read.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: "Wilson's peace activities have been postponed because at the present moment they would lead to nothing on account of Roumania's entrance into the war, and because of the confidence of victory on the part of our enemies resulting therefrom. Wilson believes that he will not be able to accomplish anything more before the election because England is playing a waiting game, pending the arrival of election day, and, if he were not reelected, she would give him a cold refusal. But if Wilson wins the election, the prospects of which are now favorable, and if up to that time there is a lull in military operations, the President will immediately take steps towards mediation. He believes

that then he will be strong enough to force a peace conference. Wilson considers it important to American interests that neither belligerent should win a decisive victory."

The CHAIRMAN: Now, please continue.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I do not know to what extent I am desired to go into the different telegrams which were dispatched from Berlin and which instructed me to hasten peace mediation by Wilson. The most important of these is a memorandum which was written by the Emperor himself and was to be given to Mr. Gerard when he went to New York on leave. It is to be found with the records. I do not know whether the recorder desires to have it read.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: It is in English as it is filed with the records. According to the records, it does not seem to me to play any particularly important rôle. For this reason, I did not refer to it in my preliminary statement.

The CHAIRMAN: Is your opinion the same, or is there anything more to be added concerning it?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I should like to suggest that, according to my recollection—I am speaking only according to recollection—it was precisely this memorandum which made the deepest impression in the United States.

The CHAIRMAN: Then I ask that you state whatever you can find to say about this memorandum, according to your recollection.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: It is here.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps it can be read in English.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Let me give the details of it. Mr. Gerard came to America on leave. Before his departure, the Emperor had prepared a memorandum in which he, so far as I can remember it—

The CHAIRMAN: Let me hand it over to you. It is in English. Perhaps it can be translated at once.

(Interruption: The date!)

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: It went through on the 9th of October.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes, on the 9th of October. It was, as I was informed, written by His Majesty himself, and was to remind Mr. Gerard that, when in Charleville, he had then held out the prospect of the President mediating in the interest of peace. It reads as follows:

Your Excellency informed His Majesty, in the course of your conference at Charleville in April, that President Wilson would be ready toward the end of the summer to proffer his good offices for the purpose of bringing about peace. The German Government is not informed as to whether the President still adheres to this idea or as to the date on which it is his desire to undertake this step. In the meantime, however, the conduct of the war has taken such a form that the German Government

foresees the time when it will find it necessary to regain that freedom of action which it reserved for itself in the note of the 4th of May and that, in such case, any action on the part of the President might be interfered with. The German Government believes that it is its duty to inform your Excellency of this, in case you might consider it possible to expedite the contemplated action of the President so that it might not take place at a time when the year was so far advanced.

Such is the translation of the English text. This memorandum was to be delivered to Mr. Gerard before he came to New York. But he had already left, and for that reason it was telegraphed to me at Washington. I was to give it to Mr. Gerard if I found it opportune to do so, but I was left at liberty to make different use of the memorandum. At that time, and for personal reasons, into which perhaps there is no necessity of my going, I did not give it to Mr. Gerard, but gave it to Colonel House who delivered it to the President. This memorandum was later mentioned once in the press here. It was then recognized in Washington by a semiofficial newspaper *communiqué* that the memorandum had been handed over to the President. In the course of the conversations which followed this, I was constantly informed that there was no possibility for the President to take any step in the direction of peace before the election. The election took place on November 7.

Delegate DR. COHN: Let me interrupt for a moment. Count v. Bernstorff said that this memorandum had made the greatest impression in America.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The greatest impression upon the Government. The public knew nothing of it.

Delegate DR. COHN: Perhaps Count v. Bernstorff is in position to tell us in what manner this impression manifested itself.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: To the extent that from that moment those in America were firmly convinced that the German Government would be ready to accept mediation by Wilson. In this connection, it was very important.

(Interruption: What was the date?)

The CHAIRMAN: The memorandum is of the 9th of October. Please continue.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: On November 7 there took place the election which was so extraordinarily closely contested that on the first night it was believed in New York that the Republican Party had won out. It hung by such a thread that even a week afterwards it was not definitely determined which party had won, since absolutely exact counts had to be made in some of the Western States. I mention this detail because in it is the explanation of why President Wilson was absolutely not in a position to take a step in the direction of peace before the 15th of November.

At that time, as I was confidentially informed, President Wilson, say

about the 15th or 16th of November, wrote the peace note which he sent off on the 18th of December, but did not send it off, holding it, rather, in his desk, because at that time another wave of anti-German feeling went over the United States on account of the Belgian deportations. At that time, Colonel House told me that we could not proceed along the path leading to a proposal of mediation in the interests of peace because, in view of the existing feeling, the President could not answer the demands of public opinion.

Delegate DR. COHN: When did this communication from Colonel House take place?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: This can be told from a glance at my telegram. Probably about the middle of November.

The CHAIRMAN (after examining the records): Yes, on November 15.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I do not know whether any such telegram is contained in the records. I am relying on my memory for the statement.

Delegate DR. COHN: Is it perhaps No. 36 of the 4th of December:

According to Lansing, peace mediation put off on account of Belgian deportations. Bernstorff to the Foreign Office, December 1, No. 36, page 6 above.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Page 53 of the 21st of November:

Wilson's reasons are as follows: He believes that he will be able to take up the matter of his mediation only if public opinion on this side continues as favorable to us as it has been during the course of the last months. For this reason, he deplores the so-called Belgian deportations.

The CHAIRMAN: Shall we read further, in order to get a complete picture of the situation? For the whole answer is certainly very material. Your Excellency probably has it in your hands. I ask that it be read from the beginning.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF:

Wilson instructed House of his own accord to inform me in strict confidence that at the earliest possible moment he would take steps in the direction of his peace mediation, presumably between this time and the New Year. In this connection he imposes as a condition that up to that time we express ourselves on the question of a peace move just as little as possible either orally or in writing, in order to block a premature rejection on the part of our enemies, and that, further, we carry on the U-boat war in the strictest conformity with our promises, and allow no new controversies to come up.

Wilson's reasons for the above conditions are as follows: He believes that he will be able to take up the matter of his mediation only if public opinion on this side continues as favorable to us as it has been during the course of the last months. For this reason, he deplores the so-called Belgian deportations.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency, I will continue with the reading in order to spare your voice:

Each new U-boat controversy would make the feeling against us increase, whereas, on the other hand, if this question can be, to all practical purposes, disposed of, the coolness with England will be increased. The British answer dealing with the black lists, together with the expressions of the English press concerning Wilson's election, have put government circles on this side very much out of humor. But unfriendly glances are again and again levelled in our direction as the result of the U-boat question. Wilson still hesitates to come forward with his peace mediation because the State Department expects a refusal from our enemies, whereas House is pushing the matter hard and is full of hope. In accordance with the instructions which I have received I have encouraged him as much as possible by telling him that in my opinion our enemies simply could not refuse to take up negotiations; beyond this Wilson expects nothing. House seemed to me to be very much impressed when I reminded him that the British Government, during the course of the entire war, had constantly attempted by its lying methods and diplomatic *tours de force* to bring public opinion over to its side. This house of cards, founded on lies and misrepresentations, would at once fall to pieces if our enemies should reject the idea of negotiations, and by so doing openly admit that they entertain the lust of conquest. I stated that what I feared as much more likely to occur was that England would enter into negotiations in form only, and in the course of these negotiations would endeavor to put us in the wrong. I selected this line of argument because Wilson fears above all else the humiliation of having his advances rejected. If it really does come to the point of negotiations, even to negotiations devoid of result, Wilson will have to record the greatest kind of success.

I believe that the conclusion is immaterial and that we can dispense with further reading thereof.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: May I add one comment. What you have just introduced is supplemented by a telegram of the 1st of December. I shall read that part of your telegram which has a bearing thereon and which arrived here on the 4th of December:

In conversation Lansing laid great stress upon the American protest against the Belgian deportations. That on account of this the entire Belgian relief movement was jeopardized and that, further, opinion on this side of the water was becoming unfavorably colored and this at the precise moment when it looked as if peace negotiations might be undertaken. Lansing stated that it was his opinion that if the Imperial Government could find a way to meet the protests of the neutral Powers with regard to the Belgian question, this would create an impression which would weigh tremendously in our favor, and that it would, in all probability, result in the immediate possibility of taking up the first steps leading to peace negotiations. That, unfortunately, up to the present time it had always happened that some obstacle came in the way.

I must now refer back to additional instructions on the peace question which were sent to you from here before your telegram was dispatched. First of all, I should like to call your attention to the fact that on the 26th of September a set of instructions was sent to you by Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg. In the course of this instruction, attention is called to the fact that the navy promised early success as the result of the unrestricted U-boat warfare, which would make England feel more inclined to consider peace terms in the course of a few months, but that the general situation would change in case Wilson, following out those purposes which he had indicated, should make a proposal of mediation to the Powers in the interests of peace. Action along these lines would, however, have to follow quickly. And now the Imperial Chancellor continues in these terms:

Your Excellency will cautiously discuss the matter with Colonel House in order to learn what Mr. Wilson's purposes are. A peace move by the President, which would have to appear as spontaneous to those viewing it from without, would be given the most serious consideration by us; and this very circumstance would probably have some effect on the result of Mr. Wilson's election campaign.

This instruction, of the 26th of September, was supplemented by an instruction of the Imperial Chancellor of the 14th of October, and this constitutes the answer to your communication, that for the present it was impossible for Wilson to take any action in the direction of peace mediation on account of the situation in the Balkans; that the question of peace mediation will have to be specially presented. Whereupon, the Imperial Chancellor answered as follows:

As before stated, definite proposal for peace mediation by Wilson impossible on account of his continued favorable attitude toward the Entente and after the speeches of Asquith and Lloyd George. A spontaneous appeal for peace, toward the making of which I request that he be further encouraged, would be gladly accepted by us.

Delegate DR. COHN: When was that?

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: This occurred on the 14th of October. Now comes that to which I referred in my preliminary statement. That is, the message continues in these words:

If he can not make up his mind to reach this decision alone, he should put himself in touch with the Pope, the King of Spain, and the European neutral nations.

Those were the instructions of the Imperial Chancellor, to which you replied that such a concerted move was not possible according to the American judgment, and that action on the part of Wilson alone could be considered.

I now desire to quote from a personal letter which Secretary of State v. Jagow sent to you on the 20th of November. He writes as follows:

As you have seen from other instructions which have been sent you, we are sympathetically inclined toward the peace suggestions of President Wilson, as before. His activities exercised in this direction are to be very definitely encouraged. But of course his suggestions with regard to mediation should not go so far as to take the form of concrete propositions (because these would, of course, be unfavorable so far as we are concerned).

But as early as the 16th of November, it had been indicated to you that further steps were to be taken in connection with the peace question, and on the 22d of November—two days after the Jagow letter—you were informed that, in connection with our allies, we were about to announce ourselves ready to take up peace negotiations. On the 24th of November, a telegram was received from you, which reads as follows:

I urgently request that no change in the submarine warfare program be allowed to take place until it is decided whether Wilson will come out with his peace mediation. I consider this will occur in the near future.

This telegram of the 24th of November finds an important supplement in the form of a telegraphic report which was received here on the 25th of November and which seems to me to be essential. The wording thereof is as follows:

Wilson instructed House of his own accord to inform me in strict confidence that at the earliest possible moment he would take steps in the direction of his peace mediation, presumably between this time and the New Year. In this connection he imposes as a condition that up to that time we express ourselves on the question of a peace move either orally or in writing, just as little as possible, in order to block a premature rejection on the part of our enemies, and that, further, we carry on the U-boat war in the strictest conformity with our promises and allow no new controversies to come up.

So this was unquestionably before our peace move of the 12th of December.

The CHAIRMAN: I now request your Excellency to express yourself with regard to the matters which the recorder has just taken up, in order to determine whether these matters are confirmed by your statements under oath.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I invariably talked over all these instructions with Colonel House and expected that the peace move would follow, in any event, during the month of December, when I received the news that the Imperial Government was intending to make a move of its own. But I have never received any instructions—I have just looked through the papers to make sure, and have found none—to the effect that the instructions from Berlin as late as November 25, to encourage Wilson, had been revoked. Thus, I believed up to the last that, while it was true that we did not want Wilson to interfere in negotiations concerning territo-

rial questions, and that we did not want Wilson to sit in with us at the peace conference at which the European questions would be discussed, a second conference of all the nations of the world was, on the other hand, to take place in which those questions in which Wilson had a special interest, such as a league of nations, arbitration, etc., would be taken up; whereas, the territorial and other European questions would be settled by the belligerents themselves. I therefore interpreted all later instructions to mean that I was always to emphasize the point that these were the principles on which we proceeded. Wilson always agreed to this view. He never requested to take part in the first peace conference, but he did say "I do not believe that such a conference will be held unless it is possible for me to bring it about."

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: You just said "I have never received any instruction in connection with that November instruction, under the terms of which the orders given me to encourage Wilson in bringing about a peace move were revoked." That is true. In fact, the very opposite is the case. You were again encouraged to proceed further. I call attention to an instruction of Secretary of State Zimmermann, dated November 26, which reads as follows:

We would be glad to give Wilson's peace move the preference over our action referred to in our telegram No. 116 of November 22. At the same time, it is our urgent wish that Wilson will decide to take early steps in the matter; if possible, by the time Congress opens or, in any event, soon thereafter.

According to my recollection, Congress opened in the middle of December. So that Wilson's peace move was to be continued in spite of our intention, already determined upon, to make a peace move on our own initiative. In any case, we shall have to hear what Secretary of State Zimmermann has to say on the point.

The CHAIRMAN: In any case, it was still Wilson's desire to play the peacemaker, a fact which you have stated yourself in your dispatches.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The peacemaker, so far as the concrete conditions of peace are concerned, and thereafter a second conference was to follow, which was to take up general questions.

Delegate DR. SPAHN: Was Colonel House continually informed of the literal terms of these instructions which you received, so that he himself reached his own conclusion as to whether or not there was a change of attitude in Berlin?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: He was constantly informed by me with regard to the contents of my instructions, but certainly not in any way to the effect that we no longer desired peace mediation on the part of Wilson. I never told him that.

Delegate DR. SPAHN: That is to say, that he himself was never shown the

actual wording, so that he could not reach his own conclusion, basing it on the literal contents.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Please continue.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I may state at the outset, as is well known, that our peace proposal followed and that the note of Mr. Wilson was thereupon sent out. After this note left, I visited Lansing in order to ask him what they thought of the *modus procedendi*; and then the records contain one of my telegrams, in which I state that it would be considered of the greatest importance in the United States if both parties to the controversy were to announce their conditions of peace, and as a matter of fact the term "clearing house" is used in the telegram.

Delegate KATZENSTEIN: I should like to know whether the German peace proposal of the 12th of December was considered by the American Government as a help, or as a move which jeopardized its move in the direction of peace.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It was looked upon as jeopardizing it.

Delegate DR. COHN: In form or substance?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It was looked upon as a menace—that is what Colonel House told me on behalf of the President—because our peace proposal was considered in the United States to be a confession of weakness on our part.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Gerard is supposed to have expressed himself here to the effect that it was an excellent move. Gerard is further supposed to have been satisfied with the further negotiations which took place.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I can not understand that, since, according to my recollection, Gerard was still in the United States at the time.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The documents contain such an expression of opinion. But I see that this refers to our reply note of the 26th of December, which is not as yet applicable here.

COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Oh, our answer! I am speaking of our peace proposal. At that time, he had not yet returned.

The CHAIRMAN: And do you think that this peace proposal of December should, rather than not, be regarded as jeopardizing the prospects of peace?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I simply say that in the United States this attitude was considered to be the attitude of Wilson and of Colonel House.

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly; it is not your personal opinion, but simply the opinion of the public mind in the United States.

Expert DR. BONN: I should like to put the following questions: As to when your Excellency was informed that our peace move was going to be taken, and as to when you communicated this information.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: According to the records, there are two

telegrams on the point. One, if I am not mistaken, is of the 26th of November.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Of the 16th of November. Secretary of State Jagow's telegram reads as follows:

Kindly ascertain whether the President is going to take steps in matter of peace mediation, and if he is, what steps and when. Question important for decision regarding other possible steps in the same direction.

That is the first indication which was wired to America, having any bearing on our peace proposal of the 12th of December. The communication which precedes the peace move did not arrive until the 9th of December. Thereupon, Under-Secretary of State v. Stumm telegraphed that the peace move was going to be made.

Delegate DR. COHN: Still another telegram of the 22d of November must be considered.

Expert DR. BONN: If these dates are correct, it follows that you were left no time to call to the attention of Berlin that, under existing conditions, our German peace proposal, of the existence of which you were informed on the 9th, might have a detrimental effect upon the American move. This is, if I am correct, the question which is for the moment before us.

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: According to my recollection, I did not have time to telegraph over here. The exact facts should be shown by the records, but I can not recollect that I took any step in opposition to our peace move.

Delegate DR. COHN: On the 22d of November, a telegram is supposed to have been sent by v. Jagow, by the terms of which you were informed that the Central Powers were contemplating a peace proposal. Perhaps the Chairman will permit this to be read.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Up to the present time, I have refrained from calling attention to the fact that, in addition to the general communication of the 16th of November, Secretary of State v. Jagow sent you a message on the 22d of November, containing the following terms:

Strictly confidential.

Exclusively for your Excellency's personal information.

Provided the favorable military situation justifies it, it is our purpose, acting in conjunction with our allies, to announce forthwith our willingness to enter on peace negotiations.

This was sent from here on the 22d of November. You must have received it. For on the 25th you answer, and this seems to me to be important:

Wilson instructed House of his own accord to inform me in strict confidence that at the earliest possible moment he would take steps in the direction of his peace negotiation, presumably between this time and the

New Year. In this connection he imposes as a condition that up to that time we express ourselves on the question of a peace move just as little as possible, either orally or in writing, in order to block a premature rejection on the part of our enemies. . . .

I must ask you: What is the meaning of the clause "peace mediation is not to be mentioned"? Does this mean that it was simply Wilson's peace mediation that was not to be mentioned, or that mediation having peace in view was not to be mentioned at all? I think it is important to find out whether, in the face of America's request to keep silent, we made the peace proposal.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It will be seen from other dispatches and telegrams that the Americans always took the view that a peace mediation could only be successful if undertaken at a time when Germany was in a particularly advantageous position, for otherwise, the Entente would not accept; and, consequently, I was always told from the American side to exercise my influence at home to the end that neither in the press nor by the government nor in any way should peace be mentioned by us; for, every time that we started any peace talk, the chances of Wilson's being able to mediate along the lines of peace would be lessened.

Delegate KATZENSTEIN: The information which the Count has given us is particularly interesting, because the general impression which has certainly existed up to this time is that the German peace proposal had a deterring effect upon the hostile Powers as the result of the proud tone which characterized it and by its enumeration of the German successes. Now you, Count v. Bernstorff, state the exact opposite to be the case, in saying that the impression of weakness was created in the United States by the very fact that our willingness for peace was announced. I should like to have this fact definitely established.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I have a precise recollection of the conference which I had with House after our peace proposal, and where he expressed himself as especially deploring the fact that we had made a peace move, because he believed that this would have a detrimental effect upon any peace mediation by Wilson, since it would be considered a sign of weakness; but that in spite of this it was possible that, after all, he would carry out his peace move, and that it was his intention to request Mr. Wilson to do so. Then, to the great and general surprise, Wilson's peace move was announced in Washington four or five days after ours.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: On the 18th. You mentioned the peace proposal of the 12th of December in a later telegram of the month of January. You state that it had not been taken seriously in the United States because it had been made without being accompanied by any concrete peace conditions. Would you be good enough to tell us whether these statements in our telegram are correct. As above stated, this refers to a later period, the

month of January. But in this document you are reporting the impression which this peace proposal made in the United States.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I believe that this last expression of opinion only refers to public opinion, not to the government, and public opinion was constantly strongly influenced by the telegrams which came from London; for, invariably, it was possible to have our news published in the press only after the telegrams from London had already made their impression, so that the American press was constantly being strongly influenced from London.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: But the question is still material: Will you kindly state once more whether our peace proposal of the 12th of December was looked upon as being in conflict with Wilson's views, or not?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Not as being in conflict therewith, but as embarrassing them; not as being in conflict therewith, for, otherwise, Wilson would no longer have continued with his peace move.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Did you not inform the Government or Colonel House to the following effect: "A German peace proposal was being made for such-and-such reasons"? Or did that come quite unexpectedly?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I must depend upon my memory for the answer. But, so far as I know, I did not mention our peace proposal to Colonel House because it was communicated to me in absolutely strict personal confidence and, in so far as I remember, the telegram stated that it depended upon the military situation, so that it was impossible up to the very last moment to know when it would take place.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Did you so construe the telegram as meaning that you were absolutely forbidden to communicate its contents?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I did not mention it in any way.

Expert DR. BONN: We are dealing with two distinct questions. First, whether you spoke with Colonel House about the matter before the 12th of December. Of course it is perfectly clear that you were not in a position to do this. And, secondly, whether after the 12th of December, you talked the matter over with him in order to determine what impression the German proposal had made. You have already answered this question. I believe that we are talking of two quite distinct things.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I talked over the German peace proposal with House between the 12th and the 18th of December. I can not remember the exact date; nor does it appear in the official documents. But I certainly did discuss it with him. I know this to be a fact, because I have a perfect recollection of the conversation, in the course of which he told me that, in his opinion, it was to be hoped that, in spite of all, President Wilson would come out with his peace move.

Delegate DR. COHN: Count v. Bernstorff, you said a little while ago that Colonel House had told you that America or he personally construed the

peace proposal of the 12th of December as tending to give an impression of weakness. Did Colonel House or any other person in official circles tell you what effect the peace proposal of the 12th had upon the Entente Powers—not upon public opinion, but upon the Entente governments themselves?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I can not recollect any particular comments which I could quote.

Delegate DR. COHN: Another question. Did you get the impression that anyone whatsoever on the American side was dissatisfied with the peace proposal of the 12th of December—I might say, due to reasons of prestige, on the theory that, on account of the German peace proposal, a possible peace proposal on Wilson's part would be deprived of its effect upon the world in general only because it was a concurrent move?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I got the impression at that time that the American Government was decidedly disappointed because it had been deprived of the opportunity of taking the first step.

Expert DR. BONN: I believe that we are again treating two distinct questions at once. First, with regard to what you stated a short while ago, to the effect that Colonel House informed you that we should make no peace proposal because that would be regarded as a sign of weakness. This happened, as we know, before the 12th of November. It was a warning that we should not interfere with the course of the American move. After December 12, did not Colonel House, if I have correctly understood the testimony, say to you: The German peace proposal which has now been announced will be looked upon by us as a sign of weakness? Did he state this to you, or not?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: He did state to me once on the occasion of the interview between the 12th and the 18th, that Wilson's peace move had been embarrassed thereby, that the impression existing on the part of the Entente was that we would not have made the peace proposal if we had not been hard put to it for peace.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Count v. Bernstorff mentioned this fact in a telegram of the 14th of January, 1917. In this telegram you state:

Public opinion is mainly occupied with the consideration of the question as to why the President sent his note immediately following the German peace proposal. It is well known that the note had been prepared for quite awhile and would have been sent at Christmas time, irrespective of any move on our part, although this is not so absolutely certain, if we take into consideration the hesitating character of Mr. Wilson, whose inclination is to handle all questions in a dilatory manner. I believe that the President's impelling motive was his urgent wish to assume the rôle of intermediary—a prospect which, it would seem, would have been jeopardized if our enemies had undertaken to enter upon direct negotiations with us. The selection of the moment, which was taken in very bad grace by our enemies, so far as Mr. Wilson was concerned is explained by the existence of this impelling motive.

And you say that Wilson was looked upon as a partisan of the German policy by the anti-German papers because he followed up our note by his own steps looking toward peace.

The CHAIRMAN: Will you express yourself again on this point?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I have nothing more in particular to say.

Delegate DR. COHN: A note from Secretary of State Zimmermann is said to have left on the 1st of December, which perhaps can be gone into later on. It would appear that you were instructed in this note to call attention to the fact that Wilson's peace move would have to follow shortly, since the Navy was insisting upon taking steps against armed freight steamers. Was that your recollection?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes.

Delegate DR. COHN: And can you state what you did in connection therewith?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I can not exactly—

Delegate DR. COHN: Perhaps—excuse me for interrupting you, Count—we can read first this note of the 1st of December. It involves two notes of the 1st of December, one concerning the *Mississippi* and another about peace mediation, of Zimmermann and Bernstorff.

The CHAIRMAN: I will read the complete note:

For your Excellency's personal information: The Navy is urging with great earnestness a revision of the American memorandum of March 25 with regard to armed merchant ships, with particular reference to the demand that their character as instrumentalities of offensive warfare will have to be shown in each particular case. In order to avoid this question being opened in accord with your Excellency's proposal, Wilson's peace move must be initiated very shortly.

Delegate DR. COHN: What inference did you draw from this telegram, Count v. Bernstorff?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It is very difficult to state at this time what inferences I drew out of individual telegrams, since I was in constant conference with Colonel House about these questions, so that in every case, when I received an instruction, I went to him anew and talked it over with him. But if there is no telegram containing an answer from me, nothing resulted of any particular importance.

The CHAIRMAN: The files will be once more searched to see whether we can find a telegram.

Delegate DR. COHN: Do you remember, Count Bernstorff, after you had been informed by Secretary of State Jagow for your own personal information, and only for your own personal information, that the Central Powers were contemplating a peace proposal, whether, in your negotiations with Wilson or with Colonel House, you got into touch with Berlin and advised

that no peace move be undertaken at the time, or whether you did nothing, merely receiving the information?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I do not believe that I ever did anything else than is shown by the telegrams before us—any more than to repeat that peace mediation by Wilson was to be expected any day, and since at the same time I had been instructed from Berlin that Berlin yielded the preference to a peace move by Wilson, I naturally always believed that perhaps even then Wilson's peace move would take place before ours. But I can not recollect that I sent a special telegram on the point.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Let me ask you a final question, Count v. Bernstorff. Unless I am mistaken, we have come to the 12th of December, so at present we have not yet spoken about any answer of ours to Mr. Wilson's note of December 21 concerning mediation by Wilson in the interests of peace. Now, I would like to ask you for an answer on the general point: Did you understand the instructions which were sent to you to mean that you were to encourage or influence President Wilson through Colonel House to undertake a peace move in our favor?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Was Wilson willing to meet this wish?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Was he ready to meet our wishes within the limitations imposed, such as declining to go into territorial questions; to have a peace conference involving international questions only; no concrete proposals?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall then adjourn the hearings for today, and, because it is necessary to conduct them along connected lines, continue them tomorrow at 10 o'clock in the same place of meeting.

The session closed at 12:30 o'clock.

SECOND SESSION

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1919

The session was opened at 10:20 o'clock by the Chairman, Delegate Warmuth.

The CHAIRMAN: The session is opened.

Before we take up the business of the committee, I should like to say a few words in reply to the complaints which have appeared in the press with regard to the insufficiency of space in the room in which we meet, to the effect that there is far too little room for the public and the press. This is unquestionably the fact. I can, however, assure our critics that we were prompt to take the greatest pains to obtain a place of meeting sufficient for the perfectly justifiable demands both of the press and the public. The hall of the main committee could not be placed at our disposal, because it would have been necessary for us to make certain alterations which in the course of a few days probably would have been shown to be wholly unnecessary, since, as has been stated, we were looking for another hall which was suited in all ways to all the demands to be made upon it. And I may state further that it is our fixed intention to obtain even by the time of the next session, a meeting place more especially adapted to our needs. I refer to the convention hall of the Herrenhaus. We have already obtained the permission of the Ministry of State; and we only have a few insignificant formalities to go through with in order to be able to obtain possession of this hall. It was wholly uncalled for, however—and I desire to call particular attention to this—for a local paper to have attributed to our President Fehrenbach the intention of throwing obstacles in the way of giving these proceedings the greatest possible publicity. This is absolutely incorrect, and I refute the suggestion. Our best intentions could not be carried out up to the present time because of difficulties.

I now proceed to the actual business of the meeting, and will first give Doctor Quarck the opportunity of putting a question which he desires to ask of Count v. Bernstorff.

Delegate DR. QUARCK: Count v. Bernstorff, yesterday in the course of his remarks, made the extraordinarily significant announcement—I quote the reported statement as it appears in the press—"that Wilson no longer had the power"—so he was informed by House—"to compel England during the critical period 1916 to adhere to the principles of international law, because American commerce was so completely tied up with the interests of the Entente that it was impossible for Wilson to disturb these commercial

relations without calling forth a storm of protest." This proves to me very plainly how Wilson's hands were tied in the course of his efforts for peace by American-European commercial relations, and particularly by those relations resulting from the war trade with England and France. I consider this point so overwhelmingly important for purposes of forming a judgment with regard to the entire course of Wilson's peace move that I would like to ask the witness to go more into the details of his own opinion with regard to this subserviency, and perhaps, as the result of his long experience acquired personally as the representative of German interests in the United States, to furnish us with proofs of these conditions and to go into this matter more in detail.

The CHAIRMAN: Please, Count v. Bernstorff, let us hear from you on this point.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I made this remark because I had already referred to my telegram touching my interview with President Wilson after the sinking of the *Lusitania*. I remarked, with regard to this interview, that Wilson would at that time have been ready to take his stand on the question of the freedom of the seas, and in fact had gone so far as to express himself to the effect that he believed at that time that he could bring about this freedom of the seas; but at that time he had demanded as a condition precedent that we should give up the U-boat war. It is well known that, from the day of the sinking of the *Lusitania* up to the sinking of the *Sussex*, and our subsequent agreement about the *Sussex* case, the moment never came in the United States when we were free from a German-American controversy. During the entire year from May 7, 1915, up to May 4, 1916, one German-American difficulty followed another. Each time we believed that we had really accomplished something over there, there occurred another sinking or an intensification of the U-boat war, or some other incident which brought all negotiations in the United States to naught. During this time, and I can state this fact as one which is well known, the entire American trade had concentrated on the Entente. All the endeavors which we made in the United States to rouse up those commercial circles in America, and particularly the cotton interests, which up to that time had sent most of their exports to Germany, simply attracted no attention, because the exportation to the Entente countries had become so great that the profits which they could have made by serving us would have been in the end but a drop in the bucket. The situation was such that it was entirely to the interests of American commercial circles to maintain their trade with the Entente. If Wilson had taken steps to interfere with these commercial dealings, he would have had public sentiment in the United States against him. I remember that in the course of our negotiations cases came up in connection with which it was said that he ought to place an embargo upon exports, and that on those occasions Wilson invariably said that he simply could not do it, for he

could not afford to go against public opinion. This played a particularly important part afterwards in the question of the armed merchant ships. It was claimed at that time that Wilson should keep the armed merchant ships outside of American harbors and should consider them war craft. He always refused to do this because, he said, the result would be that the whole American trade would lie fallow for the reason that there were scarcely any merchant ships which were not armed; at that time, as is well known, the Americans had no merchant marine and were dependent upon the merchant marine of the Entente.

I believe that in this way I have answered Dr. Quarck's question in the main.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: On April 5, 1916, the Imperial Chancellor announced our war aims in the Reichstag for the first time, the effect of which was, so far as Belgium was concerned, that never again should Belgium be allowed to play the part of a bulwark in the hands of our enemies against us. Delegate Spahn of the Reichstag, in his capacity as chairman of the Center party, summed up these statements in the announcement that, if Belgium was not to operate as a bulwark in our enemies' hands, this meant neither more nor less than that Belgium, from the political, military, and economic point of view, would have to be completely in our power. This was during the time when the U-boat war, as is stated in the government's announcement of the 14th of March, was being carried on in intensive form; it was announced on the 14th of March that the intensive U-boat war was in full swing. Now, I should like to know how the American political authorities, and how Wilson in particular, looked upon these German demands. This must be made just as apparent to the public as Count v. Bernstorff's testimony can possibly make it. In the second place, the Imperial Chancellor should be asked—

The CHAIRMAN: I ask that this question be postponed.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: Very well, I limit myself to the question as to what the attitude of the American authorities was toward these German demands.

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: May I amend the foregoing question: Is it true that the Count is of the opinion that the swing of commercial interests in the direction of England was so strong on the part of America in the spring of 1916 that Wilson was not in a position to take effective action in the face of public opinion?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Certainly.

The CHAIRMAN: Let me ask that an answer be given to the remarks of Professor Hoetzsch, taken in connection with those of Privy Councilor Schaefer.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Throughout the entire war, the Belgian question was the one which interested Americans most and which was most effective in working up American public opinion against us. Up to the

time of the *Lusitania*, there was absolutely nothing else in the entire mass of anti-German propaganda in America, except what bore upon Belgium. I have not the slightest doubt but that the Americans, even in connection with peace mediation, would, under all conditions, have insisted upon the complete restoration of Belgium and that they never dreamed of anything else except that such a restoration would take place, and would never have consented to act as mediators to bring about peace under other conditions.

The CHAIRMAN: I find in the records quite a number of instructions which went out to you, which have to do directly with the Belgian question, and which made it incumbent upon you to so exert yourself as to bring about the conviction on the part of Wilson that we had absolutely no intention of considering any annexation of Belgium in the course of the peace negotiations which were to take place. Is it your opinion that this alone would have satisfied President Wilson, if a proposition of this kind had been made to him? Or do you think that he would have demanded something more definite, and that he would have made guarantees of the restoration of Belgium a condition precedent to taking part in any way in the peace negotiations?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: I believe that he would have accepted our announcement that we did not desire to annex Belgium, as sufficient at least to justify him in starting a mediation in the cause of peace. Had this not been the case, he would not have made his speech to the Senate of the 22d of January.

The CHAIRMAN: So that this definite assurance which had been received from the Foreign Office with regard to the Belgian question was well known to him, and it was in any case primarily satisfactory so far as he was concerned.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: If I remember correctly, Count Bernstorff told us that, generally speaking, the American people, too, were inclined toward mediation in the cause of peace, but that this inclination for a peace mediation by the United States was from time to time constantly being dissipated. I would like to ask Count v. Bernstorff what occurrences, aside from the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war, the *Lusitania* case, etc., and, too, the deportations of the Belgians, entered into the case, which so affected the American attitude that the American people lost their inclination for peace by mediation.

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: Well, there were certainly incidents which occurred which were not directly connected with the question of a peace mediation which we have under discussion, but which assuredly had an influence upon public opinion. I refer to the so-called German conspiracies in the United States. It was stated by those who were issuing the enemy propaganda, and, I am forced to admit, is looked upon as proven as the result of the investigation by the American Senate, that conspiracies

were instigated by Germany in the United States which were in conflict with American laws.

Delegate DR. COHN: Of what nature were these conspiracies, pray?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: In my opinion, there were no conspiracies. I take the ground that nothing ever occurred which appeared to justify the expression "conspiracy." There were only individual transactions, which, as a matter of fact, were in violation of the laws of the United States but with which we over there, or at least I personally, never had anything to do.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Do these incidents represent the perpetration of ordinary felonies out of political motives, such as incendiarism, for instance?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The judgments were rendered in all the various trials which took place after I left the United States. The judgments in the case of both the German consuls affected, as well as in that of Mr. Rintelen's case and most of the others, were rendered after I left.

So I do not know of what offenses these gentlemen were found guilty. I know, it is true, that several of these gentlemen were supposed to have carried on sabotage. To what extent these gentlemen were actually convicted, I can not say.

Delegate DR. COHN: In this connection, according to my information, it has been alleged on the part of the Americans, that the military or naval authorities which Germany had in the United States participated in those acts to which you have referred, or in deeds of a similar character. Do you know that claims of this kind have been made and, if so, whether the claim is correct?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I can vouch for the claim, in view of the fact that the naval attaché and the military attaché were withdrawn on the ground of such accusation, that is to say, their recall was required by our government, and on this occasion it was said that these gentlemen were compromised through the activities of such agents.

Delegate DR. COHN: Such agents? What agents?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I see that it is necessary for me to go into the most important of these cases which brought about the compromising in question, and this is the case of the mission of a certain Commander Rintelen.

The CHAIRMAN: Please give us the details.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: One day there came to me in New York, at my hotel where I generally stayed, a certain Commander of the Reserves, Rintelen. I asked him why he was calling upon me and what his business was in America, whereupon he answered me that he was not permitted to say. Thereupon I told him that I would make inquiries concerning him in Berlin, and would have nothing further to do with him. To my inquiry in Berlin I received no response. Thereafter, Rintelen came to see me once

more in Washington; he asked my assistance and said that he was connected with the war department. I told him at that time that I would telegraph to Berlin and ask whether the war department knew anything about him. Once again I received no answer. I do not know whether the telegrams arrived or not; I can not say. Later, I believe—I can not swear to it; I should be cautious about doing so—Rintelen was, at the request of the military and naval attachés, removed when in the United States and arrested in England. He announced in England, that he was an agent of the German Government. Thereupon, I telegraphed once more to Berlin and received a telegram in reply, signed by Secretary of State v. Jagow, in which the following was stated: You are authorized to deny categorically that we have ever had anything to do with Rintelen.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I would like to ask whether these acts of sabotage covered simply German property, more particularly speaking, ships, piers, etc., or affected American property at the same time, such as ammunition factories, etc. It might be worth while to establish at a later period in the proceedings whether, in spite of the announcement which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs made with regard to the activities of Mr. Rintelen, to the effect that he was no German agent, he actually had been so designated by the military authorities. For we have known something of the kind to happen in Norway. Does your Excellency perhaps know anything about this?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I do not know even today who it was that sent Rintelen to the United States and what his mission was.

(Interruption: The sabotage question.)

With regard to the sabotage question also, I can only say that I do not know even today whether, as a matter of fact, acts in the nature of sabotage of any kind were performed by Germans. It is true that it was alleged in the United States that bombs had been laid on the merchant ships of all nations, and that ammunition factories had been blown up, etc. But I can state here under oath that I do not know whether such cases actually occurred or whether they have been proved.

The CHAIRMAN: Not to say that these acts were in any way performed on behalf of the German Government, or that the German Government stood behind these acts of sabotage in any manner whatsoever!

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I should have to have this question very carefully put. Who was the German Government?

The CHAIRMAN: Let us say the Foreign Office.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Certainly not the Foreign Office.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Did you know of these agents, particularly Mr. Rintelen, having been provided with money and provided, indeed, with generous amounts of money?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: With regard to the recall of naval

attaché Captain Boy-Ed, I was officially and subsequently informed by the American Government that the reason, which it had hitherto refused to give, why Captain Boy-Ed's recall had been demanded was that proofs had been submitted to the effect that Rintelen had received a half million dollars from him.

(Interruption: From Boy-Ed?)

Yes.

Expert DR. BONN: Is your Excellency aware that an investigation was conducted by the United States covering this whole matter and that, if I am correctly informed, while it is true that this investigation was conducted on somewhat vague and general lines, a very bulky volume dealing with these matters is in existence, which is probably already to be had in Germany in some form or other?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I read the report myself, but was not able to form a definite conclusion as to whether or not, as a matter of fact, any of these acts with the responsibility for which we have been reproached had occurred.

Delegate DR. COHN: Does your Excellency know whether American newspapers—at what date I am uninformed—published the facsimiles of checks which were supposed to have been drawn in favor of agents of that kind by Mr. v. Papen or Mr. Boy-Ed, the military and naval attachés?

COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Mr. v. Papen left the United States under a safe-conduct, and consequently believed that he could take anything with him that he wanted; in any event, he had his check-book with him. Since the military and the naval attachés were on a completely independent basis in the United States, I could not testify on this point, and would suggest that Mr. v. Papen be called in person. I can not say what he paid or what he did not pay. I do know, however, that his check-book was taken away from him.

Delegate DR. COHN: My question was as to whether you were aware of the fact that American newspapers published facsimiles of checks bearing the signature of v. Papen.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I am aware of that.

Delegate DR. COHN: When is that supposed to have happened?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The recall of both gentlemen was requested at the beginning of December, 1915. Mr. v. Papen was arrested in England, I should say in January, 1916. It must have been around February, 1916.

The CHAIRMAN: This belongs to a phase which, at the present, has not come up for discussion in the form of a hearing. It goes back somewhat further beyond the 12th of December.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No, it was a year earlier.

Delegate DR. COHN: I have still another question to put along this line.

I seem to recollect that there was a great polemic campaign in the newspapers here in Germany with regard to America, touching the question of influencing Austro-Hungarian laborers, particularly Hungarian laborers. Do you know anything about this, as to its general connection and its effect upon the feeling and willingness of the American authorities with regard to peace? I have in mind this story about the Hungarian and Austrian factory workers who were supposed to have been taken out of the factories or been driven away by violence. I can no longer remember definitely how these matters were correlated.

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: It is well known that both the Embassies, the Austro-Hungarian as well as the German, were completely shut off from Europe by the blockade. It followed that we were limited to the use of certain facilities, and we put everything in cipher which we sent across. I say this at this time because the question will certainly be put to me later as to how it came about that our cipher became known. This is probably explained by the great quantity of dispatches and reports sent in cipher by us. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador had entrusted, in September, 1915, a report to an American newspaper man named Archibald, who was going abroad, in which he submitted a petition on the part of a Hungarian journalist who requested that money be provided by the Austro-Hungarian Government in order that strikes might be worked up among the Hungarian workmen—I believe it was in Toledo and in connection with the Bethlehem steel works. This man Archibald let the English take from him this letter which was not in cipher, and thereupon the request was made upon the American Government to ask for the recall of the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador.

The CHAIRMAN: That answers this question.

Delegate DR. COHN: I have one last question to put in this connection. The activities of a certain Mr. v. Igel are also mentioned in this connection. I am interested to know whether that was, perhaps, an isolated piece of work and not in any way connected with the activities of Papen and Boy-Ed.

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: When Messrs. v. Papen and Boy-Ed were recalled, it was necessary for us to have the affairs in which those gentlemen had participated wound up by somebody. So far as military matters were concerned, Mr. v. Igel represented the military attaché. At the present moment, I do not remember who took over the naval affairs. In any event, Mr. v. Igel took over the military affairs, and he had an office in New York, the only purpose of which was to close up matters which had been left at loose ends. This office was raided one day at the moment when Mr. v. Igel was at his open safe and when documents were lying upon the table. The officials took these documents away with them. I was afterwards requested to acknowledge these documents as records of the Embassy, in order that Mr. v. Igel might be identified as a member of the Embassy.

Delegate DR. COHN: Who requested this?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The United States Government. It had confiscated these documents and requested that, in return for giving them up, I should acknowledge them to be records of the Embassy. I refused to acknowledge them as records of the Embassy, because I had not had anything to do with these matters. As the result, these documents are still in the hands of the American Government, although this occurrence took place a year before the breaking off of diplomatic relations.

Delegate DR. COHN: You mentioned an office, your Excellency, which, if I understand you correctly, was established for the winding-up of these affairs—or was it the old office?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It continued the existence of the office of the military attaché in New York.

Delegate DR. COHN: What was the firm style of this office? Office of the Military Attaché? Or did it have a more specific designation?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: So far as I remember, it simply continued to be carried as the office of the military attaché of the Embassy.

Delegate DR. COHN: If it was the Office of the Military Attaché of the Embassy, was so called, and, in addition thereto, was publicly designated as such, were you not then called upon, your Excellency, to protest against this breach of exterritoriality?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes, and I did protest against it. But the United States Government met this protest with the theory that Mr. v. Igel was being prosecuted for a criminal offense, and consequently it could not be clearly established whether or not he was entitled to claim exterritoriality under these circumstances. This controversy went so far as to keep up during the whole year, and it was never settled as long as I remained in the United States. I believe that it was never carried any further by the American Government, since at that time the peace move came, and all controversies were purposely avoided.

Delegate DR. COHN: Was the criminal offense designated by the American Government?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It consisted in the alleged conspiracies which were attributed to the military attaché.

Expert DR. BONN: It is at least evident that the so-called conspiracies did not lessen the difficulties of your task, so far as public opinion was concerned. I believe, however, that it can be correctly gathered, as the result of the entire episode, that, on the other hand, the following is established: that you denied any knowledge of these "conspiracies"; that so far as you were concerned, your denials were given complete credence; and that, in spite of these "conspiracies," your personal relations with Colonel House, as you stated yesterday, were those of mutual confidence. Is this true?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: On the day when Secretary of State Lansing requested me to call upon him to take up with me the question of the request to have both Messrs. v. Papen and Boy-Ed recalled, I at once put the question to him whether I was in any way compromised by the acts attributed to these two gentlemen. I stated that if the American Government was of the opinion that I had been compromised by these dealings, I would at once request my government to recall me, since it was impossible for an Ambassador to remain at his post who did not have the confidence of the government to which he was accredited. Secretary of State Lansing gave me the following categorical answer: "You are in no way included in this episode, and we should look upon it with extreme regret were you to leave us, because you are at present entrusted with those important negotiations." This announcement of Secretary Lansing's was reiterated to me by Colonel House two days later in still more emphatic terms.

Expert DR. BONN: This brings us to December, 1915. This expression of confidence continued unaltered, however, if I have understood correctly, up to the beginning of 1917, or is this not the case?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That is at least my assumption, for, otherwise, they would probably not have dealt with me on a basis of mutual confidence.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I have understood from the statements of Count v. Bernstorff that the military attaché was absolutely self-dependent and that he was in no way subject to the orders of the Ambassador. I should like to ask whether, generally speaking, not simply in Germany's case, but in the case of other embassies, the rule was that the military attaché occupied a position of complete and individual responsibility and that he was not subject to the instructions of the ambassador or minister.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The position of the naval and military attachés has always been two-fold, and somewhat difficult to define. They are directly subordinated to their superiors in all military questions, whereas reports of a political nature invariably went through the ambassador's hands, and he had, moreover, the right to hold these up or to request the gentlemen to make alterations in them. During the war, however, the situation had somewhat changed, since—I think I can state this now—there were a number of military questions to be handled in New York City which made it necessary for the military and naval attachés to go to New York and give up their residence in Washington. Consequently, during the war, my influence upon these two gentlemen was only manifested now and then on the occasion of conferences with them in New York, when I went to that city. For the rest, they operated completely on their own responsibility during the war; they were not authorized to apply to the embassy for money but had their own funds.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I asked the question as to whether Count Bernstorff

knew that similar relations existed between the ambassadors and military attachés of other Powers, or whether this applied to Germany only.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Similar relations were the general rule, for, in the course of my diplomatic experience of many years, I have on numerous occasions come into contact with a situation where military attachés were recalled by their government on account of espionage or similar reasons, and where, by no possibility would anyone have dreamed of connecting the ambassador with the matter in question.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Count Bernstorff has told us that the reports of the military attaché concerning all political affairs would invariably have to pass through the embassy. In view of the separation of the military and naval attachés from the embassy seat—for I have just heard that during the war they were located in New York—did the possibility arise of exercising any kind of supervision of the question as to whether, independently of the embassy, they sent in reports of a political nature, and was this control practicable in any event? Of course it is always a very doubtful question as to what is a political matter or what is a purely military matter.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Absolute control was impossible. But in view of the fact that for two years I had worked with both gentlemen in complete harmony, I do not believe that they would have sent in reports covering political matters of which I had no knowledge. I do not know this as a fact, but still I do not believe they would.

Delegate DR. COHN: Did the American State Department never express any objection to these two gentlemen who, after all, belonged to the diplomatic personnel, removing their official headquarters from Washington to New York?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No, nothing was ever said about this. This question never came up.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe that this question had better not be discussed any further, because if we do so we shall find ourselves embarked upon a sea without a shore.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Is it true that, during the time that we were still at peace with the United States, and your Excellency was endeavoring to bring about mediation by the United States, Wilson complained in a message to Congress, in so many words, concerning the criminal activities of Germans on American soil?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Wilson did speak of criminal activities in his message to the Congress, just about the time when our military and naval attachés were recalled. But, according to my recollection—I would have to have the message before me—the message referred only to Americans of German, Austrian or Italian, of foreign descent, not to Germans. At that time—I believe it must have been somewhat later—I made an official announcement, with the consent of the Foreign Office, that Germans residing

in the United States would, under all conditions, have to abide by the laws of the land.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now hear Professor Schaefer with regard to an entirely new question, since the present one is settled.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: In the peace note of December 18, 1916, which was handed over here on the 21st, Wilson mentioned the smaller and weaker peoples which must be protected against violation of their rights and against oppression on the part of greater Powers; stating that that was a chief aim. I should now like to know—we naturally think of Belgium first of all—whether it was possible for Count v. Bernstorff to take up this question with Wilson or Lansing or House, and to inquire whether Wilson had other States in mind, such as Greece or, perhaps, even Portugal. I think that we should understand Wilson's pronouncements correctly—what he meant and what he intended to say thereby.

The CHAIRMAN: As a matter of fact, this question applies to a subject which is to come up later. The date limit set to the consideration of these prior matters was the 12th of December. We should lose ourselves completely. It is better for us to postpone this question for the present. It is very possible that it would lead to further questions. Otherwise, we shall not get ahead.

I should now like to put a question which refers to the period which was discussed in the session of yesterday. Your Excellency stated at the commencement of your remarks of yesterday, that as early as August, 1914, a proposal on the part of Wilson, looking towards mediation in the interests of peace, had already taken place, that Mr. Gerard had had the opportunity of talking with the Emperor along these lines; that the Emperor replied thereto; that Gerard had requested that it be put in writing; and that this *aide-mémoire*, if we may so call it, reached Washington through Gerard. The committee would like to be informed somewhat more in detail about this question, with particular reference to the impression which the statement of the Emperor created in Washington, both upon the government and upon the people as well.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I referred to this memorandum which—

The CHAIRMAN: Of August, 1914. You referred to it at the beginning of your statement yesterday—I assume that that was the one which you had in mind—when you stated that at the beginning of August and immediately after the outbreak of the war, Wilson made his first attempt to take steps in the direction of peace.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: In August, 1914, before I was in America? For I was on leave when the war broke out, and arrived back in the United States only on the 23d of August. In the beginning of August, Wilson issued a general appeal to all the belligerent States, but I should have to consult the records again to see the form in which this was done, for I was

not personally in Washington and can not state it as a matter of memory. In any event, it constituted an attempt to restore peace, I do not know in what form. It was in August. After I had come back to the United States, Secretary of State Bryan for a second time attempted to bring about a peace mediation. That was about the 6th or 7th of September, I believe.

The CHAIRMAN: So you are not at present in a position to go into detail, particularly with regard to the Emperor's reply and with regard to what he caused to be set down in writing; you would have to be informed first as to details?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I do not believe that it involves an announcement by the Emperor; I believe that it was an official reply of the German Government.

The CHAIRMAN: This is the way it was announced in the press at that time, so far as we can recollect it. Perhaps we are thinking of two different things.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I believe that there is a misunderstanding. The Emperor sent a telegram to Wilson, in which he asked him to make some announcement concerning the Belgian atrocities.

Delegate DR. COHN: And this was done also?

The CHAIRMAN: That is another matter. This meeting is supposed to have taken place in the *Lustgarten*, according to Gerard's book. That is what Gerard said. In any case, you know nothing about it?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No, I never heard that.

The CHAIRMAN: Then this item is concluded.

Delegate DR. COHN: I would like to ask another question. Does your Excellency know whether, by means of cooperation with, and perhaps at the request of, the Americans, a Belgian relief work was organized?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Certainly.

Delegate DR. COHN: Do you know whether the application of the money which was subscribed, of the food, etc., was carried out to the satisfaction of the Americans, or whether differences arose with the American Government on account of this relief work which might possibly have been detrimental to the desire for peace?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Personally, I am practically not at all informed with regard to the relief work in Belgium; this all took place in Europe. But I never heard over there that any disagreement of any kind had resulted therefrom.

Delegate DR. COHN: Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency, there is another important matter concerning which the committee would like to be informed. Dr. Sinzheimer, please.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: It relates to the following: You stated in answer to a question, that in governmental circles in the United States our

peace proposal of the 12th of December had been characterized as a sign of weakness and, on this account, constituted an obstacle to Wilson's peace move, because the Entente assumed from this that we were in a weak situation and, on this account, were making a peace move on our own initiative. I would like to ask you whether or not you reported the fact that this peace proposal of the 12th of December had emanated not only from the Foreign Office but in full agreement with the Supreme High Command of the Army which had before it the note of the 12th of December and took part in drawing it up—or was this fact wholly unknown to you?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The negotiations on this point, so far as I recollect, were entirely limited to the American Embassy over here. The peace proposal and everything that had anything to do with it was telegraphed to us in Washington; but I had no instructions whatsoever to supplement it with reports of any kind. This matter was not handled through the Embassy at all.

The CHAIRMAN: Then we come to the further—

Delegate DR. COHN (interrupting): Shall we not determine definitely whether the question of the previous speaker is substantiated in the records in the form in which he has put it?

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I can assert, basing my assertion on the official documents, that this peace proposal of the 12th of December was made in full agreement with the Supreme High Command of the Army, and that the Supreme High Command of the Army had before it the draft of the peace proposal, and that this draft was amended by it and authorized as well.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask, now, that you will continue with your statement where you left off yesterday. You left off yesterday with the peace proposal of the 12th of December, which was sent out by us, and what we now have to take up first is a discussion of the American peace proposal, that is, to take the time of the 21st of December as a starting point. Kindly commence with this period.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: As I called to your attention yesterday, Wilson had sent off his proposal in the nature of a mediation in the interests of peace—for we in Washington always considered it as such, and it was likewise so considered by public opinion—in spite of the fact that it had been preceded by our peace proposal; and precisely on this account Wilson's peace proposal attracted a very great deal of attention in America, since, because it followed so directly upon the heels of our proposal, the impression was created that it was his intention to support our proposal. Consequently, at the last moment he had inserted in his note the statement that his proposal had nothing to do with the German proposal, and that he had been contemplating sending it off for a long time. American public opinion, as the recorder called to our attention yesterday during the reading of a report, con-

sidered the step taken by Wilson as absolutely pro-German. Articles to this effect were published in all the journals, and the feeling in Washington was generally to this effect, as I stated yesterday. Thereupon, I called upon Secretary of State Lansing to ask him what course he was considering as the result of this note, and thereupon occurred the conversation to which, also, reference was made yesterday, in which it was said that the American conception was that of acting as a clearing house for the peace conditions, and thereupon followed the German answer already alluded to. From the moment that this German reply was received, it is certain that a contradiction arose between the conception which I had of the meaning of the German reply and the interpretation attributed to the German reply over here, as I am now bound to assume from the contents of the records and from public statements which have been made of late. I assumed that the German note meant nothing more than that I was again to emphasize the point that we were desirous that Wilson should take a hand only to the extent of making a conference possible, and that the belligerent Powers were to negotiate directly with one another concerning individual points at issue. It was thus that I understood the note at the time, and I did not believe that it meant that the idea of a mediation by Wilson in the interests of peace should be given up. As the result of matters which have been made public lately, and as the result of my present examination of the public records, access to which was made possible for me day before yesterday, I am bound to reach the supplemental conclusion that the purpose of our answer of the 26th of December was to do away wholly with the possibility of a peace mediation by Wilson. But this was not communicated to me, so that I continued to assume that the peace mediation of Wilson was desired and continued to mention Wilson's mediation in telegrams, whereupon a controversy arose as to what the peace mediation of Wilson was. For instance, I have seen a telegram in which the Emperor telegraphed to the Foreign Office and asks why I should still be talking about a peace mediation by Wilson, whereas, as a matter of fact, no such thing existed.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to interrupt here in order to give you an opportunity of giving your reasons more in detail, as to how you reach the conclusion that it was the intention of the German Government to desire to ignore any peace mediation such as was referred to in Wilson's peace proposal. Wilson states emphatically in his peace proposal that he is proposing no peace; that he does not even offer to mediate; he only suggests that feelers be thrown out with regard to neutrals and the belligerent States, and so forth and so on. In other words, simply a suggestion that feelers be thrown out, not a peace mediation, is what is announced by Wilson himself in this peace note. Consequently there would be no reason for the German Government to look upon this step as a move in the direction of mediation in the interests of peace. How does it, then, happen that you as-

cribe to the German Government the attitude of looking with disfavor upon a peace mediation? And I should like once more and quite particularly, too, to point out that two stages of progression in the direction of peace are involved: the first consisting of a general arrangement in connection with territorial questions with which Wilson was to have nothing to do under any circumstances, and the second, in this second convention which, to be sure, plays a more important part, and toward which, in any case, so far as I can determine from the original documents, the German Government showed itself to be strongly inclined. It is urged again and again to work along this line; it is continually stated: We are ready to take up with all these things, the freedom of the seas, the peace league, etc., because Wilson assured us of his cooperation in this connection in due course. Kindly give me a still more detailed interpretation of what you have just stated, from this standpoint, your statement being that you failed to see any desire on the part of the German Government to have Wilson take steps in the direction of peace.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I looked upon Wilson's note as a step in the direction of a peace mediation for this reason, because this was necessarily to be deduced from all earlier negotiations. It was the note which had been announced to me in advance by Colonel House, and I considered the mode of expression which Wilson selected—if I may venture to say so—very uncertain and groping, because it was his purpose, by this means, to make it impossible to reject it. Had he stated frankly the first day: "This is a peace mediation," then they would perhaps have answered him: "We do not want it." But the note was so drawn that a rejection was practically impossible.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you finished with your remarks, Count Bernstorff?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I should like to come back to the other question. At that time, I was thoroughly convinced that our note of the 26th of December in no way indicated the change of attitude from that previously maintained by the government, and that, consequently, everything remained the same as before, with the exception that the government wished to emphasize anew the point that we did not want any intermeddling by Wilson in territorial questions. This note changed nothing, in my opinion. I merely referred just now to the fact that I now entertain a different opinion, because I have learned from the publication of Field Marshal v. Hindenburg's letter that the purpose was to reject a peace mediation by Wilson. For, only a few weeks ago, a letter of Field Marshal v. Hindenburg's was published in which he goes into these matters.

The CHAIRMAN: But this has nothing to do with your own opinion?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I simply desired to say that my interpretation of this note is different today from what it was at that time.

The CHAIRMAN: Then we are to be at least certain, are we not, that, in

any case, Wilson did not attach decisive importance to our providing him with our exact peace conditions—that the refusal to do this did not signify a break, so far as he was concerned?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It did not mean any break, so far as he was concerned, because he simply kept on negotiating. There is no doubt that he always assumed that he would finally induce us to announce our conditions.

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly, but not that our refusal had, in itself, any such significance as you attribute to it today.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: We must reach some conclusion on that point. The essence of Wilson's note of the 21st of December consists in the plea directed to all belligerent Powers to announce their concrete peace conditions. I shall venture to read this briefly. I believe that it is essential to have the note literally before us. The passage in point reads as follows:

The President suggests that an early occasion be sought to call out from all the nations now at war such an avowal of their respective views as to the terms upon which the war might be concluded and the arrangements which would be deemed satisfactory and as a guarantee against its renewal or the kindling of any similar conflict in the future as would make it possible frankly to compare them. He is indifferent as to the means taken to accomplish this. He would be happy himself to serve, or even to take the initiative in its accomplishment, in any way that might prove acceptable, but he has no desire to determine the method or the instrumentality. One way will be as acceptable to him as another if only the great object he has in mind be attained.

And then he says in another part of the note:

And yet the concrete objects for which the conflict is being waged have never been definitively stated.

He ends with the statement that he is not proposing peace, that he is not even offering mediation, that he is merely proposing that soundings be taken in order that it may be learned "how near, perhaps, the haven of peace may be."

In the note which we sent by way of answer to this request on the 26th of December, no reference whatsoever was made to Wilson's desire to be informed concerning our peace conditions. The information is not given. Thereupon, you (to the witness) constantly report that Lansing was now requesting that, since we had refused to announce our peace conditions publicly, they might at least be divulged in confidence. Again and again do you report this urgent wish on the part of Wilson.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Perfectly true.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Is that now correct?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Then I should like to put another question to you. You have just referred to a letter of Hindenburg's.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That is a letter which was published in the *Lokalanzeiger* some six weeks ago.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I find no such letter in the records. If I recollect aright, an explanatory statement of Secretary of State Zimmermann was attached to this letter.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That I did not read.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Then Hindenburg's letter is no longer material here.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No. I simply assumed from the letter and from my study of the files that, in view of the note of the 26th of December, it was generally assumed here in Berlin by the Imperial Government that the peace mediation on Wilson's part was finished. I assumed this as a result of these publications; for that would explain the difference which apparently existed between my conception and that of the government in the month of January.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Now, I should like to establish another point. In reply to your transmission of Lansing's request to communicate the concrete conditions confidentially, at least, Secretary of State Zimmermann replied to you, on the 7th of January—two days before the declaration of the U-boat war—that you were to handle this question, literally, "in a dilatory manner." Do you remember that?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I remember that; and it was for this reason, too, that I assumed that all remained as it was before except for the fact that I was to handle this question in a dilatory fashion.

The CHAIRMAN: At that time you were emphatically instructed in that very communication that you were urgently and most emphatically to insist with all zeal that the conditions of this second convention would be guaranteed by us to the very fullest extent.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: In support of your recently acquired interpretation, you referred to a telegram of the Emperor as an indication of the fact that Wilson's peace move was positively not desired at this time. This telegram must be read. The telegram is dated January 16, and was transmitted by Secretary of Legation v.—

The CHAIRMAN (interrupting): Excuse me. It is in the—

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I simply wanted to fix the contents of the telegram, in view of the fact that it was referred to by Count v. Bernstorff. It is dated January 16, 1917, and is addressed to the Secretary of State. It reads as follows:

His Majesty thanks your Excellency for your information.

I will explain in a moment just what that information was.

His Majesty remarked, in regard to the telegram, that he placed "absolutely no" reliance on Wilson's peace move. In case the break with America was unavoidable—

Which you (to the witness) have announced,

— matters can not be changed; we shall go ahead.

The CHAIRMAN: But this is a question which can only be gone into for the first time when we reach the period in question, that is, at least the time following the 9th of January, after the announcement at Pless. At the present time, I shall not go any further into this question; for, even during today's proceedings we shall reach it in due course.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Excuse me. If I have understood Count v. Bernstorff correctly, he wanted to interpret this telegram to mean that absolutely no intention ever existed, even at an earlier point of time, to accept any peace move on the part of Wilson. Is that correct?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No. I conclude at the present time, and from my present knowledge of the situation, that the purpose of the German note of December 26 was to put a stop to Wilson's move in favor of peace.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: On the basis of this telegram?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes, and on the basis of the various statements made public which I have read since that time.

The CHAIRMAN: In any event, the exchange of correspondence between you at that time and the Foreign Office, or the authorities on this side, did not result in giving you that conviction?

COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No. At that time, I believed that Wilson's move in the direction of peace was to be allowed to proceed undisturbed, and that nothing was to be changed.

The CHAIRMAN: And you were given instructions as to how to proceed, to work definitely along these lines?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That was at least my understanding.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: That telegram of the Emperor's referred back to a report of Count Bernstorff's which had been submitted to the Emperor's consideration. In the course of this report, the witness mentions a "peace mediation" on the part of Wilson. Thereupon, the Emperor asks what was meant by this "peace mediation;" that he was of the opinion "that a peace mediation on the part of Wilson has never been in contemplation." Thereupon, Secretary of State Zimmermann replies as follows:

Be kind enough to inform His Majesty that the expression used by Count Bernstorff "peace mediation of Wilson" does not exactly apply to existing circumstances. As His Majesty states, a peace mediation by Wilson has, as a fact, never been contemplated. Count Bernstorff has not been left in error with regard to this, and has obviously merely made misuse of the term. In my opinion, the Ambassador merely has

in mind the peace move set on foot by Wilson in his note to the belligerent Powers, which, in the meantime, was wholly brought to naught by the answer of the Entente. The telegram of Count Bernstorff left before this answer of the Entente reached Washington.

But in the meantime, you had always reported, in connection with your earlier instructions, that the moves for peace which had been suggested by us would go ahead, and that the concrete peace conditions could be disclosed in connection with bringing about further endeavors in this direction. Is this conception correct?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I believed that Wilson's peace mediation had begun and that it was to continue. I always believed that.

Expert DR. BONN: I believe that I can assert that all the Emperor's statements and the exchange of correspondence with Secretary of State Zimmermann which has just been read to us, was not brought to your knowledge in Washington?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No.

Expert DR. BONN: Therefore, in my opinion, the possibility of obtaining information from you with regard to these matters and their results vanishes completely, so far as our program is concerned. It is not possible for you to give information with regard to matters of which you have no knowledge.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That is positively correct. I only thought that, in view of the fact that I am testifying under oath, I ought to explain that I entertain a different opinion today concerning the note of the 26th of December from that which I entertained formerly. In those days I considered this note as a continuation in the move toward a peace mediation by Wilson, and am forced to assume that Gerard took the same view of it after he had spoken of the note in the highest terms, whereas today, in view of what has been made public with regard to the situation, I conclude that the purpose of this note was to terminate Wilson's efforts in behalf of peace. I simply wanted to make this point clear because, otherwise, I should have made statements which I could not have made under oath.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: The essence of this kind of American mediation was, was it not, that America simply wanted to act as a clearing house, in contrast with taking part in an actual mediation? Is it not true that you, Count Bernstorff, most painfully failed to detect in the Berlin reply under these conditions, a statement that, on our side, we were willing to disclose our peace conditions—a transaction to which the idea of the clearing house was essential?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: This note was not communicated to me at all, but followed the usual telegraphic route through the Embassy in Berlin. It is certainly true, and I admit this, that I regretted the note at that time, because it did not make the concessions required for the negotiations I was carrying on over there. But after my instructions of the 7th

of January told me that I was to handle the question in a dilatory fashion, I assumed that the peace mediation had not been given up and that, as a matter of fact, nothing was changed.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe Professor Bonn wished to supplement his question with another.

Expert DR. BONN: I simply wanted to observe the following: It is, of course, to be understood that the witness must inform us if his opinion with regard to a situation has changed. But I believe the matter should end there. For this situation, which can be changed by the presentation of new documents, can naturally not be determined by an opinion entertained by the witness. The important point seems to me to be the following: Was your Excellency informed of the concrete peace conditions of Germany before the 29th of January?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No.

Expert DR. BONN: Were the German peace conditions communicated to you in an indefinite form?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: With the exception of the telegram which has already been read, in which it was stated that we would not annex Belgium and that, moreover, we agreed to the freedom of the seas and compulsory arbitration, etc., no. In addition to this, I received nothing.

The CHAIRMAN: It was always said that the peace conditions would be "moderate."

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes. The expression "moderate" is the term used, I believe.

The CHAIRMAN: They are in any event, contained within reasonable limits, and constitute a contrast with the unreasonable conditions which the Entente proposed. But, at any rate, you were never informed of anything definite, anything concrete, before the 29th of January?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No. I was merely continually informed that the conditions would be very moderate, and the Belgian question was always referred to. I recollect this in particular in connection with an interview with Secretary of State Lansing, because this interview brought out very clearly the difference in the points of view. Lansing asked me why it was that we refused to make our peace conditions public, and then I told him, in accordance with instructions, that we were of the opinion that our conditions, which were so moderate in contrast with the conditions of the enemy, would give rise to an impression of weakness, and that, as a result, we did not intend to make them the subject of public announcement. Then Lansing said to me, "I do not understand it; I can not conceive it. Why do you not demand as much as the rest do? For, after all, a middle point will be agreed upon. I can not conceive why you are submitting moderate conditions; on the contrary, do just as the other side does, and then we shall meet upon a middle ground."

Expert DR. BONN: Do you remember, your Excellency, that not only the American Government, but public opinion as well, was clamoring for the announcement of peace conditions?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes, the entire press, and in fact everybody, expected that we were going to announce our conditions; this was quite general.

Expert DR. BONN: Do you, perhaps, remember too that the American papers attempted to form a conclusion with regard to our peace conditions by snatching at things which they had heard here and there—from their conception as to the meaning of the word “moderate,” and similar expressions used in connection with Belgium; that, at that time, if I recollect correctly, it was announced that the German peace conditions were included in an article—or, I believe, two articles—in the *Evening Mail*?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: An extraordinarily large number of cases came to my notice in which the newspapers announced that they had received information from me or from other sources with regard to the German peace conditions. I can, however, unqualifiedly state that I never announced official German peace conditions to anybody in the United States before the 29th of January, 1917. It is perfectly true that I did mention the subject in the course of private interviews; this is readily understood, since, otherwise, diplomacy could not be carried on. But that I at any time told anybody that certain definite conditions were those which the German Government was going to propose, is simply not the case.

Delegate DR. COHN: Count Bernstorff, were you afterwards informed of the conditions of Germany, on which the peace proposal of the 12th of December was founded?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: They were officially communicated to me on the 29th of January.

Delegate DR. COHN: Oh, officially. Did you let them go any further?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I got them simultaneously with the declaration of the U-boat war and transmitted them at the same time.

The CHAIRMAN: You are referring to those conditions which we discussed yesterday, of the 29th of January, to wit: “We inform you of the conditions under which we would have been willing to enter into peace negotiations in case the Entente had accepted our peace proposal of December 12.”

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Certainly.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to introduce the closing paragraph at this time, in order to clear matters up on this point, because these telegrams might be possibly such as to suggest the idea that, so far as we were concerned, the moment for peace conditions had definitely passed. The closing paragraph states expressly:

As is to be observed in the instructions governing the intensive U-boat warfare, we are always ready to do justice to the necessities of the United States as far as in any way possible. We beg the President, in spite of all, to take up and continue his efforts, and we declare ourselves perfectly ready to discontinue the intensive U-boat warfare as soon as we receive satisfactory assurances that the efforts of the President will lead to a peace which would be acceptable to us.

I take it that this telegram is directly related to your report of the 23d of January, in which you emphasize the very point which you have just expressed here, that as a result of disclosing peace conditions it was possible that an unfavorable impression might result in Germany, on the ground that these peace conditions were too reasonable; you suggested at that time to go somewhat further, in fact, in connection with these conditions by announcing the desire that it might, perhaps, be inserted that we, in our capacity as conquerors, would demand an independent Ireland. This is correct; this connection—it was on this account that it occurred to me to clear up this ambiguous term “would have been”—exists.

Delegate DR. COHN: Count Bernstorff, you stated sometime ago that you were of the opinion that the desire for a complete restoration of Belgium had constituted the most important feature of the American peace mediation or suggestion, we might almost say, was a *conditio sine qua non*; and now you just said that Lansing said to you: “Why are you making such moderate peace conditions; make them more severe, and then we shall meet upon a middle ground.” Do you believe that there is a certain contradiction between these two remarks of yours, or do you think that your first statement that “the restoration of Belgium was a *conditio sine qua non* so far as the Americans were concerned, so far as all the questions brought up by America were concerned,” should also be applied to Lansing’s statement “make them more severe; we shall meet upon a middle ground.”

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I never applied Lansing’s remark to the Belgian situation, because I was perfectly convinced that an American peace mediation without the restoration of Belgium was absolutely out of the question, so far as American feeling was concerned.

Recording Secretary DR. SINZHEIMER: I wish to remark that these discussions do not represent correctly the formulation of the peace conditions, and I must claim the right to turn to the records themselves in order to find the requisite proofs. In my opinion, this is made necessary by the present state of the proceedings. The peace conditions which formed the basis of our peace proposal of the 12th of December, and which were not communicated at the request of Wilson, were carefully agreed upon with Baron Burian. I wish to remark—

The CHAIRMAN: We are at the present time engaged in hearing the testimony of Count v. Bernstorff, and there is no reason for me to permit the in-

jection of supplementary remarks by the recorder. I believe that it is in every way proper that we should first conclude with the testimony of Count v. Bernstorff and then these supplementary statements of the recorder can follow.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Then I must state, with regard to the proofs which are here offered, that the peace conditions which were communicated to Wilson on the 28th of January were quite different from those peace conditions on which our peace proposal of the 12th of December were based.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall naturally take up this point in time.

Expert DR. BONN: I believe that we must follow right along on the course which the Chairman has designated. We are not concerned with the fact as to whether the peace conditions which were communicated to Count v. Bernstorff were the right ones or not, for the only question at present before us is: What were the peace conditions which were communicated to Count v. Bernstorff on the 28-29 of January, and what did he do after he got them? The witness is limited to this ground in this respect. It is of course understood that later on, when other witnesses testify concerning other matters, we shall have to investigate the question as to whether there is an agreement or not. I believe, however, that it would be simply a waste of time if we were to ask Count v. Bernstorff concerning matters which he can not answer except by examining the records and reading them. And it is certainly not the province of the witness to tell things which he has read somewhere, for he is only required to bring out matters which, as the result of his own experience, he knows better than anybody else, or better than the files.

The CHAIRMAN: I propose to proceed in this way.

Delegate DR. COHN: Count Bernstorff, after your return to Germany, did you learn that the conditions which were communicated to you on the 28th of January for transmission to Lansing were different from those which were decided upon shortly before the 12th of December at a joint conference held by the Supreme High Command, the Imperial Chancellor, the Emperor, and others?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: No, I am learning this today for the first time; and, so far as I am concerned, I can perhaps simplify this particular question by stating at the outset that the peace conditions played absolutely no further part in the United States, since I received them on the same day that the unrestricted U-boat war was declared; and because the unrestricted U-boat war necessarily was bound to bring about the breaking off of diplomatic relations, since on the occasion of the exchange of notes with regard to the *Sussex*, the American note of the 18th of April, 1916, was an ultimatum which stated that "if Germany persists in carrying on the U-boat war according to the rules hitherto adopted, I must sever diplomatic relations." So, as a matter of fact, a diplomatic situation was created which left the

American Government no other possible choice than to break off relations unless it was willing to designate as white today that which it had described as black previously.

The CHAIRMAN: But as a matter of fact, even after the U-boat war, Wilson declared himself further prepared to enter into negotiations with us and to reach a friendly understanding. I will not, however, refer to that prematurely; I should like to maintain the chronological order. That is, however and in any event, a question which I shall put when we have reached this point, the discussion of which is of the most extreme importance, because it will be conclusive on the question of whether the U-boat war, as a matter of fact, destroyed all possibilities of negotiations with the United States.

Delegate DR. COHN: I have still another question.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to take matters up again regarding the 21st of December, in order that we can get ahead.

Delegate DR. COHN: I believe that the present would be the best time, because the witness has already testified concerning this period; but I shall wait.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: What we have to do is to settle that most important question as to why our concrete peace conditions were not communicated on the 21st of December at Wilson's request. The proof does not consist merely of the statements of witnesses; it consists also in the contents of public documents, and for this reason I must reserve the right to communicate the contents of these documents which under all conditions, have a bearing on the peace conditions. For it depends upon the nature and the kind of those conditions as to whether or not they were, as a matter of fact, adapted to being made public at that time. From the very nature of the conditions the reply to the question as to why—

The CHAIRMAN: It is perfectly obvious that we shall and must go into that question. The comments to be made concerning it will be in no wise restricted. That is settled. But, I repeat, it has no place in connection with the giving of testimony by Count v. Bernstorff, and for that reason we exclude it.

Delegate DR. COHN: Just one question, which I desire to ask. Count Bernstorff, kindly answer the following question: The conditions which were handed over to you on the 28th of January were characterized to you by Under-Secretary of State Zimmermann as moderate. If you will now consider the situation at the time directly preceding the breaking off of diplomatic relations, and fix your attention upon the nature of the conditions imposed, I will now ask you the following question: Bearing in mind the general situation, including the breaking off of diplomatic relations which was known to you to be imminent, did those conditions when you had them before you at that time, seem to you still to be moderate?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The conditions which were communi-

cated to me, I considered moderate. But I am bound to repeat that I attributed no further value to the conditions; for I was then perfectly well aware that diplomatic relations would be broken off, and that they would be of no further value.

Delegate DR. COHN: You handed them over, if I understand correctly, together with the U-boat note?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That is not quite correct. The handing over took another form, since all the peace negotiations had been carried on between myself and Colonel House, and the U-boat question with Secretary of State Lansing. Therefore, on the 31st of January, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, in accordance with instructions, I handed over the U-boat note to Secretary of State Lansing, but already, on the morning of the 30th, I had had the peace conditions handed over to Colonel House personally because I hoped that he would come to Washington at once—as he actually did—and perhaps even then something might be done.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: One question which I have already put, and which I would like to repeat now, in view of the fact that it belongs to the period which is now under discussion. The thing which seems to me most important is to determine, not only what was said, but what was meant. Whom did Wilson probably have in mind in his peace note of the 18th of December when he spoke of lesser nations which he desired to protect from violations of their rights, and from forceful oppression? Did Count v. Bernstorff have the opportunity of speaking with Wilson and of finding out whether Belgium only, or perhaps other small States like Greece, for instance, were in contemplation.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Councilor, we shall come to that later.

(Interruption.)

In any case, it is a matter which can be settled at once by question and answer.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: Then another question, referring to the message of the 22d of January.

The CHAIRMAN: That will come later. May I ask you, Count v. Bernstorff, to reply to the first of Professor Schaefer's questions.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I never spoke in detail with him or with Colonel House, with regard to the question as to what States he had in mind. I personally assumed that he meant Belgium by this language, and that he simply made use of a method of expression of which he was accustomed to avail himself to a very great extent, which consisted in referring to a number of things at one and the same time, and leaving it to the reader to form his own opinion of what he wanted to express.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now proceed, and I believe that the most fitting thing for us to do is for us now to take up the note of the Entente which rejected our offer, and to consider the impression which it made in

the United States, particularly upon Wilson, and as to how he estimated the situation with regard to the possibilities of peace after this blunt rejection of peace by the Entente. We want to go into the question with particular care as to whether he considered it a bluff or not. The rejection by the Entente is contained in the note which directly followed the note of the 26th of December.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: So far as concerns my negotiations with representatives of President Wilson, he always stated to me that he considered that the conditions of the Entente which followed upon our note, as well as those which followed upon Wilson's note, were not to be taken seriously. He stated in so many words that he considered it a bluff, and said that it was his opinion that the Entente probably intended to prevail upon us in this way to enter upon the U-boat war, and by this method to draw the United States into the war. That was the opinion which was entertained by the authorities in Washington.

The CHAIRMAN: So he did not think it was so powerful an obstacle as to make him think that it could cause his efforts in behalf of peace to come to naught.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: You say, Count Bernstorff, in a report of the 26th of January, that the conditions of the Entente were not only characterized to you in the United States as a bluff, but that Colonel House in so many words spoke to you of the "impossible conditions" of the Entente?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: So far as I recollect, that is probably right. It is certainly right, since I reported it; but what I mean to say is that, for the moment, I can not remember the circumstance.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps Dr. Sinzheimer will read it to you in order that you may refresh your recollection.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: You report on the 27th of January as follows:

House related to me in detail the following line of reasoning of the President: That our enemies had publicly announced their peace conditions, which were impossible of acceptance; that, in direct opposition to this, the President had thereupon announced his program; that from now on we too were under the moral obligation of disclosing our peace conditions; because, otherwise, our intentions with regard to peace would not be looked upon as genuine.

Expert DR. BONN: I would like to add another question. You referred to the fact that it had been stated on the part of the United States that the Entente was attempting, by means of unmeasured peace conditions, to entice us, so to speak, into a U-boat trap in the broadest sense of the term. Was this a general opinion, or did you have very definite influential persons in mind?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I had in mind my negotiations with

Colonel House, who always discussed with me confidentially all the questions and possibilities which presented themselves, and on these occasions the view was more than once announced that the Entente would attempt to provoke a war between Germany and the United States in any event, and in this way bring about a situation which could result in the war terminating in its favor.

Expert DR. BONN: What we are discussing, then, is a statement by Colonel House.

The CHAIRMAN: I now ask you, Count v. Bernstorff, to inform us as to what you may know further with regard to the period extending up to the 9th of January, since I assume the 9th of January to be the date of the conference at Pless. Kindly tell us what was done during this period in order to strengthen Wilson's inclination to bring about peace.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I do not know that anything in particular did happen in those days. It is true that, since I still believed at that time that by so doing I was acting in accordance with the desires of the government, I expended every effort to further Wilson's peace mediation so far as public opinion was concerned. I should like to emphasize this point particularly, because I was subsequently attacked by a certain portion of the German press on the ground that I had carried on a separate policy which was not the policy of the government.

The CHAIRMAN: As far as you were able to do so, did you exert yourself to incline Wilson to this matter of peace mediation?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I announced in all the papers to which I had access, and in the course of all my utterances, that Wilson ought to mediate in the interests of peace.

The CHAIRMAN: On many occasions, you were told by Under-Secretary of State Zimmermann from the Foreign Office in Berlin, to lay particular stress upon the point as to whether or not it was possible to have a vigorous pressure brought to bear on England by Wilson in the form of embargoes upon foodstuffs and war materials. You referred to this some time ago, and stated that he was not able to do this on account of considerations in respect to American commerce which were too powerful to be opposed. I should like very much to hear something more definite on this point, for one would certainly think that trade considerations would be considered as matters of secondary importance by a man like Wilson, who had striven so earnestly on behalf of peace, when compared with the question bringing about peace which, for him, was a much more vital matter.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The situation in the winter of 1916-17 had become changed to that extent with regard to the question of commerce (which is here to be considered as synonymous with the question of industry), since Wilson had been reelected on the ground, first, of having maintained peace and, secondly, of having increased the preparedness of the United

States for war. By the term "preparedness for war," Wilson did not understand simply an increase of the army, but the creation of a great fleet, and also, as was pointed out emphatically in his proclamation, the creation of a great merchant fleet. Consequently, industries in the United States were bound to assume that at the moment when peace was made, activities in industries would get such an impetus that they could in no way lose as the result of the conclusion of peace. Therefore, the feeling in American industries came to be less hostile to the conception of a peace favorable to us than it had been before. In addition to this, I must point out in this connection the first positive step which Wilson took to force the conclusion of a peace, and which, neither at that time nor, so far as I have been able to ascertain, in the course of public statements which are being made in these days, has been made the subject of comment—I refer to the fact that the Federal Reserve Board, which corresponds in the United States to our Imperial Bank, made the announcement in December, shortly before Wilson's proposal for peace mediation, that no loans should be made on foreign unsecured paper. The situation which, therefore, actually came into existence, was that the American money market would have been closed to the Entente, since it is not to be assumed that Americans would have purchased, to any far-reaching extent, additional amounts of paper of this kind which could not be negotiated.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: You also reported this to Berlin. Now, two more inquiries, which are most important for the determination of the question as to whether, speaking from the objective standpoint, a possibility of peace existed. I should like, therefore, to address the following question to you: As a matter of logical premise when applied to existing facts, was there reason to believe that the Entente would meet Wilson's proposals for peace? Do you know whether any contact of any kind took place with the Entente on this point, from which Wilson could conclude that the Entente at that time would have been willing to make peace, in opposition to the contents of their official note?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I assume that an actual contact took place. But I can not swear to it. I have always assumed this to be the case, because Wilson had sent word to me that he would only take up the question of peace mediation if he had well-founded cause for believing that it would bring results.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: And your conclusion is that, because he made the peace proposal, the assumption that this prospect existed was actually entertained. But that is just a conclusion which you are drawing, is it not?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Nothing but a conclusion; I can not swear to it. The facts are not known to me. I simply know that Colonel House was constantly negotiating in New York with English parliamentarians in the matter; but more than this I can not say.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: It is further material for us to establish here,

to the extent that we are able to do so, the question as to whether an actual intention to bring about peace really existed. Recently, Wilson was submitted to a cross-examination in the Senate, and in the course of this the question was put to him as to whether, if we had not launched the unrestricted U-boat war, he would, even in such case, have gone to war with Germany. According to press reports, he answered this question in the affirmative. Are you acquainted with the original report of what actually took place? What significance do you ascribe to this announcement?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: If the Chairman will allow me, I must state that we are herewith entering completely into the domain of psychology and that, naturally, I can not state under oath what the President's opinion on this point was. I can only state what I believe to be the case, and the situation, in my judgment, appears to be as follows: Senator McCumber's remarks in the White House were more or less the following: "Mr. President, do you believe that our moral conception with regard to Germany's blame for the war would have brought us into the war if Germany had not attacked our citizens and our commerce in an illegal manner?" Whereupon the President answered, "I hope it would." Thereupon, Senator McCumber said: "Do you think if Germany had committed no acts of war against us that we would have gotten into this war?" Whereupon, the President answered: "I do think so, as things developed." That is the conversation.

The CHAIRMAN: Now, I would like to ask you another question. What is your own opinion? You certainly know Wilson. Let us enter the domain of psychology, as you have quite correctly called it. According to your opinion, was the fact that the unrestricted U-boat war was declared, the reason which induced Wilson thereupon to break off relations with us? Do you personally believe that that was the main motive, so far as he was concerned, or do you believe that there were other motives which influenced him jointly, or, perhaps, individually influenced him?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: To the extent of breaking off diplomatic relations?

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly, to the extent of breaking off diplomatic relations and later declaring war.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: My personal opinion has invariably been—and I so set it down on uncounted occasions in the course of my reports and telegrams—that the breaking off of diplomatic relations meant war, and that, at the moment when diplomatic relations were broken off, war was simply a question of days or weeks, depending upon whether the United States was prepared for it or not, but that the war was an absolute certainty from the day of breaking off of relations for the following reason: Because, in the United States, we were engaged in a bitter fight with hostile propaganda which had absolutely no other purpose than to bring about war between Germany and the United States. At the moment when the German

Embassy ceased to exist as such in Washington, we were delivered over, bound hand and foot, to this propaganda, and there was no longer any doubt that it would prevail.

Expert DR. BONN: I believe that various matters have been mentioned, into which we ought to go. Above all, it is necessary that we should have the English report of this interview which Count v. Bernstorff has repeated to us from memory. It is to be had in the Foreign Office. It is a very long report. We must examine the whole matter before we express ourselves finally concerning it.

The CHAIRMAN: Then I would suggest that we postpone that point for the time being. Consul Müller can get the English text for us from the Foreign Office by tomorrow.

Expert DR. BONN: Now for a second point. It seems to me that the question as to whether Wilson desired a real peace or not should not be considered at this time; for the message of the 22d of January, which spreads out Wilson's program far more openly before us, had not yet made its appearance; we must go into this in great detail later. And now I would like to ask your Excellency another question. You are, without doubt, well aware that, as the result of announcing his peace proposal of the 18th-21st of December, Wilson immediately gained the reputation of being strongly pro-German, and that a very lively controversy took place. If I am correct in my recollection, this was an occasion upon which, for once, Lansing made quite a serious slip. In order to smooth down the matter, he stated to the newspaper men, who were pushing him rather hard: "Yes, the President had to do this, for if we did not succeed in bringing about peace at a very early date, the unrestricted U-boat war would be launched; and if the unrestricted U-boat war comes, this means war with Germany. That the President did not want a war." Unless I am mistaken, similar statements by Gerard had already been made on board ship to the representative of the *New York World*, who has also set that down in his book. I simply wanted to refer to these matters generally and to ask your Excellency if you could give us any definite information concerning it.

The CHAIRMAN: Please, your Excellency—or perhaps tomorrow, if it is difficult for you at present to answer the question.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: We are reverting now to the question of the psychological moment for peace mediation on the part of the President. As I already stated yesterday, the President always entertained the opinion that peace mediation could be consummated only on the basis of a peace without victory. Therefore, he wanted to seize the moment when neither one of the belligerents was indulging in the hope of being able to win the victory. Therefore, as the result of the entrance of Roumania into the war, he had put off his peace mediation because it was believed at that time that the Entente would win. On the other hand, he made up his mind that, as long

as the Entente hoped to be able to draw the United States into the war on its side and against us, he would certainly not take up the matter of a peace proposal. Consequently, he always said: "I can not initiate any peace proceeding as long as there is a controversy with Germany; for as long as one exists the Entente will constantly entertain the hope that the United States will join in a war against Germany."

Therefore, that statement to which Professor Bonn just referred, that there was danger of a war with Germany, was looked upon by the President as jeopardizing his peace move, and it was for that reason that Secretary Lansing was immediately called to the White House and, in the afternoon, took back his statement at the order of the President and explained it away.

The CHAIRMAN: This question has thereby been satisfactorily answered. I would like to take up another matter. The U-boat war, even the unrestricted U-boat war, was announced to be a counter-measure taken against the hunger blockade and also against the ruthless pressure which England was exerting upon the neutrals in connection with commercial traffic, etc. Was it not possible for these two features to be a sufficient weight in the eyes of Wilson to make him understand our step in launching the unrestricted U-boat war? For he was the one who, in his message to the Senate and in all possible addresses, played the part of the man who was standing up for humanity and justice. It seems to me that it is most probable that you also, your Excellency, took steps to influence Wilson along these lines through the medium of Colonel House, and I should like to know how Wilson expressed himself, or what attitude he took with regard to these purely humanitarian points of view.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: These negotiations go back to an earlier period. This question was very often touched upon by me, as, for instance, in the negotiations concerning the questions of the *Lusitania* and the *Arabic*, the *Lusitania* question when it came up for the second time, and the *Sussex* case. After the agreement was reached in the *Sussex* case, I made no further reference thereto in the course of my negotiations, because President Wilson was of the opinion that the general situation had been so changed that he was no longer in the position of forcing England to conduct her war according to the rules of international law. At the time of the *Lusitania* incident, on the contrary, Wilson always stated: "If you will meet me on the question of the U-boat war, I shall do my best to put an end to the hunger blockade which I, just like you, consider illegal and indefensible: but I can only do this if the U-boat conflict with Germany is put completely out of existence."

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I would like to ask you the general question with regard to an intention to bring about peace: Do you believe that Wilson really intended to mediate in the cause of peace?

Witness COUNT BERNSTORFF: Yes.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Do you believe that, in this connection, he

would have taken German vital interests into consideration, or would it have been a peace in favor of the Entente?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I accepted literally Wilson's program of the 22d of January, 1917, in which he distinctly spoke of a peace without victory, and I assumed that it meant a peace without victory and that Germany would maintain its position in the world in full measure.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: That is to say, not a peace in favor of the Entente; not a mediation for the purpose of staying our hand. Do you believe that he had the guileful intent of bringing about a mediation for the sole purpose of preventing us from making use of our military successes at a time when our military successes were at their height?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: If I believe that personally?

The CHAIRMAN: In other words, was he, in your opinion, an honorable mediator, or not?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: At that time, I considered him an absolutely honorable mediator. In those days, as a matter of fact, I personally did not believe in the existence of such wonderful military successes on our part; when all is said and done, they were never decisive.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Another question, then, which is connected with the Foreign Office's conception of Wilson. We have a remark of Secretary of State Zimmermann before us, appearing in the dispatch of the 6th of February to Ambassador Wedel. It is here stated: "As a mediator, he would exert all his influence against us." In your opinion, was this judgment of Wilson correct?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It is perfectly clear that this conception was, in a word, the one which was generally entertained here; and it is made even more plain by the fact that we did not accept peace mediation by Wilson but launched the U-boat war instead of so doing. But since I have been asked my personal opinion, I will state perfectly frankly that, under all the circumstances, I should have accepted a Wilsonian peace.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Do you consider that the judgment of the Foreign Office concerning Wilson's intent, which I have just read, in the form of the opinion of Secretary of State Zimmermann, is correct or not?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: My personal opinion is that it is wrong.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Based on your American impressions?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Based upon my negotiations.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Based upon your personal dealings with Wilson, House and Lansing?

Expert DR. BONN: I believe that it serves no purpose to have witnesses here give their judgments concerning the statements of other witnesses before we have heard the latter. I believe that we should immediately proceed to the 22d of January, for it was then that Wilson's policy is spread before us in its entirety.

But, since I have the floor, I should like to ask his Excellency another question. Your Excellency will remember that, in the summer of 1916, Wilson gave his consent to a number of war steps of a commercial nature being taken against the black lists, etc., of the Entente. These were very complicated affairs; they did not go far enough, but at all events we will have to consider as established that he actually made the attempt to work out commercial methods to be applied in the process of forcing the Allies. This, together with the policy with regard to the Federal Reserve Board, shows that, as a matter of fact, he attempted to prepare himself for exerting pressure.

And there is another feature which comes into this question, which clearly can not be fully explained by us. For it is well known that Sir Edward Grey retired in the late fall of 1916. That has always been looked upon as an event which unfavorably affected peace mediation on the part of the United States, if I recollect correctly. I should like to have some information with regard to this point too.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe that the thing for us to do is to continue along chronological lines. I will ask you to do this and, therefore, to testify concerning all these positive facts which you have to submit to us which occurred before and up to the 9th of January, and from thence onwards to the time of the message to the Senate, and then introduce the latter.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I know of nothing else which would be of interest in this question, up to the time of the message to the Senate.

The CHAIRMAN: Then let us take up the question of the message to the Senate.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: On January 22, 1917, Wilson sent a message to the Senate, in which he referred in detail to the "peace without victory" as he pictured it to himself. This message acquired a peculiar value as a public document, because President Wilson, before making his speech, had the message, word for word, telegraphed to Europe and handed over to the foreign governments on the same day that he made the speech. In this way, it became a quite unusually solemn act of the government of the United States.

But I must interpolate something at this point which, perhaps, is not directly related; for, before that day, I had already been informed that we were to launch the unrestricted U-boat war. I received this communication on the 19th of January. So that at that time I was exerting my efforts to cause the unrestricted U-boat war to be put off, in order that Wilson's peace mediation, which I now felt was being much more energetically handled than hitherto, could continue its course. I constantly telegraphed to Berlin along these lines. I personally entertained the hope that the delivery of the message on the 22d of January might have already had the effect in Berlin of having the order for the unrestricted U-boat war put off. But

that was not the case, and, as is well known, my telegrams did not have that effect. Thus the whole situation, from a chronological standpoint, has been submitted to you.

The CHAIRMAN: You then returned to Berlin?

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: Count Bernstorff has just said that the news of the U-boat war, which was set for February 1, 1917, reached him on the 19th of January. The message to the Senate followed on the 22d of January, and, as he has just stated, had already been completed and had been very widely communicated. At the time that President Wilson drew up the message, did he or did he not know of the intention on the part of the German Government to launch the U-boat war on the 1st of February?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Personally, I do not believe that Wilson had received news of the U-boat war. I have no reason to suppose that he knew about it before 5 o'clock in the afternoon of January 31, when I informed him thereof. I am all the less ready to indulge in this assumption, since the American Ambassador Gerard made a speech here which would have been absolutely impossible for him to have made if he had not still entertained the opinion that, in accordance with his instructions, he was to do everything in his power in order to bring about a peace mediation by Wilson.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: Then it is a very peculiar fact that, in his message of the 22d of January, Wilson announced conditions which, so far as Germany was concerned, were perfectly impossible for her to meet. First of all, it appears in these conditions that there is to be a united, independent and autonomous Poland. Now, to be sure, the proclamation of November 5, 1916, had been issued, but this proclamation of the two rulers was by no means such as to make a united Poland, and by no means such as to create an autonomous and independent government. If that was to be brought about in accordance with the terms of the message, this proclamation would have to go much further than it was primarily intended to go. Complete independence and a united Poland was certainly not to be agreed to by Germany. My personal view of the situation is that the present order of things is incompatible with the existence of the German Empire. That is my personal view.

Now, it is further stated in this message that access to the sea must be guaranteed every State. This access to the sea has, up to the present time led to a great extent through foreign territory in the case not only of various States, but in our own case as well. We have been obliged to send our imports and exports for the most part by way of Antwerp; Bohemia has been similarly situated with regard to Hamburg. There was no occasion—the proclamation of November 5 established this on Poland's account—there was no occasion for stating anew such a demand. Then there were additional demands which were obviously drawn up for the purpose

of injecting something into the discussion which could not be agreed to by Germany. So far as I am concerned it is perfectly clear to me that there was no doubt in Wilson's mind on the point. And you will also—I may add this—observe in the negotiations which took place between the 4th October and the 9th November 1918, how he constantly injects something new into the negotiations, and goes further and further with each succeeding note. So that I can simply express as my opinion, the fact which I am convinced has not been clearly enough brought out as the result of the nature of the questions which, on the whole, have been put in the course of this hearing; to wit, that we should not simply depend on the words used, but that we should put the following inquiry: What were the purposes and the inclinations which the man entertained? And in this connection I should like to put further questions, more in detail, since *Count v. Bernstorff*, as the result of his experience, must be better informed than any other man on the question of purposes and shades of feeling in the United States.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to remark, in view of the fact that you have assumed a corrective attitude toward the questions of the Chairman and others in this connection, to the effect that we have gone into the psychological feature to an insufficient extent, that I have put these questions to *Count Bernstorff* repeatedly.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: Not psychologically! The question concerns the whole situation. Wilson is a statesman and desired to reach the goal which would insure advantages to his country. And I also consider the question as to whether Wilson was an honorable mediator or not as too sharply put. The question can not properly be put in this alternative. During the first part of the war, Wilson was anxious for peace, a peace which was not exactly in favor of the Entente, but in any event a peace which should not result in Germany's being in a position which would have to be looked upon as constituting a menace to England. That could be harmonized with the idea of an indecisive war, but not with that of a decisive German victory.

The CHAIRMAN: That is simply an expert opinion rendered by you concerning the whole political situation, which seems to me to have very little to do with the giving of testimony by *Count Bernstorff*. Or is it your purpose that the Count shall now give his opinion as to what Wilson probably thought of the situation himself, judging it in connection with the general political outlook at that time, as to whether, as an American, he should act in the interests of America, or as to whether or not he was considered an honorable mediator so far as Germany was concerned?

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: I would request that these questions be finally put to *Count Bernstorff*, but not at this time.

The CHAIRMAN: Then, perhaps, we had better prepare these questions in advance, since we will be obliged to continue the hearings tomorrow.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I am perfectly ready now.

The CHAIRMAN: We have only five minutes' time. Dr. Sinzheimer wanted to put one more question.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I am speaking of the message to the Senate, of the 22d of January, which took place in this period. The assertion is made a matter of public comment that this message to the Senate was unacceptable, so far as we were concerned, for the reason that Wilson stated that the conditions of the Entente were such as could be discussed. I have the text of the message to the Senate before me, and can find no such passage to this effect. He says:

The Central Powers united in a reply which stated merely that they were ready to meet their antagonists in conference to discuss terms of peace. The Entente Powers have replied much more definitely and have stated, in general terms, indeed, but with sufficient definiteness to imply details, the arrangements, guarantees, and acts of reparation which they deem to be the indispensable conditions of a satisfactory settlement.

Are you acquainted with any other announcement of Wilson's, to the effect that he characterizes the conditions of the Entente as being capable of submission to discussion?

The CHAIRMAN: May I ask your Excellency to make your statement?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No, I never heard that he considered them capable of being discussed from our standpoint. He always stated that we should reach an agreement among ourselves with regard to conditions and that he only desired to bring us to the point where views could be exchanged.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: That was the one question: the basis of discussion. But the Polish question was just suggested to you. It is stated that, on account of Wilson's expression that a united and independent Poland must be restored, this demand would be unacceptable to us, because Prussian territory also was to be made the subject of consideration. Now, in my opinion, it is important, with regard to explaining this announcement in his message to the Senate, to examine your report which was sent in immediately thereafter in which you state expressly:

Wilson offers in the first place, in confidence, peace mediation based on his message to the Senate, that is, without interfering in the matter of the territorial conditions.

Do you interpret the situation to be that hereby he did not desire to take the stand unconditionally that Germany should be required to give up parts of her territory?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The telegram which has just been read refers to the conversation which I had with Colonel House two days after

the message. He requested me by wire to come to New York and offered a peace mediation officially on the part of Wilson, on the basis of the message to the Senate, and then made the statements contained in this telegram. But I can assert in the most positive manner that there was never any negotiating with me from the American side with regard to a peace where the slightest suggestion was made to me of any giving up of German territory.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall adjourn the hearings at this point. The next session will convene tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock in this same place, since I have no definite assurance that the Herrenhaus hall will be ready for our occupancy tomorrow. We are confidently expecting, however, that this will be the case next week.

The session closed at 12:30 o'clock.

THIRD SESSION

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1919

The session was opened at 10:30 o'clock by the Chairman, Delegate Warmuth.

The CHAIRMAN: The session is opened.

An erroneous conclusion has been variously announced in the press, and a number of inquiries have been directed to me along the same line, which I should like to answer briefly before we enter upon the proceedings. In the order of business it is expressly provided that every member of the investigating committee has an independent and unlimited right of inquiry, a circumstance which must be obvious from the very purpose, end, and duties of the committee.

I shall now pass on to the proceedings themselves, and at the outset would like to refer back once more to a remark which was made at the end of the last session. Your Excellency told us that, during the time that Wilson's peace move in the nature of mediation in the interest of peace was still in contemplation, no one ever mentioned the possibility of Germany's territorial integrity being in any way attacked under the terms of the treaty of peace. Will your Excellency confirm this statement as correct?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Certainly.

The CHAIRMAN: Now, it is stated *verbatim* in Wilson's message to the Senate of the 22d of January:

I take it for granted that statesmen everywhere are agreed that there should be a united, independent and autonomous Poland.

And in another place, he remarks: "So far as practicable, moreover, every great people now struggling toward a full development of its resources and of its powers should be assured a direct outlet to the great highways of the sea. Where this can not be done by the cession of territory, it can no doubt be done by the neutralization of direct rights of way under the general guarantee." It seems to me that there is a conflict here, for, if the first mentioned consummation were to be brought about, to wit, a united Poland, and, moreover, simultaneously with a corridor to the sea or through the neutralization of distinct areas of German territory, let it be noted, the territorial integrity of Germany would, beyond any possibility of doubt, be impaired. So we have here a contradiction, and I note that this message was sent off on the 22d of January, that is, at a time when diplomatic relations were still fully maintained, and you yourself, your Excellency, were

still in Washington. May I ask you for a few words of explanation on the subject?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I have not the slightest doubt that President Wilson wanted the restoration of Poland, but whether this restoration of Poland should be carried out to such an extent that Prussia, that is to say, Germany, would have to cede territory, is a question which, according to my opinion, would have to be entered upon for the first time in the course of the negotiations, and in any event, would, perhaps, have to be considered in connection with compensation. So the "peace without victory" was, according to my view, not necessarily to be interpreted unconditionally as meaning that German territory should remain exactly the same, but that a sort of *status quo* would result where, so to speak, in no case would any cession of rights or territory take place without corresponding compensation.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that your personal opinion, your Excellency, or is that the way you sum up the conversations which you carried on at that time—say, with Colonel House?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It expresses my conviction resulting from the negotiations had at that time.

The CHAIRMAN: Resulting, then, from the negotiations had at that time? Then, did remarks made by Colonel House as to the conception with regard to the peace tend to indicate that the territorial integrity of Germany was not to be understood literally as meaning that the *status quo ante* should in reality be maintained, but that eventually a policy of compensations should be adopted, so that, in this special case, one piece of territory or the other should be ceded to Poland, or that a given territory should be subjected to neutralization, say, for instance, Danzig, and that Germany should receive a corresponding *quid pro quo*, so that, looked at in this aspect, an unimpaired Germany should remain?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: So far as I was concerned, that necessarily followed if the program "peace without victory" were to be maintained, for if Germany were to have been forced to take part in a one-sided cession of territory, that would no longer have constituted a "peace without victory."

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, that is a conclusion which you draw, your Excellency, but, as I stated beforehand, I would still like to find out whether House expressed himself in terms to this effect.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It was always assumed, in our negotiations—orally—that mutual compensation was not to be barred.

The CHAIRMAN: Was not to be barred. Mr. Gothein!

Delegate GOTHEIN: It is stated here: "Where this can not be done by the cession of territory, it can no doubt be done by the neutralization of direct rights of way under the general guarantee." But this would certainly

make it possible that Danzig as well as the direct rights of way, that is, the Vistula on the one side, the Marienburg-Mlawa railroad—I think—and the branch roads, would remain completely German for their own purposes, but that an agreement would be concluded by which this zone would be neutralized to the extent that Poland would be fully guaranteed the right of passage, just as is done elsewhere. But, too, the other possibility of an outlet for Poland to the sea would be made available by the fact that the road across Lithuania to Libau in Courland would be placed at their disposal. Did this question, by any chance, come to be discussed?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: We did not go into detail to this extent, for, historically speaking, the course of events so shaped themselves that the message of the President was delivered on the 22d of January. If I am not mistaken, I then received a telegram from Mr. House on the 23d; it may, however, have been on the 24th of January—the records do not establish this date precisely—in which he asked me to come to New York to have a talk with him. I thereupon went to New York and on that day he officially tendered the offer on behalf of President Wilson to mediate for peace, generally speaking, on the basis of the message of the 22d of January. I thereupon telegraphed the circumstance to Berlin, and that was my last conversation with Colonel House. So from that time on, let us say the 24th day of January, I had absolutely no further political interviews in the United States, if I except the handing over of the declaration of the U-boat war, which was immediately followed by the breaking off of relations. So that it is probable that my last official telegram is the one which contained the official offer of mediation in the interests of peace by President Wilson.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. Professor Schücking!

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: In view of the fact that there was no talk of any neutral corridor, but only of a "neutral way," did your Excellency not think that it was probable that what was meant was in reality only an international servitude?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: To the extent that I ever had any conversation with regard to the matter, the only comment made at that time dealt with the access to the sea by means of railroad connections or the like.

The CHAIRMAN: In other words, not a neutralization in the sense that the territory was to be withdrawn from German sovereignty?

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: Count v. Bernstorff just stated that Wilson always wished that Poland could be restored. Let me ask whether this problem, which was certainly vital so far as Germany was concerned and a certain solution of which had already been contemplated in the proclamation of Poland, was not the subject of numerous conferences between you, Wilson, House, and other American statesmen, which would certainly seem called for? And, secondly, if this was the case, did you get the impression that the

American Government was clear on the point as to how Poland was to be restored, and did the Government actually entertain a distinct intention on this point?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It is certainly the fact that no clearly defined program with regard to the restoration of Poland existed, so far as the American Government was concerned, and it was again and again emphasized in conversations with me, that these negotiations were such as would have to be carried on between the belligerents themselves; America was satisfied with asserting the principle that Poland would have to be restored.

Expert DR. BONN: If I correctly understand you, your Excellency, the purport of your conferences with House was not that one belligerent should engage with the other belligerent in a matter of mutual bargaining, in the course of which was to be established: "What do I get and what do you give?" but, on the contrary, that the main point of the efforts consisted in bringing about an opportunity for the exchange of views between the belligerents. Consequently, the situation was naturally quite different from what it was, for instance, in 1918, for if we are going to discuss the year 1918, we shall have to deal with Wilsonian peace conditions imposed by Wilson as a belligerent. I assume, your Excellency, that you recognize this as a correct differentiation.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes, I take the ground that the peace mediation or the peace move by Wilson in the year 1917 had absolutely nothing to do with that of 1918, and the fact that Wilson failed at Versailles has nothing to do with the time when he felt absolutely differently about Germany from what he felt in the year 1918. These are two completely distinct courses of action which, in my opinion, make it logically impossible to hark back from one to the other.

Expert DR. BONN: From my point of view, it is most important for us to be perfectly clear on the point as to what the fact at issue was in the course of this entire move on the part of Wilson. Therefore, I would like to ask, in the process of summing up, whether my recapitulation is correct: (1) After a long period of hesitation, Wilson took a step in the direction of peace and in this connection actually spoke in generalities on the 18th, or say the 21st, of December; thereupon, after the replies of the Entente had come in, Wilson went ahead another step. He had received peace conditions from the Entente, he had received no peace conditions from us, according to what we have just heard. Thereupon, he made an attempt to create something which has been characterized as "grounds of action." Yesterday, the term "capable of discussion" was used. This is not the point at issue; the real point is—and I should like to have this confirmed, that is, whether I have the right idea—whether Wilson meant thereby a ground which could serve as a basis of discussion for the belligerents. Is that the correct view?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I have always been of the opinion that

the message of the 22d of January was a program on the basis of which parleys could take place, and nothing more.

The CHAIRMAN: And this agrees with the note which you sent to the Foreign Office on the 27th of January in due course, in which you state expressly that:

The President would be particularly pleased if at the same time your Excellency would state that we were prepared to enter upon the conferences on the basis of his message to the Senate.

Expert DR. BONN: Then I would like to take exception to the use of the word "program," and ask whether it was not really a question of "fundamental principles," general lines of conduct. A program is of itself something positive. When we come to the fourteen points—and this will of course happen later—we shall then be able to speak of a "program." But between a program and general principles, there exists—and we all know it, very much to our sorrow—a great difference. Did you conceive this message of the 22d to represent "general principles?"

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I interpreted it as the telegram reads, that is, as a basis, as constituting general fundamental principles. I am in entire agreement with the expression "general fundamental principles."

Expert DR. BONN: So that, if one has before one this message and nothing more, one can draw absolutely no conclusions with regard to modalities of any kind in the application of these fundamental principles, unless, as you stated a moment ago, they are interpreted backwards.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I am entirely of this opinion.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: I believe that the question of neutralization which is discussed here in connection with the announcement of the 22d of January, can be explained and answered in very many different ways. One might even be led to believe that nothing further was in contemplation than is involved in public law in connection with German imports and exports by way of Belgium, or the same on the part of Bohemia by way of Germany, or, again, the same with regard to us by way of Austria (Triest), as I already suggested yesterday. But that this was the exact meaning of the terms employed, I do not consider to be altogether probable, and I scarcely believe that, as a matter of practice, such a neutralization could have been brought to pass without there being necessarily involved some arrangement with regard to these territories.

But on top of this, we find that a "united, independent and autonomous Poland" is made the subject of discussion, and a requirement of this kind is obviously incompatible with the existence of the German Empire; I should like to lay the greatest weight upon this point. And then, besides, there is further talk about "compensation." We can only consider such compensations in connection with the western and the northern boundaries; to

discuss them in connection with the eastern boundary would be simply to involve the idea of a loss. So that a compensation could only occur as above indicated, and we were perfectly satisfied with regard to the situation on both of those frontiers. No reasoning man in Germany ever demanded annexations on the west which included the whole of Belgium; only the mineral deposits of Longwy and Briey and the western slope of the Vosges, including areas small in extent, came under discussion; it would only be a question of such areas as these. But I would like to call attention to another point, and ask your Excellency if you can make any suggestions with regard thereto, and that is as to what Wilson's method of reasoning probably was when he said that people ought not to be shifted from one sovereignty to another, like pawns. If that was not to be the case, we are confronted with the question as to how the compensation theory could be carried out if, by this method, compensation in the shape of territory was barred and, consequently, people could not be shifted about.

The CHAIRMAN: Are we not really calling for an opinion from Count v. Bernstorff which is actually outside of the limits of the examination? The Count is limited to a mere statement of facts. If we are going to proceed, in the main, along lines in the course of which we ask witnesses for their opinions on all manner of subjects, I believe that we shall not be carrying out the purposes for which we are sitting.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: But this is material for the purpose of interpreting the message.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps, after all, it is admissible when considered from this standpoint. So I will ask your Excellency to express yourself with regard to these remarks which Privy Councilor Schaefer has made.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: In my opinion, one of the most important questions is, what were we going to do with this peace mediation of Wilson's if we had been willing to have him act? The only thing that I ever had in mind was that a conversation between the belligerent Powers was to take place, with Wilson's assistance, which, as I hoped, would lead to some result as soon as the representatives of the belligerent Powers should have actually engaged in conference face to face, because up to that time we had never been able to bring this about. As to the result, that naturally was a question which the negotiations themselves would determine. It could not be foretold. We shall come later to the question as to whether Wilson would have declared war in the absence of the U-boat war which we initiated. But, quite aside from the wish to bring matters to a point where peace negotiations might be commenced, my personal reason for desiring Wilson's peace mediation to be accepted was, mainly, that thereby the entrance of the United States into the war would be avoided. So far as I was concerned, that was one of the principal reasons for accepting peace mediation on the part of Mr. Wilson—and I believe that the recorder will confirm the fact that this is

set out with the utmost clearness in my reports and telegrams—because I was always of the opinion that the U-boat war would automatically bring about the breaking off of relations with us. And, moreover, as a result of breaking off relations, war with the United States would follow as a matter of course, and, to my mind, war with the United States meant that the war would be lost to Germany. Consequently, the whole end and aim of my two and a half years' activity in America was confined to efforts to prevent the United States from entering into the war. On the other hand, I was convinced that all the efforts of the Entente were exclusively directed to bringing the United States into the war and in that way assuring victory for the Entente. Consequently, so far as I could see, there was nothing else for us to do except to accept Wilson's mediation. Therein consisted the only possibility of keeping the United States from entering the war. If, as the result of mediation by Mr. Wilson, we kept the United States from taking part in the war, quite apart, in my opinion, from the question as to whether Wilson was favorably or unfavorably inclined toward us, peace would have resulted in any event, since, without the assistance of the United States, the Entente would never have been able to defeat us. Had we been successful in stopping the United States from entering the war, in the course of time and as the result of negotiations, perhaps not in a fortnight, perhaps not in four weeks, or even perhaps not in six months, a peace of understanding which, in my opinion, would have constituted a German victory, would have been brought about in any event had the United States not entered the war.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall take the opportunity later on to go into this precise question as to whether or not a war between America and Germany would have come about in any event, and in this connection we shall be particularly called upon to examine Wilson's statements made to the Committee for Foreign Affairs of the United States Senate, which was already touched upon yesterday. This question can, perhaps, be again examined later.

For the time being, I should merely like to call attention to the fact that Wilson refused in so many words to take part in these peace conferences with the belligerent Powers having to do with territorial questions, and that the matter which was always of the utmost importance to him was to take part in the second convention—

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: —in the negotiation which had to do with the league of peace, the question of disarmament, freedom of the seas, etc. And here, too, seems to me to be an obvious contradiction, existing in the fact that right here in the Senate message he does actually take a hand in these territorial questions, and not merely in the sense of simply suggesting, as it were, what the course of the belligerent Powers should be, as between them—

selves, on the occasion of the final peace negotiations, but, on the contrary, in the sense that he makes his entire cooperation in the question of bringing about peace conditioned on the fact that Germany shall recognize this particular point made by him in his message to the Senate. Is this not so?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes, but we ourselves had already created a restored Poland.

The CHAIRMAN: But not in such a way as in any manner to impair the integrity and national sovereignty of Germany, whereas, we expressly were of the opinion that a very decided attack was made upon our national sovereign rights, particularly where the demand of neutralization was the mildest form contemplated.

Delegate GOTHEIN: With regard to the question as to whether Wilson changed his position: is the fact that he now came out with a program, to be explained by this, to wit: that the disclosure of the peace conditions on the part of Germany to him had been denied?

In the second place, I would like to ask whether we are to understand by the words "a united Poland" that all the territories where the inhabitants spoke Polish were to belong to this Poland in question. We speak and, before the war, used to speak of a united Germany, although there were extensive territories not included within the territorial limits of Germany, where the population speaks the German language. Now we are discussing the German provinces, the Ostmark, regions where two languages are spoken, regions which are not purely Polish. Does your Excellency believe that, in using the terms he did, President Wilson meant that these provinces, in which more than one language is spoken, would also necessarily have to belong to a united Poland?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I do not believe that he had any such detailed conception at that time with regard to the boundaries of this Poland which was to be created. I do not believe so. I believe that he simply had in mind that the negotiations would settle remaining details. I do not believe that he had any definite ideas on the point.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Then the other question: Whether you think that he drew up his independent program because we refused to divulge our peace terms to him.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: My opinion was rather that he intended on the following day to do what he did, namely, to make us a formal offer of peace mediation, and that, consequently, he desired to submit a preliminary working basis, or, as Professor Bonn has just stated, general fundamental principles, as the result of which we could know what his peace mediation meant.

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: I should like to be enlightened concerning a contradiction which, according to my notes, exists between something which the Count stated yesterday, and the statement of today. If my recollection

tion is correct, you stated yesterday that nobody in America had ever suggested to you to enter into a discussion which should suggest in the slightest way the cession of any territory at all on the part of Germany, and today you stated, in answer to my question, that although no definite stand with regard to Poland had been taken, you had been informed by the United States Government that the provinces inhabited by Poles were included in the decision. Now, of course, there were provinces inhabited by the Poles within the territorial limits of the German Empire. Logically speaking, we have a demand which involves a cession. These two remarks are not quite compatible. I should like to be informed whether I made a mistake in the notes of the testimony which I have put down.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe you are mistaken.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I have positively and repeatedly stated that never in the course of the negotiations was any suggestion made to me concerning a cession of German territory. As a matter of fact, I never had anything to do with the details concerning Poland, because, as I repeat, the message of the 22d of January was never made the subject of negotiations. I would certainly never have conducted any negotiations, and never did so in the United States, without having very clear instructions on the point from Berlin. Since I had received no instructions whatsoever with regard to the message of the 22d of January, and, so far as I can recollect, the only answer made to the message consisted in the declaration of the U-boat war, in the introduction to which it was stated that the German Government, generally speaking, agreed with the program of the 22d of January—for it was to this effect that the introduction read—

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I never received any instructions with regard to the message, and so never made it the subject of negotiations.

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: The question does not concern negotiations covering the message. However, you yourself said a little while ago that it was true that negotiations with regard to Poland had taken place, though not formal or of binding force, for the question was a very serious question which, as you yourself state, was of unusual interest to the United States. On these occasions, some idea must certainly have been expressed as to the intentions entertained in the United States concerning the establishment of the Polish boundaries.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That was expressed only in very general terms, but never to the extent of telling me that Germany must cede so-and-so much territory to Poland. That was never said.

The CHAIRMAN: But merely as you yourself have already stated.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: In a very general way.

The CHAIRMAN: In a very general way. To repeat, this took place only up to the time of the message; as a matter of fact, after the day the message

was sent, there was, with regard to these questions between yourself and House—

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I only had a comparatively short conference, which is set out in my telegram of the 27th.

The CHAIRMAN: I have that before me and it will be read later. In any event, this conference in no way touched upon these questions which are before us at the moment.

Delegate DR. COHN: Count v. Bernstorff, when did you learn that a proclamation of November 5, 1916, was to be promulgated in Berlin?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The Polish proclamation?

Delegate DR. COHN: Yes. Or did you first learn of that from the newspapers?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: According to my recollection, I learned it in the usual way in which we received most of our communications. As you gentlemen are well aware, communication with the United States was extraordinarily difficult and, as the result, we only received official communications in case instructions were to be given. Matters of common interest were always communicated to me by the open transoceanic telegrams which came in every day. I believe—I should not like to make an erroneous statement on this point—but, to the best of my recollection, I received word of the proclamation with regard to Poland in the usual manner and by means of such a transoceanic telegram.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no communication on this point in the files.

Delegate DR. COHN: According to your recollection, was it later communicated to you by way of instructions or in writing?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I do not believe so.

Delegate DR. COHN: Did you take any steps to notify Berlin of your opinion of the effect of the proclamation concerning Poland upon *pourparlers* in the interests of peace.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No, not that I recollect, nor have I discovered anything in the files on the point. I believe not.

Delegate DR. COHN: Were you at that time of the opinion that the intention announced in the proclamation of the 5th of November, 1916, to establish a kingdom of Poland and at the same time to maintain intact the territorial sovereignty of Prussia and possibly that of Austria, but certainly of Prussia, would be possible, or are you perhaps of the opinion—

The CHAIRMAN (interrupting): What connection, may I ask, is this supposed to have with Wilson's peace program?

Delegate DR. COHN: Why, because it might show the attitude taken by the witness with regard to the negotiations.

The CHAIRMAN: But I beg of you! In any event, this matter is not involved, even to the faintest extent, in the files.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I can not remember that this procla-

mation played any part of any kind in the negotiations or had the slightest influence upon them. It is to be understood that it was the subject of very active comments in the American press, and those newspapers which reflected the anti-German view stated that this proclamation was not made in good faith, and by the other papers it was claimed that this constituted an evidence of our desire to recognize the principle of the self-determination of peoples. But it played no part of any kind in the negotiations.

Delegate DR. COHN: Did you not, according to your recollection, discuss this point with Colonel House?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Not according to my recollection.

Expert DR. BONN: It has already been stated that there are two things to be decided: What Wilson wanted before the 31st of January, and what Wilson wanted later. For the time being I will leave the second question completely out of consideration. If we do not do this, matters may easily become confused. If I have correctly understood Professor Hoetzsch's comments, he has, for instance, made use of a formula taken from the fourteen points and assumed that it was already announced in the message of the 22d.

For the time being and for the purposes of this question, I should like to restrict matters within the limits of the 31st of January, and now put the following inquiry: What did Wilson want before the 31st of January? The break had not happened before the 31st of January; so we must assume that, up to that time, he was still adhering to his old policy. I should now like to put the question once more: Was Wilson following up the sense of his message of the 22d of January in offering you a proposal for mediation through Colonel House on the 23d or 24th of January? Is that correct?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Certainly.

Expert DR. BONN: An official offer to mediate. There are, then, a number of facts to be established progressively: First, generalities on the 18th of December; then, definite fundamental principles on the 22d of January, and then, proceeding on the same line, a positive mediation proposal. Is this right?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Certainly.

Expert DR. BONN: Now, did Wilson, when he made his proposal for mediation and when he announced his message of the 22d of January, respectively, want to participate at the conference table as one endowed with equal powers, or was he satisfied simply to bring the belligerents together?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: In response to this question, I can simply repeat what I have already said, that President Wilson continually sent word to me that it was his desire to bring the belligerents together at a conference. He always mentioned The Hague or some other neutral place, and that, simultaneously or afterwards, according to how it might come about, a second world conference could take place in which Wilson

desired to participate, together with all the nations of the world, for the purpose of settling questions of the freedom of the seas and others of a general nature.

Expert DR. BONN: In the first conference, which might be designated as the peace conference, he neither wanted to be represented nor to announce definite material demands.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: He always stated this in so many words.

Expert DR. BONN: Then it necessarily follows from this that, if the two belligerent parties had come to an agreement on a somewhat different basis from that announced in the fundamental principles of the message of the 22d of January, Wilson in any case might have been able to accomplish something at the second conference, but not at the first.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That was the thought constantly entertained, and, so far as I recollect, there is something to the same effect to be found even in the message, to the effect that he might even accept a different basis. At least, it is to be found in one of his speeches.

Expert DR. BONN: I believe that it is in the first note of the 18th of December.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: In one of the two, it is unqualifiedly stated that: "I attribute no significance to sharply defined formulas; the Americans would agree to another method."

Expert DR. BONN: Very well. If I understand the situation correctly, the point is that, as a matter of fact, Wilson wanted a peace based upon definite fundamental principles, in order that it might be a lasting peace, but that he had no particular interest in the shaping of the details of individual peace conditions, provided the others were in agreement.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: He announced this again and again. He constantly had me informed that he only had an interest in those questions which caused a deep feeling in the United States. First and foremost among these, of course, was Belgium and, for the rest, the question of the freedom of the seas, the league of nations, the court of arbitration, and, above all, disarmament.

Expert DR. BONN: From this, then, as I stated at first, it would result that Wilson had no clear-cut and carefully-thought-out Polish policy.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I have always assumed this to be the case.

Expert DR. BONN: And, secondly: Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that the participants in the first peace conference had reached an agreement without his assistance. Would he have raised great difficulties if the Polish question had been decided otherwise?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I have always assumed, and it has been my view, that he would not have done that.

Expert DR. BONN: Of course, it is impossible to answer this question definitely. But, since so many other questions have been put concerning the Polish question which it is just as impossible to answer, we have to put it in this form. So it seems that the point was that Wilson, up to the 31st, was desirous of putting the belligerents on the track by which, if they followed it up, they might bring about an exchange of views, and that he would have been satisfied if the exchange of views had brought about a result.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That is how I estimated the situation.

The CHAIRMAN: But this unconditional demand which is made precisely for the benefit of the lesser and oppressed States, as he terms it—the demand as expressed in so many words as having a direct bearing upon Poland—certainly seems to be in contradiction to the fact that all he wanted to do was to provide a road which all could follow. This certainly appears to have existed here as a *conditio sine qua non*.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: If I may say so, I would state that I would also assume that Poland was a *conditio sine qua non*; but that was exactly what ultimately turned out to be the case for us after we had restored Poland.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Have you reason to believe, your Excellency, that when President Wilson announced his Polish program in the message of the 22d of January, he and his immediate advisors even as much as knew of the existence of the peculiar conditions which characterized the populations of the Prussian-Polish provinces with their mixed speech?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I am convinced that these conditions were not known. (Laughter.)

Delegate DR. SPAHN: Do you believe that Wilson changed his mind in the period from the 22d of January, 1917, to the 4th of July, 1918?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I am convinced of it.

Delegate DR. SPAHN: It is very noticeable; in his speech at Washington's tomb he announced his attitude in the form of such very distinct fundamental propositions that it is surprising that he did not adhere to these fundamental principles during the whole war. Have you available the speech of the 4th of July, 1918? If not, I will hand it to you.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The one after the breaking out of war? Yes, I remember that one.

Delegate DR. SPAHN: On the basis of this speech, I assumed that his whole attitude throughout the entire period had been based upon these guiding principles. It is obvious that you do not take this view.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I have always assumed that, on the 31st of January, 1917, a complete change came about in Wilson's attitude which I can account for on psychological grounds. In this connection, I must again go into the great question and, if I may say so, into the slogans which

were used during the war, into the differences existing between a peace of understanding and a so-called German peace. I am convinced that on the 31st of January, Wilson changed his attitude with regard to us, to the extent of assuming that we wanted no other than a so-called German peace; in such a German peace, he thought he saw the proof of a plan for world dominion which the Entente had always ascribed to us, and consequently became convinced that Germany really desired to obtain world dominion. He acted accordingly. I believe that that is the psychological explanation for Wilson's entire behavior.

Delegate DR. COHN: On what day did you leave America, Count v. Bernstorff?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: February 13, 1917.

The CHAIRMAN: This answers the question which I put. I shall now beg to continue with the proceedings at the point where we left off yesterday. Your Excellency will now be good enough to make a statement on the events which took place after the message to the Senate. This would involve conversations which you have had with Colonel House. We shall take up the peace proposal which directly followed, and shall later consider your report, and the reply to the report from Berlin.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: As I have already stated, I received a telegram from Colonel House, I do not know exactly whether it was on the 23d or the 24th. In any event, it contained the request to come to New York as quickly as possible.

The CHAIRMAN: Your answer is dated the 27th of January.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Since the telegram was sent from Washington, it was on one of these days. Then it was that the conference took place with regard to which I rendered a telegraphic report. I shall venture to ask the recorder to be good enough to read the report.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER:

House asked me of his own accord and on Wilson's behalf to call upon him and gave me the following message from the President, stating it to be official:

Wilson offers in the first place, in confidence, peace mediation based on his message to the Senate, that is, without interfering in the matter of the territorial conditions of peace. He said that Wilson did not consider as confidential his request, simultaneously addressed to us, for a disclosure of our peace conditions.

House related to me in detail the following line of reasoning of the President: That our enemies had publicly announced their peace conditions, which were impossible of acceptance; that in direct opposition to this, the President had thereupon announced his program; that from now on we too were under the moral obligation of disclosing our peace conditions, because, otherwise, our intentions with regard to peace would not be looked upon as genuine;

that after your Excellency had informed Mr. Wilson that our peace conditions were of a moderate nature and that we were willing to enter upon the second peace conference, the President was of the opinion that his message to the Senate was in accordance with our views; that Wilson hoped that we would disclose peace conditions to him which could be made public both here and in Germany, in order that they could become openly known throughout the entire world; that, if we would only trust him, he was convinced that he would be able to bring about both peace conferences; that he would be particularly pleased if at the same time your Excellency would be willing to state that we were prepared to enter upon the conferences on the basis of his message to the Senate; that the reason for our announcement could be explained by the fact that Wilson had now asked us directly for our peace conditions; that the President was of the opinion that the Entente note to him was a bluff and, for this reason, need not be taken into consideration; that he hoped with reason to be able to bring about peace conferences and, indeed, at such an early date that unnecessary bloodshed in the spring offensive could be avoided.

To what extent your Excellency is willing or is able to meet Wilson can not be judged from this side. In the meantime, I urgently beg leave to make the following suggestion: If the U-boat war is commenced forthwith—

I may remark at this point that Bernstorff was confidentially informed on the 16th of January that the unrestricted U-boat war had been decided upon and that, on the 31st of January a note relating to the launching of the U-boat war was to be handed over to the American Ambassador.

—the President will look upon this as a slap in the face, and war with the United States will be unavoidable. The war party on this side will gain the upper hand, and we shall not be able, in my opinion, to tell when the war will end, since the resources of the United States are, in spite of all statements to the contrary, very great. On the other hand, if we meet Wilson's proposition and if, in spite of that fact, these plans are brought to naught by the obstinacy of our opponents, it will be a very difficult thing for the President to undertake a war against us, even if we were then to start the unrestricted U-boat warfare. Thus, at the present, all we need is a brief delay in order to improve our diplomatic position. In any event, my view of the situation is that at this time we can get a better peace by means of conferences than if the United States should join our enemies.

Then follows a comment concerning prompt reply.

The CHAIRMAN: The report is dated January 27.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Received here January 28th.

The CHAIRMAN: May I ask your Excellency to tell us about the reasons underlying this report?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Thereupon, I received a reply, so far as I remember, on the 30th. Then I simultaneously communicated our peace conditions.

The CHAIRMAN: The answer went off on the 29th and should have reached you on the 30th.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Then I communicated the peace terms at once to Colonel House, handing over the announcement of the unrestricted U-boat war on the next day, and had no more conferences with anybody because diplomatic relations were broken off two days later.

The CHAIRMAN: It would be advisable to read the answer at once. I shall ask the recorder to read us the reply of the then Imperial Chancellor, v. Bethmann-Hollweg.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER:

Kindly express the thanks of the Imperial Government to the President for his communication. We offer him our full confidence, and ask him to give us his in return. Germany is ready to accept a mediation which he offers in confidence for the purpose of bringing about a direct conference of the belligerents, and will recommend the same to its associates. We ask that our acceptance be regarded as strictly confidential, as was the proposal. The public disclosure of our peace conditions is now impossible, since the Entente has publicly announced peace conditions pointing to the degradation and destruction of Germany and its associates, which have been characterized by the President himself as impossible.

We can not look upon them as being in the nature of a bluff, since they are in entire accord with the utterances of the enemy authorities, not only before, but after their publication, and fit in exactly with the purposes for which Italy and Roumania entered the war; and, moreover, so far as Turkey is concerned, correspond to the assurances made by England and France to Russia in treaty form. As long as these war aims of our opponents continue to be freely and frankly maintained, the public disclosure of our peace conditions would be inadvisable, inasmuch as it would indicate a weakness which does not exist, and would only lead to a prolongation of the war. In order to give President Wilson a proof of our confidence in him, we inform him herewith, but absolutely for his own personal information, of the conditions under which we would have been willing to enter into peace negotiations in case the Entente had accepted our peace proposal of December 12 of last year.

And now come the peace conditions:

Restitution of that part of Alsace now occupied by France. The obtaining of a boundary which would protect Germany and Poland against Russia, strategically and economically. The restitution of our colonies in the form of an understanding which would assure to Germany such colonial possessions as are adapted to her population and the importance of her economic interests. The return of French territory occupied by Germany, under reservations concerning the establishment of strategic and economic boundaries, as well as financial compensation.

The restoration of Belgium under certain guarantees assuring Germany's safety, which would have to be reached by negotiations with the Belgian Government. An economic and financial adjustment on the basis of an interchange of the territory conquered by both sides which is to be returned on the conclusion of peace. Indemnification of German undertakings and private persons who have been injured by the war. The renunciation of all economic agreements and measures which would, after the establishment of peace, interfere with normal trade and commerce. Agreements on this point to be concluded in the form of commercial treaties covering the subject. Guarantee of the freedom of the seas.

The peace conditions of our associates are in due proportion to and in agreement with our views.

We are further prepared to take part in the international conference which President Wilson is seeking to bring about after the termination of the war, on the basis of his message to the Senate.

Your Excellency will deliver this communication to the President at the time that you hand over the note regarding the intensive U-boat warfare, and will accompany this with the following announcement:

If his proposal had only been made a few days earlier, we would have been able to put off the commencement of the new U-boat war. Inform him that, at the present time, in spite of the best will in the world, it is, unfortunately, too late on account of technical reasons, since far-reaching military preparations have been decided upon from which we are no longer in a position to recede, and because the U-boats have already left port with new instructions; that the form and the contents of the enemy's note answering our peace proposal and the note of the President were so blunt that, in view of the newly-announced fight for life and death, we could no longer delay putting to full account those instrumentalities of warfare best adapted to a rapid termination of the war, nor have been able to answer to our own people for our failure to do so.

As is to be observed in the instructions governing the intensive U-boat warfare, we are always ready to do justice to the necessities of the United States as far as is in any way possible. We beg the President, in spite of all, to take up and continue with his efforts; and declare ourselves perfectly ready to discontinue the intensive U-boat warfare as soon as we receive satisfactory assurances that the efforts of the President will lead to a peace which would be acceptable to us.

That is the note.

The CHAIRMAN: I will ask your Excellency to tell us in detail how you complied with these instructions which accompanied this answer.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: As I stated yesterday, I carried out these instructions in two ways, in that, I immediately communicated to Colonel House everything which had to do with peace, so that it was made possible for him to inform the President thereof before the American decision with regard to the steps which were bound to follow our U-boat note had been taken. As I remember the facts, Colonel House, too, came immediately from New York in order to confer with the President, but, as I stated

yesterday, the whole situation in the United States was such as to make it absolutely impossible for any discussion whatsoever to have any result after we had once announced the unrestricted U-boat war. The entire situation in the United States, taken as a whole, made it absolutely impossible to take up any negotiations of any kind after this announcement had once been made.

The CHAIRMAN: As a matter of fact, no negotiations followed. And you, on your part, made no further attempt to bring a negotiation—

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I tried it to this extent, that I continued dealing as before. I wrote to Colonel House and asked him to be good enough to tell me whether he would be willing to talk the matter over with me, and then inform me as to what might follow. But nothing further happened after this.

The CHAIRMAN: And then your Excellency—I believe we have come to this period now—returned to Germany?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It was not until the 31st of January, in the evening, that I handed over the U-boat note. And you can imagine how firm my conviction was that there was no other possible way out of the situation, by the fact that as early as the morning of the 31st of January I sent out word to have the German merchant ships destroyed, which I was to send out in due course, because I was certain that, by the evening of the 31st, there would be no opportunity left for carrying out the order. I gave the order on the 31st of January at 10 o'clock in the morning, to destroy the German merchant ships, and they were already in the hands of the American police at 7 o'clock in the evening. So it would not have been in any way possible to carry out this order if I had not sent it off in advance.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: That they were expecting a break with the United States over here is made plain by the fact that, on the 18th of January, a telegram was sent to you by Under-Secretary of State Zimmermann, in which you were asked to designate the Embassy which should take charge of the interests of the Germans in the United States in case of a break with the United States.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I always took it for granted that it was expected in Berlin, but of course I can not swear to it as a fact. I can not state as a fact what the government in Berlin believed, but I received exactly the same impression from the telegram as you did.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: You replied that, in this case, Switzerland should take over the interests of the German Government.

The CHAIRMAN: Is there any particular significance to be attributed to the fact that this was considered, or was it not called for as a matter of ordinary prudence; or did you construe it that Germany, as a matter of course, should consider imminent an early breaking off of relations with the United States?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I was bound to assume this. In view of the fact that, for the past twelve months, I had invariably been telegraphing the same message, to wit, that the U-boat war would mean the breaking off of diplomatic relations, I assumed that they would believe me. But I can not state as a fact what was believed here.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: There is no question but that this was assumed here to be the case. On January 16, the Imperial Chancellor, v. Bethmann-Hollweg, sent you an instruction. It concludes with the following words:

I know full well that by taking this step we run the danger of bringing about a break and possibly war with the United States. We have determined to take this risk. But I request your Excellency to advise me as to any possible means likely to afford an opportunity for taking steps to diminish the danger of a break.

Of course, efforts were made to avoid the break, but it appears that they counted definitely here both on the possibility and the probability.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I can only testify at second hand with regard to whatever happened in Berlin.

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly. I want to get cleared up with regard to this question into which we have already gone in the course of yesterday's proceedings. It is the statement which President Wilson made to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the original English of which was not available to us yesterday. I believe that it would be advisable for Professor Bonn—I believe you handed it over—

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I have the translation here.

The CHAIRMAN: Please be good enough to make your statement, based on the original document.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: According to a copy which was placed at my disposal by the Foreign Office, the translation is somewhat as follows. It is prefaced by a short statement. Wilson's idea that the League of Nations created a moral obligation on the part of the States members thereof to proceed jointly against a country which should be guilty of violations of international law, came under discussion. Senator Harding, one of the bitterest opponents of the League of Nations, made the suggestion during the debates that the United States, in the capacity of a sovereign State, could not permit a separate entity, to wit, the Council of the League of Nations, to dictate to it what its moral obligation was in any kind of an international conflict. Wilson, driven into a corner, of course had to admit this, but he said that, nevertheless, this did not in any way detract from the need for a league of nations. He said: "The American Republic, if I interpret it rightly, does not need a suggestion from any quarter to fulfil its moral obligations. But it steadies the whole world by its promise beforehand that

it will stand with other nations of similar judgment to maintain right in the world."

In this connection, Senator McCumber now undertakes to destroy Wilson's theory by a practical reference to late historical occurrences. He points to the late war, during which no league of nations was in existence, and the following dialogue takes place:

SENATOR McCUMBER: Would our moral conviction of the unrighteousness of the German war have brought us into this war if Germany had not committed any acts against us, without the league of nations, as, of course, we had no league of nations at that time?

The PRESIDENT: I hope it would eventually, Senator, as things developed.

SENATOR McCUMBER: Do you think if Germany had committed no act of war or no act of injustice against our citizens that we would have gotten into this war?

The PRESIDENT: I do think so.

SENATOR McCUMBER: You think we would have gotten in anyway?

The PRESIDENT: I do.

The comments follow.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you personally any remarks to make?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: When you left the United States, were you accused by the American press of being two-faced? Will you kindly express yourself on this point?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: A part of the American press, particularly later, voiced the charge that the peace negotiations with Wilson had only been carried on for the purpose of concealing the preparations which were being made for the U-boat war. This charge was applied to me personally, and the further charge was made that I had known about this and had engineered matters with this knowledge in mind.

The CHAIRMAN: Only as putting things off in a certain way.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: But from everything that I have stated, it must at least be clear to every unbiased person that I unconditionally believed in this peace mediation and—a fact which I am particularly anxious to emphasize—believed up to the last that, in so believing, I was reflecting the intentions of the German Government.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: In an article in the *Demokratisches Deutschland*, you say that all questions had been dictated in Berlin, either by the civil and political authorities or by the military authorities, or represented a compromise between the two parties. What did you mean by that?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That is my personal opinion resulting from all the telegrams received, and also was well known in the United States and the view constantly expressed in the course of all the negotiations with the American Government; a conviction which, moreover, House had come

to entertain in Berlin, that in Berlin there was a constant conflict between two parties, of which one wanted the U-boat war and the other did not; as the result one looked forward to the break with the United States, and the other did not wish the break.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you get this impression after your return to Germany, that is, for instance, as the result of the manner in which you were received? I would like to be particularly clear on this question. Of course, when you came back to Germany, it was your idea to report at once to the Emperor and to visit Headquarters.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: As a matter of fact, I had not really entertained this view since the *Sussex* case. The impression of which we are speaking now was one which I entertained mainly during the period—and this is what I meant by what was said in that article at that time—extending from the date of the *Lusitania* incident to the date of the *Sussex* incident, because at that time it was always a question as to which policy would prevail. It is true that after the *Sussex* case I believed that the policy with which I was in perfect harmony, namely, that of not launching a U-boat war and of negotiating with the United States, had definitely gained the upper hand. And I continued to be of that opinion from that time on.

The CHAIRMAN: And you thought that you recognized this policy as prevailing among the military and naval circles?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Certainly.

The CHAIRMAN: And now we shall come back again to the point which we have already touched upon. Were you in any way induced to believe as a result of the manner of your reception at Headquarters after your return to Germany, that you were entitled to draw conclusions which confirm that which you have just stated with regard to the particular influence of a certain policy?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Since I am questioned under oath, I must state that I certainly got the impression that the announcement of the U-boat war was a complete victory for the military policy. This is the impression which I gained.

The CHAIRMAN: Will you be good enough to tell us in what way, after your return to Germany, you were given the opportunity of officially bringing your judgment as Ambassador to the knowledge of the proper authorities, for instance, the highest authority?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: On the first evening after my return—I returned, I believe, on the 13th of March—

(Interruption: On the 14th of March.)

—well, then, on the evening of the 15th of March, I had a conference with Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg.

The CHAIRMAN: And at this time you made a report of the situation. Now, what happened in the course of this conference, particularly with re-

gard to the nature of the conference, which would have a material bearing on this question now before us?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I believe that it would be better for Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg to testify himself with regard to the reasons which he gave me at that time. But of course I am ready to state what he said to me that evening.

The CHAIRMAN: Kindly state it.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg told me at that time what his reasons were for not having accepted mediation on the part of the United States. According to my recollection, he specifically stated two reasons. The first reason was that mediation by Wilson was so unpopular in Germany that he was of the opinion—I believe that I can quote his words literally: “I would not have been able to have those in the Reichstag agree to a mediation by Wilson; only the Social Democratic Party would have agreed to it, no other party.” The second reason given by Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg was that he did not believe that he would be able to conclude the so-called hollow peace without having made use of the last instrumentality, the last weapon which was regarded by the German people as the most effective and the best, and by them was believed to be such as would lead to victory. We shall be able to determine later whether I have repeated his words correctly.

The CHAIRMAN: During later hearings, your Excellency, we shall probably be obliged to call upon you again on one or more occasions, and consequently your presence at subsequent hearings when testimony is being taken will be considered necessary.

Delegate KATZENSTEIN: You have stated that Wilson expressed himself to the effect that he believed—he made use of the peculiar expression that he hoped—that, even without the perpetration of unrighteous acts by Germany against the persons of American citizens, that is, even without a U-boat war, the break between the United States and Germany would have come. Does that not permit the existence of a doubt, I will not say as to the good faith of Wilson's peace mediation, but at least as to whether Wilson himself believed that his peace mediation would be effective?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Well, this naturally takes me back again to the domain of psychology, where it is very difficult to make statements under oath. I can simply state as my personal view that, in my opinion, before the declaration of the U-boat war, Wilson was not morally convinced of the unrighteousness of the German war, and that, consequently, all inferences which are to be drawn from these later comments of Wilson's are completely unreliable.

The CHAIRMAN: How long was it, your Excellency, until you were received by the Emperor after your return?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Six or seven weeks. It was the 4th of May.

The CHAIRMAN: Did that not seem to you to be a rather unusually long space of time, above all, in view of the importance of the mission which had been assigned to you in the United States?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes, it did seem so to me at that time. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Do you believe that you can give us any reasons for this; reasons, perhaps, which might have to do with the personality of the Emperor?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: At that time, reasons were suggested to me, which, however, I did not consider as carrying much weight. I assumed that the reason why I was only received by the Emperor after six or seven weeks was to be found simply in the differences of political opinions.

The CHAIRMAN: Are those reasons such that they are worth your mentioning here?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: If I were asked about them—

The CHAIRMAN: Please let us hear about them.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The two reasons which were suggested to me—

The CHAIRMAN (interrupting): By whom?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The two reasons, one of which was made the subject of detailed comment by the Emperor himself in Constantinople, are as follows: The first reason refers to the circumstance that the Swedish Minister, at the time that we were leaving New York, had a box filled with records and of which we knew nothing, put on board our vessel. I believe that they were Swedish dispatches to his government, but I can not swear to the fact. Afterwards, as is well known, we were held up for twelve days in Halifax and the ship was thoroughly searched. On this occasion, this box with the Swedish records was commandeered by the English and—what I, moreover, did not know at that time—was transported from Sweden to London and opened there. The English papers represented the case at that time as if a box of dispatches had been taken away from me. This impression was pretty broadly published, and I believe that at that time it was supposed that dispatches of the Embassy were contained in that box and that, for instance, the secret of the Mexican dispatches, became known in this way. I believe that that was one of the reasons why it was so long before I was received by the Emperor. In any event, the Emperor believed that I had not exercised sufficient care with regard to a box of dispatches. That is the way the matter was presented to me.

Then the second reason to which I must refer, if I am to tell everything, and with regard to which I spoke with the Emperor later in Constantinople in the course of an interview of considerable length, was, the Emperor told me that I was to blame because such a man as Gerard had become the American Ambassador here. I answered at that time that the appointment

of Ambassador Gerard had only been communicated to me after he had been selected and that at that time I had, consequently, seen very little reason for bringing up a renewed disagreement resulting from my recommending the rejection of an ambassador who had already been selected for the post. And, moreover, before the war, and taking the whole situation into consideration, I had certainly considered that Gerard's personality was by no means a dangerous one, particularly in view of the fact that at that time I could not know that the war was coming.

The CHAIRMAN: So these are the reasons?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Count v. Bernstorff, did you have any reason for supposing that your activity in attempting, during the course of a whole year, to bring about mediation by the United States, was looked upon with disapproval by those who were working in favor of the unrestricted U-boat war here; more specifically, did you have any reason for supposing so as the result of personal conversations which you had with General Ludendorff in the Headquarters after your return?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes, as the result of my conversation with General Ludendorff on the 4th of May, I was obliged to assume that my activity in this direction had not been looked upon by him with sympathy, and had been undesired by him.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Will you kindly describe this conversation to us?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: According to my recollection, and so far as I can state under oath, the conversation which took place was more or less to the effect that General Ludendorff received me with these words: "Well, you wanted to make peace in America, did you? You probably thought that we were at the end of our rope." Whereupon, I answered him: "No, I did not believe that we were at the end of our rope, but I did want to make peace before we reached that point." Whereupon, General Ludendorff answered me: "Yes, but we did not want to, and, moreover, we are going to end the business now by the U-boat war inside of three months." (Laughter.)

Thereupon, I asked him whether it was certain that the war would be ended in three months. He told me that on the morning of that same day he had received very definite information that England could, under no conditions, prosecute the war for more than three months longer, and this, on account of the shortage of foodstuffs. The General then asked me if I believed that America would bring to the war resources of a really serious nature. I thereupon answered that this would occur within a year's time; and so, if he was expecting to terminate the war by means of the U-boat war, he must do so before this year had run its course. Thereupon, the General said to me again: "We do not need a year; we shall have finished, by means of the U-boat war, before that time."

Expert DR. BONN: I would like to put a short question in connection with the commandeering of the Swedish box. Did you hear this story of the Swedish chest a long time after your arrival, or immediately upon your return?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: To the best of my recollection, I heard of the Swedish box for the first time through the announcement by the London press.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Was there no investigation of any kind?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No, no investigation took place.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Was there—and this is a much more important matter—an investigation into the fate of the Mexican dispatches?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes, an investigation did take place in that instance.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: And what was the result of this investigation, so far as your activities came into question?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: So far as I know, no result was accomplished by the investigation. But subsequently I came to have no doubt upon the point that all our dispatches were decoded by the British and placed at the disposal of the Americans.

Expert DR. BONN: By this, you mean to say that this dispatch was caught between Germany and the United States, and that the decoding was not the result of transmitting the message to Mexico from the United States by land?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: According to what I learned later, I assume that the British decoded all the telegrams which came over the English cables.

Expert DR. BONN: We shall have to go into this matter more carefully later on.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, but for the present we will close the matter here with this.

Delegate DR. SPAHN: Secretary of State Zimmermann will give us information later concerning the question of the box. The statement which we have received from him on the point differs from yours, your Excellency. But he will tell us about it himself.

So far as concerns the dispatch to Carranza, the complaint has been made that there was no change of code, and that the old cipher was used, which had been known for a long while; that it was in this way possible for the dispatch to be decoded. How about this?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Naturally, the code was changed much less during war time than was otherwise the case, but that was due to the fact that it was impossible to send us new ciphers. The last time I received new ciphers was by way of the U-boat *Deutschland*. . . . Twice, on both the trips of the U-boat *Deutschland* I was sent new ciphers.

Delegate DR. SPAHN: Then a further question—your conversation with General Ludendorff suggests it to me. Were you acquainted with the report which Haniel made with regard to the strength of the United States and the menace which America's participation in the war would contain for us, because America was invincible, before it was sent over here?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I always worked in the greatest harmony with Mr. v. Haniel in Washington, and he entertained my opinion absolutely with regard to this question. Three weeks before the breaking off of diplomatic relations, he wrote—he told me this himself a few days ago, and his testimony will probably be taken here—to his relative, Count Monts, and to two other gentlemen—I believe to Mr. v. Treutler and others; they were private letters to the same effect as my reports. He showed me all those letters at that time, or told me of their contents, which I do not remember exactly; in any event, I was perfectly informed as to what he had written.

Delegate DR. SPAHN: So these were not official communications?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It has always been our custom to supplement official reports by private letters. That is a custom which was constantly observed in the diplomatic service.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Perhaps I should confirm that by reference to the files.

Delegate DR. SPAHN: Did General Ludendorff know about this?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That I do not know, but I believe that a private letter of Haniel's was sent to the Field Marshal by Count Monts.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The files show that a considerable portion of a private letter of Haniel's was delivered here officially, I believe, through Count Monts, unless I am very much mistaken. The contents of this letter were brought to the attention of General Ludendorff. The same was the case with regard to the equally important and detailed opinion of the present Under-Secretary of State Albert. In this opinion, particular emphasis is laid upon the fact that America's resources, even of a military nature, were inexhaustible. This report—it was a direct report—was, I believe, forwarded by his Excellency Helfferich. His Excellency Helfferich, so far as I recollect, forwarded this report to the Foreign Office.

The CHAIRMAN: Consul Müller has the floor for the purpose of making a statement on behalf of the government.

CONSUL MÜLLER: I simply desire to state, in connection with the question of the Mexican dispatches, that a careful investigation has been made in the Foreign Office with regard to the loss of the Mexican instructions. I believe, however, that the examination of this question will be put off until later.

Delegate DR. COHN: The Mexican matter is of great interest to me,

and I should like to put a question from a standpoint formerly suggested by Professor Bonn. Professor Bonn mentioned the fact, Count Bernstorff, that after your departure from Washington you were accused in the American press of having carried out a double-dealing and two-faced policy. Do you believe that it was the proclamation of the Mexican incident which should be considered as the cause of this accusation being made against you and also as having the effect of increasing the weight of evidence not only against you but, above all, against the German people?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That the Mexican dispatches were made capital of as propaganda against us, is absolutely beyond doubt. But the Mexican incident did not have a conclusive influence upon the course of history, because the war would have come in any event.

Delegate DR. COHN: Did you speak with General Ludendorff before you spoke with the Emperor, or *vice versa*?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: *Vice versa*, I first spoke with the Emperor.

Delegate DR. COHN: Did you speak with other gentlemen of Headquarters?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I spoke with Field Marshal Hindenburg as well.

Delegate DR. COHN: Did you speak with gentlemen of the political department?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No.

Delegate DR. COHN: With anybody else?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No.

CONSUL MÜLLER: I should like to state, since the Mexican instruction has been mentioned, that it resulted from the investigation in the Foreign Office that in all probability it was not known in America before the breaking off of relations between America and Germany, but only considerably later.

The CHAIRMAN: So this agrees wholly with what his Excellency v. Bernstorff says.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Did you consider the reasons which were given you as explanatory of why you were not received by the Emperor, to be excuses or the actual reasons? At that time, there was very much publicity given the matter.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I would say that the expression "excuses" is too strong. I believe that these reasons had their effect. But I have assumed, at least personally, that the underlying cause was to be found in differences of political opinion.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Have you reason to believe that perhaps certain circles had influenced the Emperor not to receive you, because you might, perhaps, have given more detailed information about the peace move?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No, I have no reason to believe this.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: It appears in the telegram which I read yes-

terday, that the Emperor asked for information with regard to Wilson's peace move in considerable astonishment, so that we must find out whether he was informed concerning your activities. Do you know of any facts justifying a belief to this effect?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No, I have no grounds on which to base such a belief.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Let me refer back to the conversation with Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg. You just stated that Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg told you that a peace brought about by Wilson would be unpopular with the German people. Did you know that, as a matter of fact, the German press had characterized peace obtained by mediation on the part of Wilson as unpopular; and did you not ask whether it would not be possible to inform the press to a certain extent with regard to the instructions which the Imperial Government itself gave you? In one of your reports, you complain of the attitude of the press.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I certainly assume that the press had made a very strong inspired fight for the U-boat war. I certainly assumed so much and, in view of the fact that these inspired activities in favor of the U-boat war were to a great extent tinged with attacks upon me personally, I very naturally knew of most that was taking place along this line. But whether the government was in the position to influence this press campaign with regard to a policy which the Foreign Office was contesting almost as earnestly as I was, I certainly could not judge from the standpoint of my activities in the United States.

The CHAIRMAN: You were just speaking about an inspired moulding of opinion.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I considered it inspired.

The CHAIRMAN: On what grounds? It was quite possible for it to be a perfectly natural development of opinion, particularly since it could be explained by the situation as a whole.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I admit that. But from my standpoint I have always considered this agitation to be artificial, and I admit that even today I still consider it to have been artificial, because today I still believe that if public opinion had been placed in the position of choosing between a possible peace of understanding and the U-boat war, and if it had been correctly informed with regard to the situation, it would have chosen the peace of understanding.

The CHAIRMAN: You are, therefore, still assuming that this inspiration process is to be attributed to a third party. For this reason, I repeat my question, your Excellency, whether you have a definite point of departure for your belief that we have to do here with something which was inspired, or is that simply a matter of pure personal impression on your part? If you can not reply to this question, the point is settled.

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: I can not give a categorical answer to the question, but I have always taken it for granted that a certain attitude announced by the press was artificially nursed along by the party in favor of the U-boat war.

The CHAIRMAN: Then we are through with the question.

Expert DR. BONN: I may, perhaps, revert back to another point. When you spoke with General Ludendorff on May 4, was that the first time that you discussed the American situation with the Supreme High Command of the Army, or had you had occasion to do this before that time?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: That was the first time that I had spoken with those in authority about it.

Expert DR. BONN: You arrived here on the 14th of March. At that time, diplomatic relations had been broken off. All kinds of possibilities, vague possibilities, were in the air, as we know from those dispatches which have already been read to us; but nevertheless we were not yet in a state of war. If my recollection is correct, the state of war did not commence until April 2. Was no attempt made by the persons in authority during this period to request you to make your personal report?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: It is possible that I may be mistaken as to dates, but, so far as I know, all these questions in all their varying phases had been settled the day I arrived. I am still personally of the opinion that my delay in Halifax by the British was brought about in order that I might have no opportunity of bringing back here anything more to report. I have always been of the opinion that the unnecessary delay in Halifax was brought about for the purpose of making any communication from me impossible.

Expert DR. BONN: I should like to submit the following question: It is probably known to you, is it not, that in some of the pamphlets which were distributed as a feature of the American propaganda, it is definitely stated that the declaration of war was put off because it was desired to give you, who had the reputation of desiring to maintain friendly relations, the opportunity of conferring with those in authority.

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: Whether that was really the intention of the Americans, I do not know. I read it in the newspapers.

Expert DR. BONN: Can you give us no information with regard to this point?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: With regard to this point, I can give no information, because after the breaking off of diplomatic relations, with the exception of a few friendly steamer letters, I received no further word from American statesmen nor did I have any further talk with anyone.

Expert DR. BONN: It is, however, the fact that the British held you up in Halifax at least twelve days longer than was necessary, that you arrived here on the 14th of March, and that then there was a further delay on the part of those in the highest positions of authority, from the 14th of March up to the

4th of May, although the declaration of war took place as early as the 2d of April. Is that correct?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The fact is correct.

Expert DR. BONN: It is not my wish to draw conclusions.

Now, on the occasion of the conversation with General Ludendorff when he reproached you—that is the way I interpret it—with having desired to make peace, you gave him to understand that these endeavors on behalf of peace had been no unnecessary diplomatic play on your part, but that, in so doing, you were acting in good faith and with the intention of carrying out the policy of the government?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I told him that that was the case. And I also remember a remark which, up to the present time, had slipped my mind. I remember that General Ludendorff told me, in response to my remark that I had desired to make peace before we came to the end of our rope: "Moreover, you were very well justified in believing that we were at the end of our rope; for your instructions, a great many of which I have read, were such as certainly to give the impression that we were at the end of our rope." I have a distinct recollection, even at this time, of this answer.

Expert DR. BONN: On the occasion of the interview which you had with General Ludendorff, did you give him detailed information with regard to the steps which you had undertaken on behalf of peace?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: In detail, no.

Expert DR. BONN: Did he know at that time that, after the 22d of January and even on the 24th, Wilson had submitted the offer of peace mediation through you, or was he ignorant of this fact at that time?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: He was aware of it.

Delegate DR. COHN: Count v. Bernstorff, this conference, this audience with the Emperor was had, as I assume, in accordance with the custom that a diplomat returning from his post must present himself to the Emperor, or was it the case here that you or the Chancellor had in view the unusual situation created by the war, and that this situation gave matters the aspect of a special case?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It was the custom that we should always report when we came to Berlin; and, most particularly after a breaking off of foreign relations, when we returned from a foreign country. So I simply took it as a matter of course that I should report to the Emperor.

Delegate DR. COHN: Did you speak about this on the occasion of your first conversation with Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I believe that on that occasion the Imperial Chancellor did say to me either that I would probably be received very shortly, or that I ought to confer with the Emperor. On this point, I have no exact recollection. I only know that there was some talk of my seeing the Emperor.

Delegate DR. COHN: I am interested in the formal steps leading to such an interview.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The formal steps? One had to be announced at Headquarters by the Foreign Office.

Delegate DR. COHN: Did this announcement take place at once or later?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: According to my recollection, it occurred at once.

Delegate DR. COHN: So the reasons which you gave us beforehand were not first of all brought forward by the Foreign Office, but originated from another quarter?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I was officially informed of these reasons later on when I inquired concerning the delay.

Delegate DR. COHN: But who was it that gave these reasons? You are of the view that the Foreign Office immediately took the proper steps for your audience with the Emperor?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: According to my recollection, yes.

The CHAIRMAN: And this is to be seen further from the fact that you could give no other reasons for this delay than those which you have given.

Delegate DR. COHN: Now, this conversation with General Field Marshal Hindenburg and General Ludendorff—did this take place only by chance, or was it brought about more specifically in any other way? Did you, or the Imperial Chancellor, or the Foreign Office arrange for such a conference?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It was the result of the then-existing situation. I received a telegram which was communicated to me by the Foreign Office, stating that I was to report to the Emperor at Kreuznach on the 4th of May. The Field Marshal and General Ludendorff were at the breakfast table and afterwards, purely from a sense of courtesy, I felt called upon to visit both gentlemen.

Delegate DR. COHN: Very good. I understand you perfectly, Count Bernstorff, to the effect that the Supreme High Command of the Army did not even consider it necessary to confer with the returning Ambassador from the United States.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No, I received no invitation for any such purpose.

The CHAIRMAN: But, immediately after your return, you sought a conference with the then Secretary of State of the Foreign Office, Mr. Zimmermann. On the occasion of this conference, there was, was there not, as I naturally assume, some talk about Wilson's peace mediation, and were you, perchance, informed of the attitude which the Foreign Office entertained with regard to these peace moves on Wilson's part, touching the question of their sincerity, etc., etc.?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: So far as I recollect, I lunched on the day following my arrival, with Secretary of State Zimmermann and the

Austrian Ambassador, and there was a general conversation covering the whole situation, the main purport of which, so far as I can remember, was to no other effect than what I have already explained to be the attitude of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg.

The CHAIRMAN: So nothing special took place in this conference?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: The same view, expressed perhaps in different words, but, in general, the same.

The CHAIRMAN: Generally speaking, exactly the same.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Your Excellency stated a short time ago that you had received the impression that the attitude of the press had been inspired. Were you aware of the existence and of the activities of the War Department News Bureau and of the censorship which, of course, influenced strongly the attitude of the press?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: I have spoken with the caution that I employed on the occasion of my earlier statements, because, as a resident in the United States at that time, I could have no exact knowledge of actual conditions. I did believe, however, that the newspapers were influenced in favor of the U-boat war mainly by the naval authorities. I believe that to be the case today, but I can naturally not give positive proof of it.

The CHAIRMAN: That answers this question.

Delegate DR. PETERSEN: Your Excellency, if my recollection is correct, you stated that you were at once received, upon your return, by Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg, and you then described briefly what was stated in the interview.

Of course the Imperial Chancellor was the sole responsible director of our German policy. Did you avail yourself of the opportunity afforded by the occasion, to suggest in any way that attempts of any kind be made at that stage, in spite of all, to come into touch with Wilson or with the American Government with regard to further activities in behalf of peace? Or, as the result of a conviction that all further attempts would be useless, did you make no further suggestion on your part along those lines?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: At that time I made no further suggestions of any kind, because I considered the matter completely closed. As to whether or not the United States would declare war within eight or fourteen days was a matter which I did not consider material, because I was absolutely convinced that war would be declared.

Delegate DR. PETERSEN: But in any event, it is certain that you made no more suggestions in the course of your conference with the responsible director of our policies, which were not followed at that time, and not only this, but you no longer desired, on the occasion of this conference, that further attempts be made to take up again further negotiations with the United States?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: Perhaps the conversation lasted an

hour. At this date, I really can not remember definitely what was actually said at that time. But, in any event, I do not remember that I made any further suggestions.

Delegate DR. COHN: I will now revert once more to the question which Delegate Gothein put to your Excellency sometime ago. It was to this effect: Did you know of the establishment of the press conferences and of the War Department News Bureau?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I knew that it existed, from decrees, newspapers, and other communications.

Delegate DR. COHN: And did you know to what purposes these institutions served, not the war department news bureau, but the press conferences which were established by the War Department News Bureau?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes, I knew that.

Delegate DR. COHN: To what purposes they served and how they were administered, and to the extent that they were handled?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I knew that in a general way.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Did it occur to you that, during that time in which the Foreign Office was desirous that Wilson should make a peace move, a certain portion of the press maintained the sharpest kind of a fight against Wilson and in favor of the unrestricted U-boat war?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: This occurred to me.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: That is to say, two elements of the government publicly took an obviously different attitude on a given matter. On the one side, they wanted Wilson, and on the other side they opposed him.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Was this officially done? I just assumed that those circles which were calling for this mediation had no influence whatsoever on the press.

The CHAIRMAN: The taking of testimony covering this period is herewith closed.

We will adjourn. The next session will take place on the 31st of October, at 10 o'clock in the morning, probably in the convention hall of the Herrenhaus. In the meantime, definite information will be given with regard to the place of meeting. His Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg will be requested to appear at this hearing. And I shall also ask Count v. Bernstorff to take part at this session, since, in all probability, it will be necessary for us to take comparative statements. Count v. Bernstorff will, then, receive an official summons.

The session closed at 12:11 o'clock.

FOURTH SESSION

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1919

The session was opened at 10:20 o'clock by the Chairman, Delegate Warmuth.

The CHAIRMAN: The session is opened.

We will begin with the—

Testimony of his Excellency Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg

I ask your Excellency to step forward in order that I may administer the oath.

Your Christian name.

Witness v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Theobald.

Chairman: Your age.

Witness v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: 63 years.

The CHAIRMAN: Under the constitution, you are at liberty to take the oath with the religious form, or without it. Which does your Excellency prefer? Shall I administer the oath with the religious formula, or without it?

Witness v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I will be sworn in the manner in which Count Bernstorff took the oath the other day.

The CHAIRMAN: That is, with the religious formula.

(Witness Former Imperial Chancellor Dr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg is sworn.)

The general subject is well known to you. We are now concerned with Wilson's peace move. We shall have to establish what the policy of the government was with regard to Wilson's peace move, and what the reasons were which guided the government's policy. So far as time is concerned, your Excellency, I shall limit you in no way whatsoever. In making your statement, you may refer to occurrences as you choose, as far back as in your opinion is necessary. But I ask that you will keep in mind three very definite fundamental questions, the answers to which are necessary to the purposes of the committee.

These fundamental questions are as follows:

(1) What were the reasons which caused the peace proposal of the 12th of December to be launched by the Central Powers, in spite of the fact that Count v. Bernstorff's communications held out the certain prospect of a peace move on the part of Wilson by the end of December at the latest?

(2) What were the reasons why Wilson was not informed of our exact peace terms, either—

(a) publicly, as was suggested by his note of the 21st of December, or

(b) confidentially, in spite of the request of Colonel House and Lansing, communicated to Count Bernstorff.

(3) Why was it that the political departments of the government did not continue to assist the peace move of Mr. Wilson, but, on the contrary, agreed to the conduct of the unrestricted U-boat war?

These, then, are the questions which the subcommittee has drawn up in the form in which I have read them.

I should like to add, personally, that, by way of illustration, you will be called upon to answer these questions: Did you consider Wilson's offer of a peace mediation to have been made in good faith? What definite grounds did you have for supporting the opposite assumption? Or, did you consider that Wilson's endeavors, assuming them to have been made in good faith, were accompanied by the prospect of success, or, on the opposite assumption, that they gave no promise whatsoever of success, as the result, say, of the attitude of the Entente to Wilson's peace note, or for any other similar reason? Did the Supreme High Command of the Army or of the Navy oppose Wilson's peace move? What reasons did these departments have for carrying on the unrestricted U-boat war, and for having set about doing so at the early period that they did? Above all, the conferences at Pless of the 9th of January will play an important part. And now, your Excellency, I will ask that you discuss matters which have a bearing upon the general theme which I have announced, and that you will do this in connected form; I shall endeavor not to interrupt the statement by questions.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I should like, at the outset, to make a short statement of the facts which, as it seems to me, have been established here in the proceedings up to the present time, which are not contradicted, and which will be conceded by me to be correct.

After we had placed ourselves on record during the first period which has been characterized by the recording secretary as such, and had shown by general conferences with regard to the possibilities of peace, that the matter of negotiating for peace was one which was acceptable to us, the beginning of the second period was marked by a move on our part, instituted for the purpose of having President Wilson direct an appeal for peace to the belligerent Powers. Our desire consisted in this, that President Wilson should bring the Entente to the conference table. If this effort was successful, the direct relations between the belligerent Powers should be entered upon under regulations personal to them alone, and without any participation on the part of Wilson. It was only in a supplemental conference, in which President Wilson should take part, that general international questions, such as freedom of the seas, disarmament, courts of arbitration, etc., would be made the subject of agreement. President Wilson was not only in agreement with regard to these features, but, as a matter of fact, never laid claim to the right of commencing any other activity. This point must be sharply emphasized, used as

ever characterizes the part which the President was to play by the term "peace mediation" is apt to lead to the erroneous view that it was our desire that President Wilson should take an actual part in deciding the question of what the peace terms would be. But that was just what was not the case. If, and to the extent that our files state that no peace mediation is desired on the part of Wilson—such cases came up for discussion on the second day of Count v. Bernstorff's hearing—these statements are to be limited in their application to a peace mediation in the ordinary sense of the term, that is to say, a mediation which includes participation in the actual construction of the peace terms. What are not meant are steps of the kind which it was thought the President's endeavors constituted. I desire to designate such endeavors by the term "peace move," in order to avoid all possibilities of misunderstanding, and to differentiate between the term "peace mediation" in its ordinary sense, and the term "peace move."

If actual occurrences running from this date up to the end of the second period, that is, up to our peace proposal of December 12, 1916, have been, as it seems to me, clearly and without contradiction established in the proceedings of this committee, the first so-called critical point is coincident with this peace proposal of ours. If I have observed correctly, the recording secretary has designated as a question calling particularly for discussion; nay, as a fundamental question—and the Chairman has just referred to it as one of the three fundamental questions—the question as to whether and how we can justify the circumstance that we made a peace proposal ourselves, although we were urging the issuance of an appeal for peace by the President, and although Count v. Bernstorff had stated the prospect to be that Wilson would issue such an appeal by the end of December at the latest. With this question, we forsake the field limited solely to the establishment of facts, and pass over quite frankly to the question of the political justification of facts already established. For this reason, if we are to estimate correctly, we must keep the subject matter clearly in mind.

It is, of course, perfectly plain that the contention that, by means of our peace proposal, we interfered with and jeopardized President Wilson's peace move, is what lies back of that fundamental question. In reply to which I state: The appeal for peace which it was President Wilson's desire to issue, and the imminent announcement of which had been stated by Count Bernstorff to be in prospect, is contained in President Wilson's peace note of the 18th of December. As is emphatically pointed out by Count Bernstorff in his testimony, this note of President Wilson's was written in the middle of November. According to the same witness, the wording of this note remained unaltered from the middle of November up to the 18th of December, except for the provision that the note should not be in any way connected with our peace proposal. In the middle of November, we certainly had made no peace proposal, and President Wilson did not know that

we even had the intention of making a peace proposal. The clear and inevitable conclusion is that neither did our peace proposal hinder the President in the matter of his peace move, nor was it influenced by it in any particular. If Wilson was annoyed because we did not wait for his peace to come, it is at least certain that his annoyance had no influence upon his undertakings.

And now, if we are to take up the question of an injurious effect created by our peace note, we can only ask whether it was our peace proposal which induced the Entente to answer Wilson's peace note of the 18th of December in such a way as to amount to a rejection; whether I, if this was the case, was bound to have known this, or to have foreseen it, and, in the presence of this knowledge, to remain expectant, waiting to see whether the President himself would actually undertake the peace move which was in contemplation.

But in this connection we enter upon a complexity of problems, of which, after all, the American correlated occurrences which are here discussed form but a comparatively small part. The military situation of those days at the various fronts of this war, which stretched over nearly the entire world, domestic conditions here at home and in the countries of our allies, the aspirations of the different political parties, the points of view of the statesmen representing the different governments, their subjective and often widely-differing estimates of the general situation—I can not name all the varying elements which must be taken into consideration if we are to succeed in reaching a decision even approximately correct. But even if we can grasp within the range of our vision these various elements, far-flung in their interlacements and inextricably interwoven as they are, we can at best take in but one side of the question. The other side, and really the decisive side, involving the history of what went on from the standpoint of our enemies, is hidden from us in its most important aspect, and, I venture to say, will long remain a mystery to us. At least I have not as yet gathered the impression that the Entente Governments are now ready to throw their archives open and make the contents thereof public.

It would be only under such conditions as these, as, indeed, is true with regard to all questions of the war as well as of the subject matter before us, that we would be able to form a conclusive judgment concerning the opportuneness of our peace proposal of the 12th of December. Our discussions here with regard to the attitude of the Entente toward Wilson's peace note of the 18th of December are nothing more than mere conjectures.

I now come to the reasons which induced us to anticipate by our own proposal the prospective peace move on the part of President Wilson, and not to await it further. I am forced to represent in their entirety, and so far as I am able to do so today, these motives which underlay the whole complicated fabric of the World War. The reasons which could be used as

arguments in favor of waiting for Wilson to act have been clearly brought out in the investigation which has been carried on up to the present time. Much could be said in their favor, undoubtedly, and particularly today, since the proofs with regard to this problem have not been applied, and the field is open for conjecture of all kinds. At the same time, they require, it seems to me, to be supplemented from the negative side; that is, they require an accentuation of those features which spoke against a decision on the part of the highest authorities to wait until the President should act.

In the first place I shall endeavor to present those factors and then pass to the positive reasons for the other alternative, namely, our peace offer. Perhaps, when I speak of the factors which militated against waiting for Wilson, I may observe the following order, speaking first of the personal aspect, then of the experiences which we had previously had with American policies and the American attitude toward the Entente, and finally taking into consideration the possibilities of political ties between the United States and us.

I am far from making the statement that President Wilson was not dealing in good faith when he held out the prospect of his peace move. But the Central Powers at Berlin were confronted with a great number of facts which made it seem very doubtful as to whether and when he would come to the conclusion that he was *able* to carry out his resolve.

And now I would like to make a remark on the purely personal side, to the effect that, according to the reports sent in by Count v. Bernstorff, there was a certain trait of hesitation in President Wilson's character, which, up to the present time, has not been sufficiently emphasized. For instance, on the 14th day of January, Count Bernstorff informs us as follows:

It is well known that the note had been prepared for quite awhile and would have been sent at Christmas time, irrespective of any move on our part, although this is not so absolutely certain, if we take into consideration the hesitating character of Mr. Wilson, whose inclination is to handle all matters in a dilatory manner.

The leaders at Berlin had already been made plainly aware of this hesitant trait of the President by experience along many lines and before this report of the Ambassador came in. And I believe that I can recall to mind that, according to reports which came in right at the end of December, even neutral statesmen entertained some doubt as to whether the President had serious thoughts of peace.

And, moreover, President Wilson was, so to speak, handicapped by his and his country's relation to the Entente. The trend of feeling in the United States or, rather, the extent of feeling in favor of our opponents, was an uncertain quantity during the course of the war, particularly in its first year. We can not look within the soul of the President himself.

At all events, I will not attempt to do so. But even if he did have friendly inclinations towards Germany—Mr. Clemenceau, who certainly knows him well, recently announced in the French Senate with great solemnity, the reverse to be the case—he was not under any and all conditions independent of the public opinion of his country. Whether or not it was his own conception, or whether it was regard for the public opinion of his country, that brought it about, it is certain that the facts are not such as to allow us to assume the existence of such inclinations on the part of President Wilson, as the result of which we could feel certain that our cause would be furthered at all safely.

Right at the beginning of the war, our representations against the use of bullets by our enemies in violation of international law met, to speak mildly, with a cool reception. The uncompromising tone of all the American representations made against the submarine warfare which, of course, was held as not permissible by the United States, stood in very sharp contrast, it must be admitted, with those protests which took only the form of words which the American Government addressed against the arbitrary domination of the sea by the English, which that government itself had characterized as being in violation of international law, whereas there lurked behind the notes addressed to us the most unequivocal threat of a breaking off of diplomatic relations, if not of war.

Let us think in terms of international law as much as we please with regard to the delivery of weapons and munitions of war by the Americans, the fact is that, as matters stood, they constituted acts in favor of our enemies without which, in all likelihood, the war would have come to a much earlier end. We were always told that, for reasons of international law, President Wilson could take no steps towards putting a stop to these deliveries. But it must be said that it is very doubtful whether he would ever have taken action, even in the absence of this excuse. Count v. Bernstorff has given us here the transcendently important information that after our *Sussex* note President Wilson immediately informed him, through Colonel House, that he could take no steps against the measures taken by England on the sea in violation of international law, because the public opinion of his country would not permit it on account of the close interweaving of interests between American commerce and that of the Entente. From two standpoints, this communication seems to me to be of fundamental significance. Once—I will simply state this here as a matter of fact—Wilson had announced to us that, in case we would refrain from conducting the unrestricted U-boat war, he would bring England back to the terms of the Declaration of London. Well, by our *Sussex* note, we had fulfilled Wilson's conditions. Thereupon, the communication of Colonel House proves that the President's hands, after all, so far as any and all negotiations with regard to England were concerned, were fastened

in the shackles which had been drawn tight about them by the close community of business interests existing between his country and England.

It is clear that under these conditions Wilson was exceedingly limited in his capacity to act, even with regard to his contemplated peace move, and that it would have been unsound and reckless for us idly to await his peace move, and to put it down as a certain factor in the sum total of our calculations. For this not only involved the question as to whether Wilson was going to make a peace move but, very particularly too, the question as to when he was going to make it. This "when," however, ladies and gentlemen, had a very material significance from the military side. This waiting upon the President, upon whose political restrictions and hesitating character (as Count v. Bernstorff says) I had to calculate, could not be indulged in to the extent of having the possibility of the other alternative struck from our hands.

I need not introduce any arguments here to support the contention that a peace proposal could only be made by us when we were in an advantageous position from the military standpoint, if we were to avoid giving the appearance of weakness so easy to attribute to such a move. If this moment went by, the opportunity for a peace proposal might absolutely vanish for an indeterminable length of time. If in the fall of 1916 we considered a peace proposal fundamentally necessary, then it was necessary that we be in a position to determine unhampered the time for its announcement, and we could under no circumstances rely upon the chance that Wilson would also choose this precise point of time. For that reason and at that time, we managed to have our peace proposal announced at the very moment when the decision of the Roumanian campaign in our favor was recognized as such by all the world.

It is in this connection that reasons appear, on account of which I have felt obliged to differ somewhat from Count v. Bernstorff regarding President Wilson and his policy. The assertion that the central government must always bring the reports of even the best of ambassadors into line with its own judgment and the conclusions which it draws from political occurrences taken as a whole, will not sound like a presumptuous thing to say. In the case before us, I constantly complained of the fact that our mail and telegraphic communications with Count v. Bernstorff during the war were always limited to the very narrowest extent—I am now coming to the third point which I desire to discuss; otherwise, the estimates which were formed over there in the center of American affairs, and here as the result of the general European situation, would have been more easily reconciled by a policy of mutual emendation. But as a matter of fact, matters were such that we simply did not have at our disposal an uninterrupted telegraphic line of communication between Berlin and the Embassy in Washington. The German cables had, of course, been ren-

dered ineffective at the very beginning of the war, and, naturally, we did not have the use of the English cables. The wireless service was soon taken over under censorship regulations on the American side, as the result of pressure exerted by the English and not on account of any obligation imposed by international law, and did not permit the sending of messages in cipher, that is, the intercourse which is essential in the political field. A channel of communication not devoid of obstacles and not free from objections could be made use of only in the case of short and occasional messages, and in the process of using which a week or more was necessary for question and answer to pass. Besides this, at certain times the American Government had permitted us to make use of their embassy here for the purpose of correspondence in cipher; but the embassy insisted upon a certain control of the contents of these dispatches. Ladies and gentlemen, imagine what absolutely extreme difficulties would attend a move involving any detail, any move which would have had to be carried on from Washington. Under such conditions, we would in any case have been, from the physical aspect, at a perfectly hopeless disadvantage with the hostile participants.

This aspect of the case, superficial as it may seem, is significant in still another direction. The difficulties of our correspondence with Washington were due, in the main, to demands made by England, in no way to be supported by international law, which the American Government tolerated; and it was the American Government itself which, probably likewise out of regard for England, imposed extremely strict restrictions upon our intercourse with Count v. Bernstorff. Matters would have been equalized to a certain extent if the American Government had made it possible for its representative here, Mr. Gerard, to keep me constantly informed with regard to the intentions of the President in connection with the peace move. But instead of this, Mr. Gerard was simply the deliverer of unfriendly notes. Right at the most critical moment of the winter of 1916-17, he assured me repeatedly that he was not informed in the matter of Wilson's peace move and was without instructions.

The combination of all these features was such that it was not possible to get a perfect conception of Count v. Bernstorff's basic estimate of the situation. I will refrain from referring to the later attitude of the President as having any evidential bearing upon the correctness of my view. But it is still worthy of comment, it seems to me, that the celebrated fourteen points of President Wilson were announced in January, 1918, that is, at a time when the United States was in an active state of war with us, and how would the treaty of Versailles have looked had it been drawn up in harmony with the promises of the President?

In one of the earlier sittings, the cross-examination to which President Wilson was submitted in the middle of August of this year, in Congress, was

offered here. A translation of the material passage in this cross-examination has been read. In the course of a dramatic climax, the President solemnly and unqualifiedly announced as his conviction that America would have entered the war even if we had perpetrated no kind of hostile act against the United States or against American citizens. To put it mildly, this is a striking announcement. Every attempt has been made on the part of Germany to deny that it is entitled to any evidential weight for the purpose of reaching a skeptical judgment with regard to Wilson's policy. I will not go into it any further. President Wilson is the only one who knows what he meant by it. But, on the other hand, there are opinions in the American press entitled to great weight, which have been rendered on the matter of this cross-examination, which are in decided contradiction to the German interpretation which has been published here. I believe that I have covered herewith the entire field of causes which can be urged in favor of the decision of the authorities against waiting for President Wilson to act. However, I once more call special attention to the uncertainty, not only of the "if," but particularly of the "when" and the military significance of this "when."

I now come to the other side of the question, that is, the combination of causes which speak in favor of the alternative, the selection of which found expression in the peace proposal of the 12th of December. And since here, too, it is a question of motives, numerous and protean and intimately interwoven with the whole situation as it then existed, I will now differentiate between those more subordinate features of the Austrian suggestion and the reasons of domestic politics entertained by our allies, and between the purpose of tying the hostile governments up in negotiations and of working upon the desire for peace entertained by the hostile peoples.

First of all, the impulse from without. In the summer of 1916, Baron Burian had suggested a peace proposal on the part of the Central Powers. In my opinion, Baron Burian had some doubts about the possibility of winning the war exclusively by force of arms, but believed that the time was coming when the situation of the Danubian Monarchy, taken as a whole, would be such that it would no longer be capable of further efforts, either materially or morally. Since, up to that time, all the feelers on the question of a possibility of peace which had been put out had come into contact with nothing at all, and since, nevertheless, Baron Burian was convinced that it was absolutely essential that the willingness of the Central Powers to make peace be made a matter of public record, in order that the morale of the Danubian Monarchy might be maintained, he suggested a public peace proposal from which he himself expected good to come, even though the enemy might reject it. It is, of course, readily understood that, quite irrespective of this, the desire for the earliest possible termination of this human butchery existed at this time, even in enemy countries.

It would have been out of the question, even if I had not been able to

recognize the basis of his deduction, to set at naught entirely this conclusion of our ally. Those motives of domestic politics which were of importance for our ally had a very definite meaning for us as well; at all events, they did not constitute arguments against, but rather for, a public peace proposal.

With us in Germany, the rift between those parties who believed that the future security of our country depended upon the attainment of war aims of more or less scope looking towards annexation, and those circles which were opposed to such measures, had become constantly deeper and wider. In its extreme form, this difference led to the most bitter mutual accusations, which, in my opinion, constituted a serious menace to the resisting power of far-reaching circles of society. Time and time again, the defensive character of the war was emphasized in official announcements and in my speeches, and the passionate hatred with which the so-called annexationists pursued me could scarcely leave any doubt as to the attitude that I took in the matter. But, nevertheless, the constant reiteration of the fact that the war was not being carried on for fantastic purposes was shown to be not only practical, but necessary, from the standpoint of domestic politics. But if, nevertheless, that movement which split the people, against which I warned, and of which probably all who are in this hall are aware, succeeded in taking its course, this very fact is proof that it was at all events advisable to combat it by every obvious means.

After these introductory remarks, I come to that group of arguments which speak materially in favor of the peace proposal, namely, motives arising from foreign politics. In this connection, I admit, I must discuss general considerations which affected my policy and which, at first sight although merely apparently so, seem to go beyond the limits of the questions which are here under discussion. I was of the opinion, not only in those months which preceded the German peace proposal, but before this and after it too, that attempts should be made to bring about peace, consisting not only in attempts to sound out the attitude of the enemy governments with regard to the proposition, but in working upon the subjects of the enemy States themselves. It has been the general fate of this war that the freedom of movement of all governments, even of the Czar's, was most extraordinarily limited in the matter of the question of peace. The States, forced to urge their people on to the extreme of exertion, energy, and resolution, and to preserve intact that morale which seemed required of them from the military standpoint, have in part brought about and in part evoked forces of passion and feelings of hatred from which they could not have shaken themselves loose even if they had desired to do so. In all countries, there were established associations of war passion built up in part on political parties, upon organizations characteristic of the modern national and commercial life, and supported particularly, in the very nature of things, by those powers in the nation upon which the military interests devolved.

This machinery of war morale, for so I shall call it, restricted the freedom of movement of governments in our case just as it did in the cases of the other Powers. I thought at a very early date and, moreover, stated to His Majesty the Emperor, who had a complete understanding of this aspect of the situation, that those governments which depended upon parliaments, newspapers, and all of this kind of machinery, would find a very difficult task in making peace unless the peace feeling was dominant amongst the people themselves.

If you read the speeches which I made in the Reichstag before and after the peace proposal, then you will find that this thought of working upon the emotions of the peacefully-inclined minorities in the enemy countries occurs again and again, though of course very greatly limited by the restrictions which were imposed upon me by the military interests on the one hand, and, on the other, the majority views in the parliament and in public opinion. Rather was I, consciously, not only in words alone but in my actions as well, always on my guard not to have my freedom of movement restricted by arousing forces and passions that later could not be controlled. The hostile governments did not do that. Ladies and gentlemen, you would find many proofs of this in the files of the Imperial Chancelry and of the Foreign Office, and also proofs coming from our enemies themselves with regard to the unwelcome effects upon them of my speeches, and particularly of those launched against the reckless war spirit of our enemies. For me, the peace proposal of the 12th of December, 1916, was a link in this chain.

If you go more deeply into my motives, I ask that you will distinguish between the purpose, wherever possible, to involve the hostile governments in negotiations and start the stone rolling, and the thought that an official and public proposal on the part of the Central Powers could not help but affect deeply the desire for peace felt amongst the enemy peoples. I will give both groups of motives particular consideration.

It is readily understood that I am today no longer in the position of completely reconstructing the first group in detail. This committee has already, in the course of its proceedings, referred to the cabinet crisis which broke out in England shortly before our peace proposal, in the course of which, after many vacillations, the Asquith cabinet was supplanted by the Lloyd George cabinet. I must lay stress upon certain features of the circumstances leading up to this crisis.

As early as the 28th of September, when Lloyd George gave his Boxer interview, certain indications of divergences of opinion were noticeable. After his interview, Lloyd George was attacked by the pacifists on account of the insulting tone which he had used in connection with the neutral Powers. Lloyd George is said to have defended himself with the argument that he had good grounds to see to it that, as War Minister, he was taking

steps to prevent himself from being bothered by a premature move for peace during the conduct of the war. Grey's banquet speech in October, 1916, was generally looked upon by his adherents as a disavowal of Lloyd George. On the 27th of November, the Manchester *Guardian* stated that the rumors of a coming change in the cabinet were connected with the other rumor that Grey, Balfour and Lansdowne were in favor of a peace by negotiation. On November 30, the *Labor Leader* published the same rumor, and added the names of Runciman and MacKenna. On December 1, Lloyd George wrote the letter to Asquith which precipitated the crisis of the 6th. On December 11, Lloyd George's cabinet was formed. The 12th of December was the date set for our peace proposal as the result of mature deliberations with our allies and with the military authorities. On December 13—I found this by chance in the papers—the *Morning Post* announced that a general feeling of relief was passing over the country, due to the fact that the British cabinet crisis had come and been settled before the German peace proposal. Undoubtedly, the same impression existed in Germany in those months preceding the peace proposal which gave Lloyd George the occasion first for his Boxer interview of the 28th of September, and then for his attack upon Asquith, namely, that various opinions on the peace question were causing wrangles in the British Cabinet.

Conditions in Russia were similar, where there was considerable hesitation on the part of the cabinet, which was composed of men from the right wing, to take steps in the interest of peace on the ground of domestic politics and through fear of the revolution—a cabinet which, to be sure, exercised nothing but an extreme minimum of freedom of movement, since the parties of the center, the Liberals, and the combined organization of commerce, industry and the press in opposition to the lower classes and in connection with Entente influences, were fighting on behalf of an impassioned war theme.

I admit that the German policy might have worked for the purpose of eventually entering into negotiations with governments inclined towards peace, and this, too, by means of a peace move on the part of President Wilson, if it had really come to pass. But, aside from the uncertainty which, in spite of all, the authorities at Berlin were justified in feeling after the experiences which they had with regard to President Wilson's utterances up to that time, and aside, too, from the further uncertainty as to whether this peace move of the President's, if, indeed, it was to follow at all, would be made at a time favorable to the military situation; aside, in a word, from all these considerations, it was the second group of motives, namely, the plan for encouraging the desire for peace on the part of the enemy peoples, and particularly on the part of the lower classes, which combined to make me believe that the public peace move of the 12th of December

would be better and more to the purpose than a peace move by President Wilson, coupled with the feature of waiting for him to make it.

It is readily understood that neither I nor my coworkers were able to draw such shrewd conclusions with regard to the presumable results of this peace move and its effects, as my critics are able to draw today. The peace proposal was unanimously rejected by our enemies. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, you know that today—but we did not know it at that time. If you will read the newspapers of those days and recall to mind, so far as possible, the occurrences of those weeks in the countries of our opponents, you will inevitably see that every single one of the hostile countries, the coalition taken as a whole, and the men who were talking war had some pretty uncomfortable weeks. Mr. Briand hastened to warn the country against being poisoned by the German peace proposal, and spoke about maneuvers and traps, but it was significant that the conference of Paris socialists demanded, in a resolution which was passed by a very great majority, that this peace proposal be not thrown on the scrap heap without consideration. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs showed great haste in cutting off the possibility of any public discussion of the peace proposal by an immediate and categorical rejection, and promulgated prohibitive orders of censorship of the strictest kind. Apparently, he had no time to reach a prior understanding with his allies; for the blunt rejection on the part of Russia appears to have had a very uncomfortable effect, so far as the governments and war parties were concerned, upon the feeling of the peoples of the western Powers. Of course, it is very possible that the reply of the allies, when subjected to a pressure exerted from below, might at least have resulted in becoming tempered to the extent that it might have been possible for us to continue spinning the thread of peace, and, finally, to succeed in involving the antagonistically inclined and war-seeking governments of our opponents in negotiations. Such an answer would have given the political department of the government the opportunity to successfully combat that momentous decision which from the year 1915 was suspended above it like the sword of Damocles and which, as a matter of fact, constituted a still greater menace as the number of our U-boats increased and the technical arguments against the U-boats became fewer and fewer—in short, I say that such an answer would have put it within the power of the German Government to successfully combat, by invoking the possibilities of peace, that decision which was reached on the 9th of January and which it considered disastrous.

All these possibilities, which you can discard today because they did not come to pass, you must take into consideration here if you are to answer the questions which have been put. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, it is altogether practicable and simple to assume that what occurred was bound to occur, and that what has actually come to pass as a matter of history was formerly discernible as a probability. The peace proposal constituted the attempt

to reach the hostile peoples and, through the peoples, the governments themselves. In discussing at that time the different methods to be followed in transmitting such a peace proposal, we decided upon an immediate and unexpected announcement of the fact, in order that the Entente governments might not be in a position to keep this news a secret from their peoples by censorship measures taken in advance, or, by corrective measures taken in advance, to weaken the effect thereof. It is perfectly true that this effect—I do not deny this and I have never denied it—was detrimentally affected by the form of our peace proposal, which was due to our anxiety on the point of giving an appearance of weakness and which represented a compromise between the military and political points of view.

This peace proposal appears today in the light of a mistake as the result of its rejection by our enemies and because it did not lead to peace. In spite of this, its after effects remained long impressed upon the hostile countries, and this effect might have been strengthened, increased and maintained by quietly proceeding along the same lines, that is, by following out the tactics of a frank working-up of the desire for peace manifested by the hostile minorities.

In those days, I personally kept to the beaten path and within the limits of the possible, both in regard to external and domestic politics. It is well known that in July, 1917, for the first time in the Reichstag, a majority voted in favor of this method and, according to my recollection, in my address to the budget committee of the Reichstag, shortly before my retirement—I believe it was on July 7, 1917—I took occasion to reply to the motion resulting in the peace resolution of the Reichstag, that I had no objection to this idea *per se* for the very reason that it was simply a step in the continuation of the policy which had been carried out by me up to that time. Until July, 1917, this policy had lacked the support of a majority in parliament and of public opinion. It was my peculiar fate—and ladies and gentlemen will allow me to make this frank statement here—that my fall was brought about by a combination on the part of the parliament with the military authorities at the very moment when (raising his voice) *for the first time* it was made possible for me to defend my policy, supported by a majority of the parliament—not only to defend it by groping in the dark to oppose the forces which were attacking it from all sides, and by fighting it with half-way measures, but actually to carry it out to an effective conclusion. I have deplored—you will permit me to inject this, I am sure—the circumstances under which the Reichstag resolution of July came about—not at the acme of military successes, as was the case with our peace proposal of the 12th of December, but as the result of the sensational establishment of the fact that the U-boat war had failed in its purpose, which nearly brought about a panic and was accompanied by the publicly announced victory of the military party over the moderated policy of the Imperial Chancellor; and

all of this, too, at a time which, in spite of all, bore many indications of the possibility of negotiations. It was these surrounding conditions which did the damage, and for this reason it was that, a few days preceding my fall, I warned the budget committee: "Let us have no flabby resolution."

If it is your desire, not only on the occasion of this investigation with regard to the American mediation, but in the ordinary course of your investigations concerning the possibilities of peace, to probe not only individual occurrences, but the great interconnected whole, I venture to call your attention once more, and as the result of my own experiences, to the extraordinary fatality which rested like a weight on the external and internal history of every country.

It is open to great doubt that our peace proposal of the 12th of December would have led to a different result had it not been preceded by the British cabinet crisis of the 6th and 11th of December.

It is possible, and perhaps even probable, that that English ministry which was overthrown by Mr. Lloyd George for no other reason than that it was simply suspected of toying with the peace idea, might have been overthrown after the 12th of December by the power of that great machine of war-passion which has already been characterized as such, and that the peace proposal also would have been rejected. Count Czernin has lately informed us that, shortly before the overthrow of the Czar, the Russian Government made its first secret attempt to sound the question of peace at Vienna. It is certainly one of the characteristic fatalities of the course of the World War that this move did not take place a few weeks earlier. But the history of the Russian revolution of March, 1917, certainly suggests the thought that, even if this attempt had been undertaken at an earlier date, it would have been shattered by the machine of war-passion. For, after all, the Russian revolution of March, 1917, was a success because the bourgeois parties who were the advocates in Russia of the war idea as the result of the influence of the ideas of the Entente, not without the cooperation of the English policies, turned against the Czar, his entourage and his ministers who were suspected of entertaining inclinations in favor of peace.

I could cite further instances to show that this fatality found its source in that force which I have characterized as the machine of war-passion. I myself see the doom of German policy during the period which is under discussion, in this, that the curt rejection of the Entente to our peace proposal deprived the political branch of those arguments by virtue of which alone it could have made headway against the decision of the 9th of January in view of the conditions prevailing in Germany at that time.

To sum up, the "if" and, particularly, the "when" of Wilson's peace-move appeared to the authorities to be doubtful. In order not to go beyond the point of time essential to military necessity, and in order to reach the peoples of the Entente by a move publicly announced, they gave the preference to an openly announced peace proposal of their own.

I assume that the question which the recording secretary has characterized as a principal question, and which the Chairman has described as a fundamental question, are answered herewith.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency does not desire to go into further detail with regard to point 2?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: No, I beg to be allowed to continue; I have about half finished my statement.

The official answer of the Entente to our proposal is contained in its joint note of the 30th of December. The preceding announcements of the enemy statesmen had prepared the world for this document. It was a completely unambiguous refutation of any desire to negotiate. The tone of the note, as curt and insulting as it could possibly have been made, gave it a doubly decisive significance. I could not imagine that any authoritative opinion at that time, whether on our part or on the part of our allies, could possibly have considered that the note was a bluff, and that it could have been considered as announcing a willingness to negotiate in veiled language, under conditions which at that time the German people could have accepted. I am not going too far in stating that, after the joint note of the 30th of December was made known, the opinion that it was to be taken as indicating the absence of any willingness to reach an understanding, was general.

In the meantime, we had answered President Wilson's peace note of the 21st of December. That his suggestion met with a warm welcome was the necessary result of our desire for a negotiated peace, and was in line with the policy which had brought about our suggestions in Washington, and our own peace proposal. Likewise was it in consonance with the fundamental principle which had been agreed upon, and according to which President Wilson should only issue an appeal for peace, and was not to be a mediator on behalf of peace, when we stated that, in our opinion, a direct interchange of views between the belligerents themselves would bring the quickest results. A public and formal discussion of the peace aims of both parties to the conflict before it was established that the readiness of both sides to enter into negotiations was a fact, would have constituted a method of proceeding which, according to my conviction, would have stifled preparations for negotiation at birth. As proof of this, we may point to the enumeration by the Entente of its war aims in the reply sent to Wilson's peace note. Nothing was so adapted to the relegation of the possibility of a peace of negotiation to the remotest future, as this catalogue of annihilation and destruction. And with regard to this, Colonel House's announcement, which was reported here by Count v. Bernstorff, was amazing, to the effect that he was surprised because we, too, did not submit extravagant war demands, for, in such case, a middle ground of agreement would be reached. This may be good advice where the parties in interest negotiate, inspired with the earnest wish to reach a final agreement, and where they bargain between

themselves, but here the question was, first of all, to bring about a *bona fide* willingness to negotiate at all. We would have reached the opposite result if we had announced to all the world war aims which even approximated the standards announced by the Entente.

In those questions which have been submitted to me, we must include the inquiry as to why we did not communicate our terms confidentially to Washington. I note by the files that, around Christmas time, a communication reached us from our Ambassador, drawn up in general terms, according to which one would be inclined to lay great weight upon wholly confidential conferences preliminary to the preparation of possible negotiations. The answer which was sent out was at least partially mentioned here by the statement that the question of the communication of our peace conditions was to be handled in a dilatory fashion. That constituted a confidential instruction to the Ambassador, and not an answer to a question which was put to us. At that time, we were not asked to give our peace conditions in detail. In the telegram in question, Count v. Bernstorff designated the following general peace guarantees as essential from Wilson's point of view: disarmament on sea and land, arbitral tribunals and a peace league. We answered this point in a manner which Wilson himself has specifically recognized as satisfactory in every way. And, going further in this reply, we designated our conditions. The Ambassador was authorized to state that our actual peace terms were very moderate and, in contrast with those of the Entente, were confined to thoroughly reasonable limits; and that this was particularly the case so far as concerned Belgium, which we had no desire to annex. Details followed and, together with them, the announcement that the Alsace-Lorraine question could not be discussed by us.

What was the result of these communications? Wilson informed us that our announcement was extremely valuable from his point of view. You will see from this that there was no neglect with regard to this item. I may remark that, at that time, nothing in the nature of real mediation had been proposed by Wilson. These events took place before the 22d of January, and it was not until this date, that of the message to Congress, that the peace move was changed into a peace mediation. It was not until the very last stage before the break was reached that the definitely expressed request for a confidential statement of our peace conditions makes its appearance. You know that we gratified the wish expressed at that time, and how we did so.

I shall inject here a short remark with regard to the question of war aims in general. Before making our peace proposal of the 12th of December, we reached an understanding with our allies with regard to our mutual war aims. We informed President Wilson, confidentially, on the 29th of January of Germany's war aims which, in many respects, differed from those of Decem-

ber. As a matter of fact, the recording secretary has already emphasized that point. In files of later dates, still other and different war aims and assertions are to be found voiced by the German departments. I need to make merely passing reference to the feeling which marked the conflict in the press and between the various political parties with regard to war aims. Unless it was our desire to keep on fighting at all costs, until certain definite minimum war aims were reached, all these statements of war aims would be of little or no practical value. If this was not desired—and it was not my wish—a decision as to whether and on what basis we were willing to negotiate or might be forced to negotiate, could only be made at the moment when the possibility of entering into negotiations presented itself—and this would depend upon the general situation existing at a given time. It would then follow that, confronted with the changed conditions of this general situation, all earlier statements of war aims would be dissipated into thin air. And that was the simple and necessary consequence of the fact that we were engaged in a battle for our existence and that we were carrying on a war of coalition of such proportions as the world had as yet never seen. Opportunities for negotiation of such a nature that the German people could have accepted it, had never come into existence at the period of which we are now speaking. If, during the winter of 1916-17, our enemies had given evidence of a *bona fide* willingness to negotiate, then, on the occasion of the first indication thereof, it would have been our task to form a picture for ourselves of what appeared to be attainable, and then, for the first time, reach definite conclusions with regard to the matter. The inside understanding which took place before our peace announcement of the 12th of December could, therefore, in the main, have no further significance than this, that first of all an agreement should be reached as a result of our deliberations, in the course of which the maximum which the political department could demand would be assimilated with the least which the military situation allowed us to concede.

I return to the chronological course of events. The situation on the 9th of January, when the unrestricted U-boat war was decided upon, was as follows: The Navy confidently asserted that England would be forced to consider peace by the new harvest if the unrestricted U-boat war were commenced on the 1st of February. The 1st of February was designated as the very latest date if the U-boat war was, as a matter of fact, to be successful; if England was enabled to restock herself by the transportation of grain which was scheduled to take place in the month of February, then the possibility of making full use of this instrumentality of warfare would be gone for another year. The Supreme High Command of the Army demanded that the U-boat war be undertaken with the utmost resolution, stating it to be a mode of warfare which was imperatively demanded by the general war situation. At the same time, emphasis was laid upon the point that we could no longer answer to the troops which were fighting at the Somme if

the British ammunition transports were any longer permitted to cross the Channel without hindrance. In support of the demand made by the Supreme High Command of the Army stood a powerful portion of the people which, probably for the past year, had argued themselves into a state of honestly believing that the U-boat war was absolutely bound to bring us victory. This belief was so firmly and so deeply rooted that people worked against me, making use of underhanded methods and of the most infamous calumnies, because they knew that I did not share this belief. A preponderating portion of the press set itself to work at high pressure along this same line. Repeated requests to bridle the press had remained devoid of result because the U-boat war was desired by a majority in the Reichstag in addition to the Army and Navy. In October, 1916, the Center party stated, in the name of all its leaders, that while I alone was responsible to the Reichstag for the political decisions made with regard to the conduct of the war, my decision would, at the same time, have to be materially dependent upon the determination reached by the Supreme High Command; and that, if the decision was to the effect that the unrestricted U-boat war should be carried on, I might be certain of the support of the Reichstag. This meant that the Imperial Chancellor is officially responsible, but, in case he differs with the Supreme High Command of the Army, he can not count upon the support of the Reichstag, for the Reichstag will follow the Supreme High Command of the Army. In this way, since the conservatives and national liberals had already, from an earlier date, been unqualified and urgent supporters of the U-boat war, the parliamentary ring was drawn; the Reichstag had assumed a responsibility for the course of events from which it can now no longer escape.

It is now alleged on the part of the military branch that I enticed the Supreme High Command of the Army into the struggle concerning the U-boat war very much against its will. This statement is incorrect. The U-boat war meant the application of an instrumentality of warfare which necessarily meant a break with the United States and, possibly, complications with other Powers. It was from this fact that my competence and responsibility in the matter arose. But an instrumentality of warfare—and that was what the U-boat war was—could only be brought into operation upon the orders of those who were responsible for the operations of war, and this means the Supreme High Command. In the course of the war, the Supreme High Command took this stand very insistently. In its communication to me of the 26th of December, 1916, it was stated:

But since our points of view appear to be markedly divergent, I shall be obliged to announce, in defense of the attitude of the Supreme High Command of the Army, that your Excellency claims, it is true, the final responsibility as Imperial Chancellor, but that I [the Field Marshal] shall, very naturally, to the extent of my power and with the feeling of complete responsibility for the successful outcome of the war, insist

that those military measures be taken which I consider appropriate for that purpose.

When I arrived in Pless on the 9th of January, the decision had already been reached *de facto*. The Supreme High Command and the Admiralty Staff were, for their part, determined to carry on the U-boat war. The Emperor stood behind them.

In comparison with the spring and summer of 1916, when I had prevented the U-boat war from taking place, the situation was completely changed. At that time I was able to have my views accepted because the authority of General v. Falkenhayn was, after all, not sufficient, in view of the obviously insufficient number of U-boats (we had on March 1 only 35 large U-boats ready for action), to put through a measure which, although it was popular with those circles who were under the influence of the conservatives, the national liberals, the pan-Germans, and the Navy, was still looked upon with a skeptical eye by a majority of the Reichstag. Now, the number of the U-boats had increased to such an extent that, on account of the poor harvest the world over in the year 1916, a successful result of the U-boat war seemed, it must be admitted, more probable. The decisive factor now was that Field Marshal Hindenburg and General Ludendorff were in supreme command of the Army. The confidence in which these generals were held by all the people, from the humblest up to the highest, was absolutely unlimited, and was based upon the fact that again and again had they saved their country from destruction. The majority of the Reichstag had made it plain that they would look upon Hindenburg's vote as decisive of the question. If these two generals demanded the U-boat war as an essential method of conducting the war; if they confirmed the arguments of the Navy and declared that they were strong enough to bear all the consequences of the U-boat war, even of war with the United States, for such time as was stated by the Navy was necessary for the attainment of the success guaranteed, I would certainly have to be in the position to base my opposition on absolutely clear and conclusive grounds. Did I have such grounds?

The Admiralty Staff had supported the success which they were predicting for the U-boat war with detailed statistical calculations made by men who considered themselves authorities on national economics. Of course, these calculations could not take the place of proof, but it was equally true that the uselessness of the U-boat war could not be statistically proven. The U-boat war remained an experiment, whether we launched it or refrained from doing so. When the Supreme High Command of the Army asserted, with all the impressiveness which befitted its dignity, that a successful termination of the war demanded the U-boat war as an essential condition, and guaranteed its success as a result of the assurances of the Admiralty Staff, which had been accepted by the Supreme High Command of the Army, I had to have some tangible reasons with which to support my view that without

a U-boat war, it was possible to bring the war to an end in some way that would be acceptable to Germany. Vague and unsubstantiated arguments were bound to come to naught in the face of the conviction, backed up by the full authority of the Supreme High Command of the Army, that the military situation as a whole imperatively demanded the U-boat war, and that to delay the U-boat war was equivalent to renouncing it entirely. In the beginning of 1917 even this last deduction could no longer be dismissed with a flat denial. It would have been untenable in the spring and summer of 1916; and even if Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz now asserts that the U-boat war should have been launched in 1916, that 1917 was too late; in 1916 we did not even have approximately the necessary number of U-boats and, from the military point of view, we would in no way have been able to follow up the results of the U-boat war. At that time, the entrance of the United States into the war would have occurred at a moment when the general military situation was staggering under the tremendous burden of the failure of the attack upon Verdun, and the menace of the eastern and southeastern fronts on account of Roumania's attitude. But in 1917, thanks to the leadership of the Supreme High Command of the Army and the bravery of our troops, the situation was quite different. Roumania was prostrated. In the west, particularly through the construction of rear line positions and by strengthening the ammunition supply, a situation of much greater security had been created. And in spite of this, the time was against us. Even the most determined will to victory and the most unshaken confidence in victory could not eliminate the cold fact that, as the superior number of our enemies increased, our man-power diminished and deteriorated as the result of the blockade. A U-boat war put off until 1918 would no longer have had the time required to make it effective, even in the opinion of those most optimistically inclined. The responsibility of having prevented the use of an instrumentality of warfare which was demanded by such preeminent authorities for reasons given, and which was looked upon by the great masses of the people at home and in the trenches and by the majority of the chosen representatives of the people, as the only but also certain method of saving us from destruction--this responsibility was the tremendous and terrible burden, the enormous dead-weight which bore down upon me in those days and hours. Now, ladies and gentlemen, was I in the position on the 9th of January to state that there was prospect of a peace by negotiation within a determinable period? For determinable the period had to be, unless the launching of the U-boat war was to be put off beyond the 1st of February. I have already pointed out that I was bound to interpret the answer of the Entente to our peace proposal as an unqualified refusal, so unqualified that I did not expect any reaction from Wilson's peace note of the 21st of December. On the 9th of January, it was absolutely impossible for me to say: "No, we will not launch the U-boat war, I will guarantee that we shall enter

upon peace negotiations in the immediate future." Every word of the joint note of the Entente of the 30th of December would have closed my lips; why, I should not even have believed what I was saying myself, for I did not have and I could not have confidence in the fact that, even if President Wilson had so desired, he would have been in a position to act as our chargé d'affaires, so to speak, in forcing the Entente to the conference table and to give up their exorbitant war aims.

I could not even hold out the prospect of other possibilities of negotiation, for we by no means cover the situation when we consider Wilson's peace move. The Russian revolution had often been prophesied, and its coming was altogether possible as a result of the general situation in Russia. But the time when it was to come was not to be stated beforehand. In this situation, it was not possible for me to give the Emperor any advice on the 9th of January other than that I gave him, which was that I could not counsel him to oppose the votes of his military advisers.

I have been attacked for the reason that I did not resign on the 9th of January. So far as I was personally concerned, my resignation would have been a simple and easy solution of the situation. Had I been able to assume that, as the result of my resignation, the policy which I had championed would in any way have benefited thereby, I would never have hesitated for a moment to place my post at the Emperor's disposal. But I could not see things in this way. The telegraphic correspondence with the Supreme High Command was such as to leave me in no doubt that, from that side, the reckless launching of the U-boat war would be carried on with the most desperate determination. As soon as Lloyd George's speech of rejection of the 19th of December became known, a telegram came to the Foreign Office from General Ludendorff, in which, as the result of personal impressions gained at the west front, he expressed his conviction as being that, from now on, a U-boat war should be launched in dead earnest. A suggestion by the Foreign Office, calling attention to the serious objections that stood in the way, was met with the reply that the General did not wish to insist upon the unrestricted U-boat war before our peace move was completed; but this was followed up immediately with the very definite statement that, without the unrestricted U-boat war, we would lose the campaign. That with the end of January the time would have arrived. That the Field Marshal would no longer be responsible for the outcome of the campaign in case the government did not accede. So it was that already at this time, the 22d of December, an open threat was expressed by the Army leaders with regard to challenging the cabinet. On the following day, the 23d of December, I received a telegram signed by the Field Marshal in person:

The Entente is proceeding with the war with all the means at its disposal. There is no doubt of this, in view of the fact that we have been so roughly repulsed by every parliament. Even Wilson's efforts can

accomplish nothing unless our opponents are willing to give themselves the lie. I believe that Wilson's proposal was evoked by England. In my opinion, we are not able, for national reasons and in view of our strong military position, to go into the question at present. It would, therefore, be a dangerous omission, one not to be justified from a military standpoint, if we were to allow ourselves to be held off in any way.

The telegram referred to the morale of the Army in strong terms, which was awaiting the ruthless application of all arms. To my answer, which did not agree with him, there followed, on the 26th of December, a telegram from the Field Marshal, curt in tone, in which it was stated:

In my telegram, I had laid weight upon the necessity of early and energetic operations by sea, since, to me, they are the only means whereby we shall be enabled to bring the war to an end promptly. Your Excellency believes that you are not able as yet to support this course. However, our military situation is such as not to permit negotiations of any kind to divert from their course military measures which have finally become recognized as correct, and thereby to cripple the energetic conduct of the war.

The Field Marshal expressed his feeling of complete responsibility for this demand: this is the passage in the telegram which I have already read, which bore on the responsibility of the Field Marshal. Against the political responsibility of the Imperial Chancellor, which he did not deny, he arrayed the responsibility of the Supreme High Command of the Army. The unqualified necessity of taking certain military measures was set up against the possibilities of diplomatic negotiations and, from the point of view of the Supreme High Command of the Army, unqualifiedly set above them. Can we assume for a moment that the Supreme High Command of the Army could have been inclined by any method of persuasion to adopt a different view with regard to this situation? Our negotiations with the United States were known to the Supreme High Command. The essential point was the weight which was to be given to these negotiations. I was not in possession of pure matters of fact which could have contributed to their value in any way. Up to the 9th of January, nothing had transpired to increase the probability of bringing peace any nearer by means of diplomacy. I was wholly powerless to dissipate the deep distrust of the Supreme High Command of the Army for President Wilson, since I was not without skepticism myself on the point. But it was perfectly clear that, by deciding to launch the unrestricted U-boat war, we were making impossible any further activities on the part of the President for the purpose of bringing about peace. The U-boat war meant a break and, later, war with America. It was on this point that for years the arguments between the military and the political branch had turned. The decisive point was that the Supreme High Command of the Army from now on was absolutely determined to assume the responsibility of the risk which an American war meant and that, in this con-

nection, it was perfectly willing to let matters come to the point of a trial of strength with the political branch.

And as a practical proposition, my retirement would not have brought about the slightest change in the situation. The decision with regard to the unrestricted U-boat war was bound to stand. Even if the Emperor had desired to do so, it would not have been possible for him to retain a chancellor against the vote of Hindenburg. But a chancellor who would have assumed the formal political responsibility therefor would have been all the easier to find, because he could have entered upon the duties of his office supported by the great majority of the people and of their representatives and by the joint desire of the Army and Navy. But I had to bear the following in mind. From the moment when the unrestricted U-boat war was agreed upon, the point of the matter was no longer the fact that the Supreme High Command of the Army had obtained its wish of taking the risk of a break with the United States and that it should now be left to act as it might; on the contrary, the point now at issue was that the risk was that of the German Empire, and the stake, the weal and woe of the German people. Was I to venture to do anything which might interfere with the decisive move that was now no longer to be stopped? Was I to venture to spoil any chance?

I knew that in Vienna they would, by no manner of means, join with a light heart in this new turn which the war took. My resignation would have plunged our allies into still darker doubts and would, perhaps, have brought about fatal differences. And how was it with us? I know perfectly well that a considerable, a very substantial part of the public would have shouted with enthusiasm if, with my resignation, a detested personality had retired from the leadership of the affairs of the Empire. But I ventured to assume that I was still held in a certain amount of confidence among other circles of the people, and that, if I withdrew, this confidence would be lost to the detriment of the common cause of the nation. I felt that after my retirement the entire power, speaking both from the standpoint of external as well as domestic politics, would have inevitably gone over to what I have described as the machine of war-passion and that the final split which would take place among the people, which I had endeavored to prevent, and which I have after all prevented, would have come about and that this split was bound to lead to evil in the further pursuance of its course. It certainly was not love of power or any other personal motive which induced me to stay at my post.

It was finally our doom to have the United States enter into the war and, in spite of this, in continuing with your investigations you will come into contact with facts which indicate that, even after the entrance of the United States into the war, it was not absolutely essential that our road should necessarily lead to ruin. Even during my incumbency and toward the end of the first six months of 1917, it looked as if possibilities for negotiation

might be shaping themselves. I took them up, but was not able to follow them out beyond the period of my defeat.

But I will break away from this line of thought and return to the 9th of January. How did the then plight—and it was a plight—come about? I recall to mind, first of all, something that is well known: how, as far back as December, 1914, at a time when we only had a relatively insignificant equipment of U-boats, Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz, in the well-known interview, which was given out, by the way, without my knowledge and even without the knowledge of the Admiralty Staff, introduced the thought of the U-boat blockade to the people, and how the imagination of the people was fired to such an extent that they were no longer able to dismiss the thought, until the broadest circles of our population were in the grip of the honest conviction that the U-boat war was the key to our salvation and that he who opposed it was a traitor to the people. It was this honest belief which gave the agitation the strength that it possessed. And how this belief was sustained by the just pride in the brilliant and deathless exploits of our U-boats! And it was shared by every person in authority in the Navy.

In the memoirs of Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz, we read how he opposed all decisions, decisions that were actually taken, with regard to the U-boat war: The U-boat war of February, 1915, was wrong (in this case, the Grand Admiral is probably right); a U-boat war should have been carried out in 1916; in 1917 it was too late. And still, the name of the celebrated creator of the German fleet was able to be and remain proof against all attacks. You know that when Tirpitz resigned in the spring of 1916, it was almost as if a cry of despair was echoed from great masses of the people. And you will further remember how intrigues became mingled with honest conviction—intrigues which seem to be inseparable from all agitation brought about by demagogues; how by reference to navy circles a perfectly fantastic numerical statement of our U-boat strength was noised abroad; how America, which (as had been wholly obvious since the time of the *Lusitania* and the *Sussex*) would have declared war upon us in case we were to launch an unrestricted U-boat war, was treated as a *quantité négligeable* by papers which were in the confidence of the Navy, by taking unscrupulous advantage of popular conceptions.

Now, my repeated and confidential corrections of these fantastic figures could not be made public, and for this reason could not be brought to the realization of the people, because, otherwise, I would have disclosed to our enemies the relative weakness of our U-boat forces. Moreover—and I will only mention this in passing—the power of the military censorship was not applied for the purpose of putting an end to this agitation, but, on the contrary, was used to the end that every effort of a serious kind, exerted in opposition to the agitation in question, was silenced. The representations made for the purpose of making it appear as if all that was necessary to

bring about an energetic and successful public agitation against the U-boat propaganda was simply a sign given by the political branch, is a conclusion reached after the event. It is not based upon convictions or facts, or upon a comparison of the degrees of influence exercised by various sources of authority in those days.

So far as America is concerned, the antagonism of the people, particularly as the result of the deliveries by the United States of arms and ammunition, and on account of what may be designated as the, at least, unfriendly tone of so many of the American notes, was so strong, and this antagonism was so deep-rooted among the great political parties, that all my warnings against underestimating the United States were continually met by that charge of weakness which was such a favorite and which, throughout the course of the entire war, was encouraged by powerful influences.

This did not prevent me from taking up arms again and again against this agitation to the full extent of my power. Occasionally I was successful in obtaining a reaction against this agitation. But again and again were the old arguments presented anew in favor of the ruthless application of the U-boat weapon, arguments which took their root deep down in that invincible and unlimited confidence in the U-boat weapon which was one of the phenomena of the war. The state of hypnosis into which our people were thrown was of itself an offense against them. Whether the U-boat war could have been carried on, or whether we were to refrain from doing so, was a question fraught with such mighty consequences that it was not befitting that its solution should in any way be affected by the passions of the people. The contrary, however, was the case. The national conviction constituted an element which, when a Hindenburg announced that the U-boat war was required on the ground of military necessity, could not be ignored without leaving for all eternity, thrust deep into the soul of the people, the thorn of doubt whose sting would tell them that their future had been sacrificed by their cowardice.

And now I have come to a second general consideration. The national government, as it operated in times of peace, provided (the exaggerations of our enemies notwithstanding) for a close and uniform cooperation on the part of the administrative and political branches. Everything underwent an immediate change when we entered the war. The Army made its authority felt in the affairs of the civil authorities in a thousand different ways. In a war which called to the colors the last man capable of bearing arms, and in the course of which it was necessary to concentrate all the powers of the country in the sole effort to assist the armies in the field to win the victory, the extension of the military jurisdiction was unavoidable. And it was further unavoidable that this development should increase step by step, the longer the war continued to call upon the nation for its every last resource. "Military necessity" was the term which, to an ever-increasing extent,

was urged in justification of every act of the increasing preponderance of war department authority, until the point was reached when even demands not of a military nature were based on the argument that, unless met, the responsibility for the further conduct of the war could not be borne.

It is possible that sufficient opposition was not offered, either in time or with sufficient energy, to this military preponderance. It is possible that a man of the qualities and of the power possessed by Bismarck, even after the successes of 1866, might have been able to secure unity in the conduct of the war. In the presence of our unspeakable collapse, which was only possible because of the short-comings of all of us, I am not undertaking to shift blame from my own shoulders to those of others, but nevertheless, I must establish the facts. When Field Marshal v. Hindenburg and General Ludendorff were called to the Supreme High Command of the Army, nearly all the civilian population of Germany was convinced of the fact that the question as to how the war should be carried on and as to how it should be terminated was one whose decision rested with them alone. It was convinced that the political branch had to consult them even in matters which were not of a purely military nature. In the Reichstag—not to mention the parliament of the largest individual state—the majority of the chosen representatives of the people acceded in advance to future decisions of the Supreme High Command of the Army. How this happened, and how, particularly, it came to pass in the matter of the U-boat question, I have already pointed out. From this time on, there was no question of any further off-sets in the struggle against the authority of the Imperial Chancellor, which was quite openly carried on. There was never a time—I am naturally speaking of the period of my incumbency—where, if I had put the question of the predominance of the views of the political branch to the test, I should have been able to obtain a tenable majority. I could, of course, have loosed an internal quarrel. But at no time would it have been ended in any other way than by destroying the initial steps which had been taken or by creating a wide and ever-widening split among the people. It must be stated freely and frankly that the majority of the German people and of their legal representatives were anxious for the preponderance of power to lie with the military leadership. The results which followed are obvious.

At the same time, I will admit one thing: That a parliamentary government might, perhaps, have been intrinsically stronger. The incompleteness of our political system became our curse.

And in this connection, too, there are evidences of neglect to be found, but even here, perhaps, a collective guilt. A complete parliamentary entity can not be made by the stroke of a pen, even if the desire to do so existed. It develops along with the political development of the people. Subsequent conjectures as to how matters would have gone if, right at the beginning of the war, we had established a parliamentary cabinet, would be to no purpose.

I believe, and subsequent observation has justified the conclusion, that even in this case a dualism would not have been avoided. This dualism was, in its final analysis, attributable to the fact that the military authorities were provided with certain claims to dictatorship as the result of the attitude taken by great masses of the population, that they were the ones vested with the authority on all questions which came up for decision.

This is no place for discussing these great problems, even in passing. But we can not overlook them altogether if we are attempting to estimate correctly the course of historical events. He who seeks for the historic proof, and by this I mean the whole truth taken in its entirety and not merely truth with regard to individual occurrences, will have no complaint to make, either of those who were not able to crush the opposition which was raised, or of those who themselves raised this opposition, without taking into consideration the psychology which has resulted from the development of the German people and its political parties. I will probably be permitted to say this, I who have been called upon to bear the brunt of all the tremendous complications of the events of this World War.

If I return to the events which took place in January, I find that there is little left for me to say with regard to occurrences which took place after the 9th of January. First, the answer of the Entente to Wilson's peace note of the 18th of December. This answer asserts that there exists a sharp distinction between the Entente and ourselves; that the Entente was absolutely innocent, so far as the world was concerned, and that we alone were to blame. On this account, they protest against the possibility of our being placed upon the same footing with the Entente in negotiations which might be brought about. It was precisely those peace conditions which are now set out in the peace treaty of Versailles which were pictured in great strokes as territorial conditions absolutely essential to the establishment of peace. The Entente assumes the ground that President Wilson would accept the view that we were not parties to the issue, vested with equal rights, but that we were the accused who were to be punished; in other words, it is taken for granted that the peace mediator will be biased from the very start. I realized from this answer which the Entente made that on the 9th of January I was wrong in thinking that I was giving up in despair an existing or future willingness on behalf of the Entente to negotiate.

Wilson's attitude is characterized by his message to the Senate of the 22d of January. In connection with the questions which are here considered, three features appear to characterize this message: first, that which has already been made the subject of comment of this committee, the change from a peace move to a peace mediation. Next, no defense of us against that disqualification which the Entente desired; rather, an assertion recognizing the fact that the reply of the Entente indicated a step in the direction of peace, whereas our own reply was designated as insufficient at that time.

And finally, with reference to the peace conditions, the announcement of very elastic basic ideas, as the result proved them to be. Next, the demand of a united, independent and autonomous Poland, with a corridor leading to the sea. According to the impression received by Count Bernstorff, the significance of the Polish question had not been clearly appreciated by the American Government.

The general impression which I received with regard to the message was that, in his capacity as peace mediator, which he assumed from this time on, President Wilson would not be inclined to take a stand, on the occasion of peace negotiations, against those demands of the Entente which I have already described, and that peace negotiations entered upon on such an understanding would have led to results which would have been rejected by the German people. And this impression of mine justified my views of the 9th of January. Finally, on the 28th of January, came Count Bernstorff's dispatch, according to which President Wilson now desired to mediate in the interest of peace, and hoped that he would be able to do so; whereupon, in spite of my skeptical estimate of the situation, I attempted to put off the U-boat war. My attempt failed as the result of the unqualified announcement by the Admiralty Staff that postponement would be impossible because a great portion of the U-boats which had been sent out could no longer be reached for the purpose of communicating later orders. There remained nothing else for me to do but to communicate our peace conditions to President Wilson, and to assure him of our promise to discontinue the U-boat war as soon as the President had been successful in bringing about a situation which promised results for peace negotiations.

In order to make the attitude of the Reichstag perfectly plain, I will bring out the fact that, when the peace conditions which we had communicated to Wilson were confidentially communicated to the committee, the majority of the members of the committee expressed the desire that if, after all, we should be successful in bringing matters to the point of negotiating for peace, I should not consider myself bound by the program which had been communicated to Wilson, because it was too moderate.

I have reached the end of my statement. I ask your indulgence for my prolixity. This has been exclusively due to my desire to have the truth established, at least as concerns the main points at issue, to the extent that I am able to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: We, of course, understand that your Excellency needs a rest. Consequently, we shall adjourn the proceedings at present and continue at 4 o'clock.

(Recess from 12:16 o'clock until 4 o'clock.)

The session was reopened at 4:19 o'clock by the Chairman, Delegate Warmuth.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall continue the hearing.

In your statement, your Excellency drew a sharp distinction between "mediation" and "move," with reference to the peace activities of Wilson. We deem it necessary to be enlightened upon this point: whether by the term "mediation," you refer to the activities of a State expressed in the exercise of "good offices," to use the language of international law, or whether, on the other hand, you consider that it should merely be termed "move"; that is, whether the fact that a State succeeds in bringing the belligerent parties to a conference table (in this connection, the word "clearing house" has constantly been used) is considered by you not as an act of mediation, but merely as a move outside of the limits of a mediation. I should like to ask your Excellency to explain to us your conception of it.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: When, this morning, I made my statement with regard to the difference which I ascribed to the use of the word "peace move" as compared with the word "peace mediation," it was only for the purpose of avoiding misunderstanding such as it seemed to me has occurred in the sessions up to this time. Of course, even President Wilson's activities, which were to consist in bringing the belligerents into conference, is, in the broad sense of the term, a peace mediation—that is obvious—and it is permissible when speaking about these matters, even under these conditions, to apply the term "peace mediation." My purpose in making the distinction was only to differentiate sharply between various forms of activity. It had been emphatically stated, in the sessions held up to this time, and by Count v. Bernstorff too, that in the preliminary stages President Wilson had never claimed the right, on the occasion of concluding peace, to participate in the actual regulation of matters, especially matters of a territorial nature, between the belligerents; that he merely claimed the right to take an active part on the occasion of the study of general international questions, such as disarmament, freedom of the sea, arbitral tribunals, league of nations, etc. The part which President Wilson played underwent a change, which fact has also been established here in the course of earlier proceedings. As has already been pointed out, indications of such a change began to manifest themselves to a certain extent in the peace note of the 18th of December, 1916. This change as a fact first came clearly into the foreground in the message to the Senate of the 22d of January. If I am not mistaken, this is a point to which Professor Bonn called particular attention in the course of his interrogations, the fact that the situation changed on the 22d of January, when President Wilson, on his part, drew up very definite peace conditions, conditions essential to the establishment of any peace whatsoever. In so doing, he stated that, in the course of his peace mediation, in the course of his peace activities, if you like, he desired to take part in the regulation of these matters, and in their direction as well. A special case consisted in the united Poland, the corridor to the sea. Now, in order in the course of the

hearing and in the course of further proceedings, not to confuse the activities of President Wilson, the activities which we ascribed to him in the beginning and to which, alone, in the beginning he laid claim, with the change which was brought about by the message to Congress of the 22d of January, I suggested making use of the terms "peace move" and "peace mediation"; we could have chosen any other term, any other word. So it was simply a suggestion on my part with regard to the description of a term, so that when I make use of the term "peace move," I mean the activities which we ascribed to President Wilson, whereas the use of the term "peace mediation" in the course of my statement was for the purpose of describing activities by which the peace mediator plays his part in the actual settlement of peace conditions. That alone was the purpose of my remarks on the point.

The CHAIRMAN: Well, that answers the question.

I now refer back to the occasion of Gerard's return to the United States in September, 1916, and I shall, in connection therewith, inquire, your Excellency, as to whether, at that time, you had communicated peace conditions to Gerard which he was to submit to the proper authorities in Washington, and whether, your Excellency, Gerard was provided with instructions, also emanating from you, which were such as to make it possible for him to form a judgment, or to give him a real conception of the various currents of feeling which existed in Germany at that time.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: This is a double question. May I answer the last question first?

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: In numerous conferences with Ambassador Gerard—and he came to see me rather frequently—I repeatedly spoke of the different currents of opinion which were manifesting themselves among the German people with regard to the U-boat war. Ambassador Gerard, too, had made his own observations concerning them and, in the mutual conversations which had taken place, there was substantial agreement with regard to the views expressed. I repeatedly assured Ambassador Gerard that the pressure for the U-boat war was increasing. A blind man could have seen that it increased from the autumn of 1916, on. Ambassador Gerard expressed himself to this effect. I told him—of course, one can not repeat the exact words which are used in conversation with another diplomat; moreover, the occasion is too remote—that I agreed with the result of his observations. Among other things, Ambassador Gerard repeatedly informed me that, as the result of his observation, he could see how my personal attitude in the matter was constantly being contested more and more, and on this point too we spoke in the same way—naturally using the language of diplomatic intercourse, well, just as one speaks about such things. Naturally, I am no longer in a position to state what these individual expressions were.

The CHAIRMAN: Naturally.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: So far as the first part of the question is concerned, whether I disclosed our war aim conditions to Ambassador Gerard, so far as I know I did not disclose to him concrete war aim conditions. In the course of the conversations which I had with him on various occasions and for various reasons, it so happened that we discussed what I had said with regard to war aims in my addresses at the Reichstag. But, so far as I know, nothing more than that ever took place.

With regard to this question, I would like to make a general statement. I am in a position, and only in a position, to reveal to the committee information with regard to the motives and purposes of my actions, with regard to the forces which, according to my impressions, worked for me and supported me, and with regard to those forces which were opposed to me, just as I did this morning. But I desire to state that it is absolutely impossible for me to answer at this time isolated special questions where dates are made the means of possible identification. I should like to have the committee please bear in mind that, for nearly two years, I had not even glanced at the files until barely a week ago, when I was accorded access to them. Possibly about five days ago I was furnished with a collection of the files which, I believe, is also before the committee and, yesterday morning at 11 o'clock, with an additional collection accompanied by copies of the documents themselves, which are very interesting. Now, gentlemen, it is quite inconceivable that I should be expected to make statements here under oath including the contents of the documents in detail, the literal contents of the dispatches and their dates. Moreover, these records would be far from sufficient. I already gave you to understand this morning that I can not limit myself to the German-American relations alone in passing upon all the questions which are addressed to me in such numbers. I have endeavored to point out how it is necessary for me in this connection to pass in review the complications of the World War as a whole. If I were to speak as one having full knowledge of the contents of the records, I should be obliged to call for countless documents from the Foreign Office, and from the Imperial Chancery, in order to reconstruct the conditions under which such-and-such a dispatch went off on a single day, what special occurrences, what political deliberations, what considerations of a tactical nature—which you may be sure are items of unusual importance in the political field—were in existence and constituted the reasons why precisely such-and-such wording was used. It is quite impossible for me to reconstruct this here. I should, therefore, like to request the committee that, if they believe it necessary to ask me special questions of this kind, they draw up the questions and communicate them to me, and give me the time required, at least in so far as is possible, to obtain such information from the records as is proper and fitting when one is testifying under oath in answer to such inquiries. But I should like to repeat: During

the war, such a mass of cares and duties came crowding in upon me that today, a little less than two years after I have retired from office—yes, it is more than two years—

(Interruption: Two and a half years.)

—it is a sheer impossibility for me to give information in detail at this time. I can simply tell you, according to my best conscience, what my intentions were during the war, with regard to individual phases, and for what I strove. It is only with regard to such matters that I can give you information.

The CHAIRMAN: It is quite obvious, your Excellency, that if I ask you questions which are not merely related to the motives and the purposes which you have in mind—that if I, for instance, call attention to certain occurrences and request a definite answer from you with regard to these occurrences, it may well be the case that you are unable to give a definite answer at the present time. This will be given due consideration by us and, as far as is possible, we shall at once endeavor to refresh your memory by reading from the pertinent documents, or by going into detail with regard to the occurrence to the extent that those details are known to us. In this case, you will give us a definite answer to the particular question at a later session. To proceed in this way is a duty which is all the more incumbent upon us, since your statements here are made under oath. So that, in accordance with your request to present you with questions duly drawn up, this is the method which we will adopt.

Has the direct question which I put to you with regard to Gerard been fully answered by you?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: So far as my recollection extends, I did not disclose peace conditions to him in any other form than that which I have related to you. But, if I may be allowed to emphasize this point, I did express myself to him with regard to the general nature of the war aims for which I was striving, and which I had made the subject of speeches in the Reichstag, at the same time, to be sure, accompanied with expressions of varying points of view.

The CHAIRMAN: But in any event, your Excellency did not communicate concrete peace conditions to Gerard?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: So far as I can recollect, no.

The CHAIRMAN: I should then, your Excellency, be pleased to request that you give us information as to what extent Austria was kept informed with regard to Wilson's peace move, that is to say, whether the Supreme High Command of the Army and Austria were in constant cognizance of Wilson's peace move, to the extent that it was known to us, particularly through Count v. Bernstorff's dispatches.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I can merely state in reply to this question, that, in so far as I recollect the matter at the present moment, Austria was kept informed. It was a continual process of keeping her in-

formed; the process of keeping her informed on matters of detail was a matter to be handled by the Foreign Office and was not directly under the Chancellor. Just how this orientation was brought about, it is absolutely impossible for me to state at the present moment.

And perhaps on this very occasion I may be permitted to revert to the former question, in order to show how it is actually impossible, in answer to questions which are suddenly submitted to me, to reconstruct affairs to such an extent in my mind that I can give you complete information concerning them. Therefore, in order to avoid saying anything that is not true, I recollect a talk that I had with Ambassador Gerard. I believe, too, that he refers to it in his book—I believe so. I had said once in the Reichstag that we must take care, so far as Belgium was concerned, that it should not be used by the Entente as a battering-ram against us—I do not know exactly what word I used—

(Interruption: Bulwark.)

—as a bulwark against us. I said once in another speech: "What the guarantees are to be"—on this occasion I expressed myself negatively—"upon which we must insist in order to bring about this result, gentlemen, I can not state."

That is approximately what was said in my speech. And I can only repeat it in approximate terms; I may be mistaken. I remember that Gerard once put the question to me: "What is your personal opinion concerning the guarantees?" And that I, in reply, made some statement to him as to how guarantees could be thought out, which could stop Belgium from being put to a commercial and political use by the Entente and prevent the Entente taking advantage of the situation from a military standpoint, etc. According to my recollection, we talked this over, and, so far as I know, Mr. Gerard has made references to this conversation in his book which, according to my recollection at the time the book appeared, which was far more close in point of time to the occurrences than is now the case, was looked upon by me at the time as absolutely false. So far as I know, I issued a denial of these comments in Gerard's book. Where and how I issued the denial, how I represented the case, it is impossible for me to give information at the present moment unless I am able to collect the necessary material—I do not know whether I have it at home.

But in order not to appear unreliable and put myself in the light of making uncertain assertions here, where I am bound to make statements under oath, I should like to repeat the following: It is possible that other occurrences took place which are not now present in my mind. I assume, however, from the statements of the chairman, that the committee is ready to submit questions of that kind to me in written form, and to allow me time to search my memory or, perhaps, papers or newspapers—I have no documents at home; I took no documents with me at the time that I retired from office. I

should like to state and to lay stress upon the point that I did not do that; it is, moreover, prohibited that officials should do this, and I did not want to set a bad example. I have nothing but copies, have kept nothing but altogether accessible matters; matters of a confidential nature are not in my possession.

This is simply by way of supplement to my first statement, in order to show how really devoid of results it is to suddenly put such questions as these to me. I simply wanted to give you an evidence of my willingness to answer as I did, and to say that I would like to have the questions drawn up and to answer them in the next session.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency will be given the opportunity in the next session to supplement the statements which you have made today. I may possibly be able to refresh your memory with regard to the question of the getting into touch of Austria and Germany, in recalling to your mind that Baron Burian stated on the 5th of December that it was his desire that Wilson should not act as peace mediator. It would seem as though Burian's personal inclinations figured very prominently in this incident.

Does your Excellency know anything about this, and is it possible that this suggestion can serve to refresh your memory on the point that negotiations had already been under way with Austria with regard to these peace proposals?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: No, I state that it is entirely impossible for me to testify on this point. I would involve myself in conjectures and assumptions which would be without basis or support.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: On the 18th of October, at the Headquarters at Pless, you spoke with Baron Burian with regard to the possibility of reaching a peace. It was here that the foundation of our peace proposal of the 12th of December was agreed upon. We have before us a detailed *résumé* on this point with regard to which reference was made in our preliminary statement. In this *résumé* there is no indication that Baron Burian was informed that, in addition, the political department had already suggested the question of a peace move on the part of Wilson. Do you remember, your Excellency, whether or not Baron Burian was, from the start, when the means and methods of bringing about peace were being discussed, let into the secret that such a peace move on the part of Wilson was being suggested by us?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: No, I can not say that; I no longer remember definitely how and in what form I spoke with Burian about the matter. In view of the fact, however, that the *résumé* will be examined by me, I should like to make a statement concerning it. I have not yet seen this *résumé* in the records, but I would like to express my opinion with regard to the nature of such *résumés*. *Résumés* which I made of the files in this way were *aide-mémoires* for me, and I suggest that the committee picture to

themselves the way in which such *résumés* came to be drawn up frequently during the war. In the turmoil and flood of business, I very often made hasty memoranda concerning a matter which, in my opinion, called for it so that it should not later entirely escape my memory. But these *résumés* are not documents; they are personal *aide-mémoires* which could not claim to be absolutely reliable.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: That is the way we look at the matter here also. But the question as to whether Burian was informed that we had suggested to Wilson that a peace move be brought about is a question which is of interest to us.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I have already stated that I should be given time in which to answer this question. I would suggest that the question of the reply be taken up in one of the next sessions, when it will be possible for me, after examining the records and conversing with my coworkers—for of course I did not do everything myself—to refresh my memory to the extent of informing you how the matter occurred, according to my best knowledge thereof.

Delegate DR. COHN: Your Excellency, may I assist your memory with the following, taken from the writing of the 18th of October? It begins with these words: "Baron Burian submitted the following to me yesterday in Pless"; and now come the contents of this communication from Baron Burian. It is stated here:

We should not invoke either one or all of the neutral Powers to offer peace mediation, because such an arrangement would probably encounter an attitude on the part of the intermediary not altogether favorable to us. What we should do is to request the neutral Powers to exercise their good offices in submitting to our enemies on our account a peace proposal expressed in definite terms. This request should be directed to all neutrals, America, Spain, Switzerland, Holland, and the Scandinavian States, and should be made publicly, simultaneously, and in the same terms. He said that the Pope. . . .

Now, America is mentioned here first among the neutral States named. Now, after I have read this to you, can you recollect whether, in the course of the conversation with Baron Burian, the talk was not only concerning America, but concerning the other neutrals as well, and more or less in some such connection as this, that "this neutral Power is already engaged in the matter of a peace move or will become engaged therein"?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I can only repeat that I request to be allowed to give information in answer to the question which has just been put to me in one of the next sittings, after I have had the opportunity of talking this thing over with my collaborators, and particularly with the Secretary of State of the Foreign Office. I should like, however, to make the following remark with regard to the conversation with Baron Burian.

According to the best of my recollection, the form of our peace move of the 12th of December differed in two ways from the proposals of Baron Burian. Baron Burian had in contemplation the handing over of a peace proposal to our enemies by means of the neutral Powers; in other words, no public peace proposal, so far as I recollect. I believe, too, that this contains an indication of what was said with regard to neutrals.

Delegate DR. COHN: Yes, but why did you at that time set down Baron Burian's communication in the following terms: "This request should be directed to all neutrals and should be made publicly, simultaneously, and in the same terms"?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Why, of course it should be directed to all neutrals publicly. There is always the difference as to whether this peace proposal should be publicly communicated to the neutral Powers, or whether, as happened here with us, it was communicated in a session of the Reichstag. Early this morning, I mentioned the reasons which appeared to us to call for such public announcement of the peace proposal in a session of parliament. We wanted to prevent the Entente from stopping, by means of prohibitive censorship measures, a real announcement of the peace proposal—the proposal by means of which we intended to influence the attitude of the various peoples. I spoke about that this morning, too. And I am inclined to believe that the proposal made by Burian was somewhat trimmed down along this line.

And there is another point of difference; but it is of little interest at the present time. Originally, Baron Burian was of the opinion—I do not know whether any mention is made thereof in the *résumé*—that the peace proposal should be accompanied at the same time by a statement of our peace conditions. I did not consider that practicable. And this morning I made general comments covering the reasons therefor.

Delegate DR. COHN: Without desiring to push you at all with regard to this statement, your Excellency, I should still like to call your attention to one thing. This *résumé* contains remarks concerning similar action on the part of a certain neutral State or neutral sovereign. In this connection, is anything further called to your recollection?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I repeat my request to be allowed to answer this inquiry on the occasion of the next session.

The CHAIRMAN: In the next session we shall get definite and detailed information with regard to it, so that it is unnecessary to put any further questions along this line.

I should like now, however, to speak of a fact which may possibly have been of some value in the process of reaching your conclusion with regard to Wilson's peace move, but which was not touched upon this morning. This fact has to do with former Secretary of State Bryan. Soon after the outbreak of the war, the newspapers took occasion to report rumors of dis-

agreements between Wilson and Bryan. As a matter of fact, after about a year's time, Bryan resigned his post and Lansing took his place. Now, Bryan, so far as the press has informed us on the point, has given reasons for his resignation to the effect that Wilson's policy was no longer such as he could agree to, because it would inevitably lead to war with Germany, and that he, as an out-and-out pacifist, would not take part in this policy. Does your Excellency know anything definite with regard to this fact, and did not this circumstance influence you in your judgment of Wilson?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I beg to be allowed to answer this question, too, in the next session.

The CHAIRMAN: Very well. I now come to a question which we desire to have cleared up, and which is based on a marked discrepancy, consisting, on the one side, in the wish which you appear to have entertained to have peace actually come about by means of a mediation by Wilson, and, on the other, of the fact that you refused to grant Wilson's wish to have his peace proposal precede ours; on the contrary, you wanted to have our peace proposal precede Wilson's. I note that also your activities in relation to the neutral Powers took the form, particularly in the case of Spain, of attempting to further Wilson's peace move. On the other hand, isolated acts and expressions of yours are such as to indicate the existence of still another intention. I should like to have you make matters clear to us along this line.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: This morning I set out the advantages of a peace move by Wilson, and the advantages of a peace proposal emanating from ourselves, and weighed them one against the other. I can simply repeat what I said this morning. And, moreover, I thought that in this matter it was best to have two irons in the fire.

The CHAIRMAN: But Wilson's express wish had been announced. We had been informed by Count Bernstorff that we were not to come out with our conditions, because it was possible that this might have an unfavorable effect upon Wilson's peace move, that this was not suited to Wilson's character, and other things of this kind. Can your Excellency perhaps give us an exact answer as to why we were to consider it necessary to ignore this particular wish of v. Bernstorff's?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I beg to be allowed to answer this question at the next session.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: This morning you gave us quite a detailed characterization of Wilson, which did not speak in favor of his bringing about peace. Will you give us the reasons which induced you and the Foreign Office to suggest that a peace move be made by Wilson, in spite of these characteristics?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Because the war was such that all chances had to be given a trial, even if they were slight.

The CHAIRMAN: On November 26, a note from Secretary of State Zimmermann was sent to Washington, to the effect that we should give Wilson's peace move preference over our peace proposal, and on the 27th of November a note went to Hindenburg from your Excellency—we have the documents in our hands—to the effect that we were to come out with our peace proposal. So we have here, and coming to pass within two successive days, a contradiction between plans of action, to be sure, not contradictory acts on the part of the same person, since it is true that one note was sent by Secretary of State Zimmermann, and the other was sent by your Excellency. Is your Excellency in a position to explain this contradiction to us?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The contradiction is to be explained, in my opinion, by the answer which I have already given, that we had two irons in the fire and that we wanted to have them in the fire. Tactical motives may have caused me to consider that the one iron was the better for the one side, and the other for the purposes of the other side. These are tactical considerations which come up in politics every day.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: But on the 26th of November, Washington was definitely informed by Secretary of State Zimmermann's note that the Wilson move should be withdrawn.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I suggest that, so far as this note is concerned, which, according to what I am told, is described as having emanated from Secretary of State Zimmermann, it be made the subject of inquiries addressed to Secretary of State Zimmermann who will soon be heard. I have worked in complete accord on all points with my highly esteemed collaborator, Secretary of State Zimmermann, and I should like to emphasize this at the present moment. But should I be asked concerning the motives which inspired Secretary of State Zimmermann to draw up this dispatch? It seems to me that his statement would be more to the point.

The CHAIRMAN: Of course, the testimony of Secretary of State Zimmermann will be taken by us; but we must assume that from the beginning there was a certain general agreement with regard to such important notes. The contradiction, then, is simply explained by the fact that you desired to have two irons in the fire, as you have already stated more than once.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: If, on the 27th of November, Count Bernstorff was informed that he was desired to urge that Wilson's peace move be carried into effect, and if Wilson was not informed that on the 12th of December a peace move on our own part was to follow, was that not bound to have such an effect upon Wilson as might well be unfavorable under all of the circumstances?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I ventured this morning to state that President Wilson's peace move was in no way detrimentally affected by our peace proposal. He carried out this peace move, which is contained

in his peace note of the 18th of December, and, as a matter of fact—and this, too, I have made the subject of detailed remarks—was written in the middle of November and underwent no change until the 18th of December. I can only repeat this here.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that a fact which is absolutely known to you, Excellency, that this note which was with Wilson for a number of weeks was not altered in any shape or manner?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Count Bernstorff has lately testified that, with the exception of the one supplemental statement which the President made—I believe in the second paragraph—that his note was not to be in any way connected with our peace move, the note remained unchanged in all further particulars. That is the impression I got from his testimony. Naturally, I do not know what Wilson did.

The CHAIRMAN: No facts of any other kind are at your disposal on this point?

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I should like to know, your Excellency, why Wilson was not informed, and why some kind of arrangement was not arrived at with him, to the effect that on the 12th of December an outline of a peace program on our part would follow, so that it would have been absolutely impossible to connect the two.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The whole purpose of our peace proposal of December 12 consisted in taking people by surprise—I have also explained that—on account of the effect upon the various peoples. It was impossible for me to allow that to be known to the world beforehand. It was also agreed to by our allies that it was to be kept secret. I kept it secret here. So far as I know, even the Reichstag was very much taken by surprise on the 12th of December, and very few people knew anything about it. The point is, that I considered it necessary. I can say no more about the matter than that.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: I should like to call attention to the fact that at bottom there is no contradiction between the communication of Bernstorff's on the 26th of November and the communication of the following day. One method might be better than the other. For this reason, it might well have been desirable for the other road to be chosen. There is no contradiction.

The CHAIRMAN: It has already been explained how the disagreement as such is to be interpreted.

Delegate DR. COHN: You stated, your Excellency, that Wilson's move was not detrimentally affected by the peace proposal of the Central Powers. And now, perhaps, the following question can be put: Do you assume that some authorities in Germany desired such a detrimental effect to occur? In other words, that it was their intention to have the peace proposal appear at the time it did so that it would conflict with Wilson's move?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Let Dr. Bonn be heard on this question.

Expert DR. BONN: I believe that we must differentiate between two things: The subjective effect upon President Wilson, and the objective effect. It is perfectly conceivable to me that President Wilson, who, without the slightest doubt, was a vacillating character, was at last forced by the German peace proposal to act, if he really desired to act at all. For this reason I can perceive no difficulty, in spite of the fact that I can perfectly well understand how, on the other hand, it happened that President Wilson may have looked upon this occurrence with a certain amount of annoyance. But the other question seems to me to be much more important than this, and that is whether the effect of Wilson's peace move was not detrimentally affected by the fact that we anticipated him. So far as America is concerned, I can confirm that from my own memory. For, at the very moment when Wilson came out with his move after we had made a peace proposal, the appearance was that of a game played hand in hand with Germany. The reproach of such cooperation would have been easy to bear if it had actually existed. But it has been very emphatically shown to be the fact that this was not the case. It is beyond any question that, as the result, Wilson got the reputation in the United States of conducting a pro-German policy. For in the previous session it was already established that Gerard, even on shipboard, and Lansing, in an interview by no means ably conducted, sought to eradicate this impression. In the United States, therefore, the question is settled. I believe that the question, whether or not the possibilities of a peace move by Wilson were not diminished in the enemy countries, ought also to be put.

The CHAIRMAN: Does your Excellency wish to give any further information with regard to the point?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I would like to remind Professor Bonn that already this morning I have made a number of comments on this point, quite special comments, in fact. I ventured to state that, subjectively, President Wilson was perhaps annoyed by our peace proposal, which was announced without his knowledge, but that he permitted his annoyance to have no influence upon his course of action. I proved this to be the case. And my view in connection with the matter was that the question should really be put thus: Did our peace proposal result in having the Entente answer Wilson's peace note of the 18th of December in a form which constituted a rejection and in a different manner than it would have had, had we made no peace proposal? In other words: did our peace proposal so displease the Entente that it was for this reason that it refused to accede to the peace move which Wilson suggested? I stated that to be the fact, and I ask that this be eventually read as part of my remarks; and I added finally the following observation: "Yes, we could only give an answer in the matter if we knew what had taken place on the part of our enemies." But

the opinions which we might voice with regard thereto would remain nothing but conjectures for, as I said, I am not under the impression that the Entente is inclined to throw open its archives. I believe that I discussed this question this morning.

Delegate DR. COHN: Allow me to call your attention to the following in connection with this: The *résumé* which has already been the subject of discussion with regard to the communication of Baron Burian, is dated, I believe, October 18, 1916. On October 1, 1916, you sent a telegram to Baron v. Grünau which, so far as the material passages are concerned, reads as follows:

You will hand the following telegram to General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg and a copy thereof to Admiral v. Holtzendorff.

Admiral v. Holtzendorff has just informed me in strict confidence that, according to information which had reached him today from the General Headquarters, it was intended to begin the U-boat war around the 18th of October, in which case the boats would have to leave port on the 10th of the month with the necessary orders.

I can not conceive of a final decision being taken on this question, and of my being merely informed thereof by the Chief of the Admiralty Staff, without an agreement sanctioned by His Majesty being reached on this point with me, and I desire to make the following comments in the premises:

It is well known that we have promised the United States to carry on the U-boat war under the rules of prize. We can recede from this promise only after an impressive statement of our reasons therefor, and after providing for the lapse of a period of time in which the United States would be enabled, in theory at least, to prevent the sailings of American ships and passengers to England. At the personal command of His Majesty, Count Bernstorff has been instructed to approach President Wilson on the subject of issuing an appeal for peace. In case Wilson is prevailed upon to do this, the probable rejection of the appeal by England and her allies, in connection with our acceptance, will constitute good grounds for us to withdraw the promise which we have made to the United States, and to do so in a manner morally justifiable to the world at large, particularly justifiable in the eyes of the European neutral Powers, and will thereby have an effect upon the attitude which they will probably assume later on. Count Bernstorff has not yet replied to the proposal, which was immediately communicated to him by telegram. Before the situation is cleared up in this respect, an announcement of the U-boat war, to be followed by steps for the purpose of carrying it into execution, according to orders of His Majesty, is absolutely impossible. And before this is done, I am scarcely in a position to obtain an agreement thereto of our allies.

My question is now put in connection with the foregoing, and along the following lines: At that time the matter of a peace proposal by the Central Powers had not as yet been taken up, but there had been discussed, on the contrary, the matter of an instruction to be issued to Bernstorff at Washington, from the German side, that is, emanating from the Foreign Office or

from you, the purport of which was to take up with Wilson the issuance of an appeal for peace; and in connection therewith, even at that time (the first of October) the possibility was discussed of withdrawing from a promise previously made to the United States to carry on the U-boat war under the rules of prize, on the assumption that England and the rest of our opponents would, as seemed likely to be the case, reject the appeal, whereas it would be accepted by the German side. To repeat my question, it is to this effect: Did certain authorities entertain the intention in any event, of connecting the peace proposal with a change in tactics with regard to the U-boat war?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I do not know. I can only testify as to what my intention was. What other authorities may have desired, I do not know.

Delegate DR. COHN: What you desired, your Excellency, is made plain, I believe, from the telegram of the 1st of October, 1916 to Baron v. Grünau, the representative of the Foreign Office at the quarters of the Supreme High Command of the Army. I ask that if I misinterpret this telegram, I be corrected. It states: We can recede from this promise to carry on the U-boat war only in accordance with the law of prize "only after an impressive statement and after providing for the lapse of a period of time"; Count Bernstorff is to suggest to the President the issuance of an appeal for peace; "in case Wilson is prevailed upon to do this, the probable rejection of the appeal by England and her allies, in connection with our acceptance, will constitute good grounds for us to withdraw the promise which we have made to the United States, and to do so in a manner morally justifiable to the world at large." "Will"! Who is the person to whom the rejection of the appeal is to furnish the moral justification for the revocation of a promise, and in accordance with whose desire is this to be done?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: It seems to me that the matter is a very simple one. In the *Sussex* note we had promised to conduct the U-boat war only in accordance with the rules of prize, but we inserted in so many words the following condition: we shall be released, if our expectations—of course I can not recall to mind the exact wording—if our expectations were not fulfilled that the United States would bring England back to an observance of the Declaration of London. It was obvious that the point would have to be established by some subsequent occurrence; and that the time had now come, in our opinion, when we were released. And some such occurrence would consist in a possible rejection of Wilson's peace move or of our peace proposal by the Entente.

I should like to suggest at this point: Dr. Cohn has said that by the first of October a peace proposal on our part had not as yet been discussed. I had been turning the matter over in my mind all the summer, and trying to plan how I could carry it out.

Delegate DR. COHN: Pardon me your Excellency, I merely said that the

suggestion of Baron v. Burian had as yet not taken place. In this connection no reference has been made to your intentions with regard to peace or to what your plans may have been with regard to a peace proposal. But let me call your attention to this fact: the revocation of the promise to the United States as announced in the *Sussex* note was at that time, just as you have stated, conditioned upon whether the United States would be unsuccessful in its attempt to bring England back to our conception of the laws governing war at sea. But you will note that here quite a different reason is alleged as a ground for the revocation of the promise, namely, the rejection of the appeal for peace. According to my belief, these two things have, intrinsically, absolutely nothing in common. They can, then, be brought into connection with one another only in case nothing more nor less than the very intention was entertained to bring about an appeal for peace for the purpose of making the rejection serve the purpose of bringing some war aim into existence, or of furthering some war aim.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I shall venture to state that I consider that a false conclusion. After we took the well-known stand in the *Sussex* note, which I have just described, it was necessary for some sort of an incident to occur which would enable us to take the stand with the United States to the effect that "the matter is now closed, we now have a free hand." And such an incident—it might have been other incidents—was to be found in the expected rejection of a peace proposal, or in the rejection of an appeal for peace made by Wilson. This telegram of the 1st of October from myself to Mr. v. Grünau, was moreover—I should like to state this fact which will be revealed by the files—occasioned by a false communication by the Admiralty Staff or by a communication which was falsely construed, to the effect that the U-boat war was to start on the 18th of October. So far as I know, the later records will also show that there was a misunderstanding.

The CHAIRMAN: This appears also from the introduction.

Delegate DR. HOETZSCH: Basing his answer upon a remark of Colonel House, Count Bernstorff replied in very definite terms, in response to the question concerning the effect of the German peace proposal in the United States, that while this peace proposal did not operate as a thwarting—that was the expression which the recorder used—of the American peace move, it certainly made it more difficult. Count v. Bernstorff stated, further, that the American Government had been disappointed in having the matter thus taken out of its hands. From the answer which your Excellency has made to Professor Bonn, I believe that I may venture to draw the conclusion that your Excellency does not share this opinion of Count Bernstorff.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I already stated this morning that, if President Wilson was annoyed by our peace proposal—and he was; I know that he was annoyed—this fact did not stop him from carrying out his move.

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: So that your Excellency does not consider that Count Bernstorff's opinion on this point was correct?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: So far as I know, Count Bernstorff stated that it was his opinion that his peace move had been made more difficult for President Wilson. Is it not a fact that that was the impression which Count v. Bernstorff had? The facts are these: that our peace proposal went out on the 12th of December, and that President Wilson, on December 18, issued his appeal for peace in a form which he had already selected in the middle of November and before the peace proposal.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I should like to be informed upon one more point. On November 25, Bernstorff telegraphed that Wilson's peace move was imminent or was to be expected very shortly, but only on the condition that, up to that time, we should have as little to say as possible on the question of peace mediation. This communication, which was officially presented by Colonel House, was not met with the reply: "We propose, nevertheless, to discuss peace, namely, in the form of our proposal." Is it not possible that this might have even gone so far as to give Wilson the impression of a rebuff?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: It is possible that it may have given President Wilson the impression of a rebuff. I revert to what I am saying now, I believe, for the fifth time, that, in spite of it all, President Wilson carried out his peace move in the way that he had already prepared to carry it out in the middle of November.

The CHAIRMAN: This question, too, seems to me to have been answered.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: I merely wanted to state that, in accordance with my recollection, Count Bernstorff stated that the difficulty consisted in this, that, by so doing, an appearance of weakness on the part of Germany had been given, and that it was on this account that the proposal for mediation on Wilson's part had been made more difficult with the Powers, because they saw that they could carry on the war successfully. It was in this way that the difficulties, according to Count Bernstorff's statement, came into being.

Expert DR. BONN: I believe that we may put aside as answered the question as to what effect the German peace proposal had upon Wilson. All those to whom we have put the question and who have answered it are in agreement on the point, but to me that does not seem to be the real point at issue. The point is this: In connection with this peace proposal, surely something was expected to result therefrom; of that there is not the slightest doubt—it is not even a matter of conjecture, and to show this we need not refer to our files; a glance at the press of the allied countries is sufficient; should not the question be put thus: The fact that Wilson went limping along after a peace move made by Germany gave the impression that his move was one that went hand in hand with it. In this way, if I may be allowed to use plain language, he appeared, both in the United States and in

the eyes of our enemies, to be acting as an agent for Germany. And in this way it was made possible for the great machine of hatred, of which his Excellency spoke this morning, to be again set in motion in quite a different way from what otherwise would have been the case. I believe that this is the fundamental point here—not Wilson's state of mind, which, on other occasions, naturally played an important part.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: If I may be allowed a remark, it is certain that Professor Bonn is right in many respects. I have also called attention to the fact that, in my opinion too, the question to be asked is, whether the rejection with which the Entente met Wilson's appeal for peace is to be taken as the result of our peace proposal, and in connection with a judgment of Wilson's peace move, in its relation thereto. That President Wilson may possibly have met with difficulties in the United States as the result of people saying to him: "Why, you are hobbling after the Germans" may well be true. For the rest, I believe that in all the countries of the Entente the inclination of the United States in favor of the Entente—the quite considerable inclination; I express myself with all caution—was so well known that it is pretty difficult to assume that President Wilson's supposed friendship for Germany could have had any serious results.

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: I agree with Professor Bonn. The question as to the effect upon President Wilson's mind has been answered. But the question has not been answered as to whether the American move, which was set in motion by the instructions of your Excellency, was cramped in its effect as the result of the German peace proposal, if not actually crippled; in other words, whether, speaking practically, it would not have been better to have let the American-German plans run their course before Germany came out with its effort. This is a question which, it appears to me, has not as yet been answered.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I believe that I may venture to refer to my statements of this morning. This morning, I analyzed the reasons which were in favor of our peace proposal. I stated, to recapitulate briefly, that, as the result of my estimate of President Wilson's policy and state of mind, I was left with no assurance that he would actually issue an appeal for peace, and, again, I had no assurance as to when he would do so. This question of when, however, was of vital importance; for an effective step in the direction of peace can only be made at the time when military successes are at their climax. If we were to observe this principle, it was we who would have to determine whether military successes were at their climax. In view of President Wilson's uncertainty, we could not depend upon the fact that he would avail himself of the point when our military superiority was reached for proceeding at once with his peace move. That he would not have selected the beginning of December, when we had captured Czernawoda and Bucharest, would seem to me to follow from Colonel

House's communication that he would have considered a peace proposal by us as an indication of weakness. Now then, if America believed that we were so weak at that time, President Wilson, on his part, would not have issued an appeal for peace, for he certainly must have been aware of the fact that the Entente would not have agreed to an appeal for peace if it believed that we were in a very bad situation.

Moreover, I pointed out this morning those reasons of domestic and external policy which persuaded me that a proposal coming from us would be helpful, and not only helpful but in some respects essential; and that, if I were to rely upon President Wilson with his vacillations—if I may be allowed so to express myself—I should not have known whether the time of our military superiority would be passed over or not, and the possibility of a peace move be adjourned *ad kalendas Graecas*, a circumstance which, for the reasons I have stated, I should have considered detrimental.

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: If I may be allowed to sum this up in a few words, your Excellency's stand is this: That, in December, 1916, you were, to a certain extent in a forced situation which was determined both by the condition of domestic politics, and by the fact that Germany could not afford not to avail herself of the advantage of having reached a climax from the standpoint of military successes. In this forced situation, your Excellency considered it more advisable to issue the general peace proposal, and were willing to reckon with the fact that the move which had been initiated on the American side might be hampered; in other words, you estimated that as being of but secondary importance in its potential effect. Have I stated the matter correctly?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: No, you have not stated it correctly. It seems to me we are simply traveling around in circles of conjecture. Assume now that President Wilson would have issued his peace move in the last days of November, whereupon I will assume that we should have relinquished all claim to our peace proposal. I would have accepted as part of the bargain that we would have lost those good features of our own peace proposal, of which I spoke early this morning, and would also, to a certain extent, have been pleased to have obtained the advantage of the good features of a peace appeal by Wilson. For this reason, I, acting through Count v. Bernstorff, continued to urge the continuation of the peace move by Wilson, although we had made up our minds to make a peace move ourselves, because I did not know on what day President Wilson would announce that he was ready to do this, or the form which it would take. Every new political incident, such as a peace move on the part of President Wilson, reconstructs the political field anew by fitting together new fractions of the whole hitherto unused. I consider that it is utterly useless to attempt to reconstruct the picture now, after the event.

Delegate KATZENSTEIN: Your Excellency, you told us today why you

felt that it would be inadvisable to make the peace conditions known. Now, the withholding of the German peace conditions—

The CHAIRMAN: That is a matter, Mr. Delegate Katzenstein, which we will not touch upon until later.

Expert DR. BONN: If my recollection with regard to what Count v. Bernstorff said is correct, there was in reality no difference between the American conception and the German conception that a peace mediation or—I will choose my terms with care—a peace move, could only be fruitful at a time when we were in a favorable military situation. If my recollection is correct, Colonel House stated this to Count v. Bernstorff in so many words. The remark made by Count v. Bernstorff, to the effect that our peace proposal would be looked upon by the Allies as a sign of weakness, should, it seems to me, be thus construed: At the moment when the German Government came out with a peace proposal it became far less likely that the American Government would meet with success; for the Allies would say: "The Germans are in a terrible hurry." Now, there is no question about it but that a peace move, whether a German or an American peace move, would have to depend upon a favorable military situation in order to bear fruit. On this point there will probably be no difference of opinion. But a favorable military situation is, after all, not a matter of three or four days. It existed after the Roumanian campaign. There is no question of doubt, after all that we have seen, that President Wilson must be considered a vacillator. This, then, was the question which presented itself: was there no way of shaking him out of his vacillating mood without jeopardizing his peace move? Would it have been—and this is the question which I would like to put to his Excellency—would it have been impossible to send a warning to Washington more or less as follows: "If something is not done soon, we shall have to try other methods"?

That is the one point. The other point which was touched upon by Professor Hoetzsch seems to me to be this. I am perfectly well aware of the fact that the question as to which was the better of the two, an American peace move or a peace proposal of our own, was duly considered. But here, too, it seems to me, the fact was that no real decision was reached, but that, if I may use a familiar mode of speech, it was attempted to handle the matter along the lines of the proverb, "It is well to have two strings to your bow." I should like to be informed with regard to these two points.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I have already stated with regard to the second point that it was our purpose to have two irons in the fire, and I shall adhere to this. The choice was to depend on whether one took a better temper than the other.

In the second place, Dr. Bonn expressed the opinion that the reaching of a military climax was not the question of a short time. I would request you to look back over the history of our war and recall to mind how, through the

offensives which we were called upon to meet on the West front the war picture, or at least the fortunes of war, changed, in any event, in the opinion of our enemies, within a comparatively short space of time.

In the third place I may add that, if we are now discussing which alternative was preferable, I will admit that our peace proposal had certain disadvantages when compared to the American peace move; but it also had certain advantages when compared to the American peace move. The really deciding feature was, however, what Professor Bonn designated it to be, that Wilson was a vacillating character, a great vacillator. I could not count upon what he was going to do or when he was going to do it, as constituting reliable factors. I do not think that I should designate as exactly shrewd, from the political standpoint, Professor Bonn's suggestion that I might have had Wilson informed that, if he did not hurry, we ourselves would decide to act differently.

Delegate DR. COHN: If I recollect correctly, your Excellency, you stated today that your doubts of Wilson's sincere desire to bring about a conclusion of peace had been increased by the fact that the American Ambassador stated, when you asked him, that he knew nothing about Wilson's intentions. Now, to my knowledge, the American Ambassador was in the United States from about the middle of September until around Christmas. To what point of time does your statement refer?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: It was exactly this point which amazed me. When Gerard returned from America, I had expected that he was going to tell me what it was, exactly, that Wilson proposed to do further. It was during the next two or three days—as a matter of fact, it was before January 9—that he gave me his answer accompanied by a certain embarrassment: "I have no instructions from the United States, I do not really know what was going on." He told me in a general way, just as he did on the occasion of the dinner to which there has been such frequent reference, that the relations were very good; but he further told me, during the first half of January, and his statement was more or less in the nature of a complaint: "I do not know what the matter is in Washington; I receive no telegrams at all."

Delegate GÖTHEIN: I should like to ask whether this absence of instructions on the part of Ambassador Gerard was not to be attributed to the fact that, in the meantime America had been confronted with a new situation, because we ourselves had come out with our peace proposal.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I have simply the following general impression on this point—and I submitted my statements thereon this morning early. Our means of communication with the United States were extremely poor; this I called attention to separately. The impression which I received was that, if Mr. Wilson was so taken up with the idea of pushing his peace move and of bringing the war to an end, he might well have so

instructed his ambassador in Berlin, with whom he could communicate quite easily, so that some of the necessary negotiations might have taken place in Berlin and not in Washington; and from the very fact that this did not occur, I drew further conclusions which nourished my feeling of skepticism.

Delegate DR. COHN: Your Excellency, do I understand you correctly; this skepticism was an incident which came into existence after those experiences of the 22d of December and later dates, but not, however, from the first?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I beg to call attention to the fact that this morning I gave a good number of reasons which brought about my feeling of skepticism.

Delegate DR. COHN: Your Excellency, you stated today that it had been impracticable to put off the German peace proposal any longer. On the other hand, the United States, through Count v. Bernstorff, held out the prospect of the peace move being taken at the end of the year, at the very latest. Was there any particular reason for Germany not to continue to wait during the period running from the 12th of December until the 31st of December, and if there was, what was it?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: On the 12th of December, we found that we had reached a climax so far as military operations were concerned. I have already set out the reasons which induced me to have the peace proposal made. It was my purpose to meet the requirements of this situation of military superiority. If I had put it off until the 31st of December, who knows what would have happened in the meantime or if it was really Wilson's intention to act on the 31st of December or before? Oh, I know this was Count Bernstorff's impression, but I have ventured to do some analyzing, and it was very interesting from my point of view, that Dr. Bonn confirmed my impression that Wilson was a great vacillator. How much could have happened meanwhile!

Delegate DR. COHN: You said today, your Excellency, that the form of the peace proposal was based upon a compromise, with the terms of which you were not wholly agreed. What were the opposing views which had to be reconciled in the drawing up of the compromise?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I believe that General Ludendorff has expressed himself with regard to this question in his book. He made the point that he was called to be present at the drawing up of the compromise, and had emphasized the fact—I can not remember the exact terms—that stress should be laid in our peace proposal upon the victorious position in which we found ourselves. I believe that that was done in a somewhat too pronounced way.

Delegate DR. COHN: Did this have reference to the army order which was issued at the same time: "In the consciousness of victory"?

(Interruption: No, to the note itself!)

The CHAIRMAN: We have now come to quite a different question. The committee would like, your Excellency, to obtain a statement from you as to what possibilities were at the disposal of the government with regard to public enlightenment, as to what the political branch of the government desired to accomplish. The purpose of the German proposal of the 12th of December was to tone down the desire for war. Now, were steps toward public enlightenment taken by those in supreme control of governmental affairs, steps which actually were such as to tone down the desire for war? As a matter of fact, did such possibilities exist, and to what extent were they taken advantage of? To what extent, for instance, did the censorship authorities bestir themselves in order not to work at cross purposes with the aims of the government?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I did not quite understand the question. Do you mean, what was it that we did, so far as domestic public opinion was concerned?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, so far as domestic public opinion was concerned, in order to make it as harmonious as possible with the aims and purposes of the government.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: With this purpose in view, I made my Reichstag speech at the time the peace proposal was introduced, and naturally took steps, as far as was possible to do so, to see that the press hewed into the same notch, but the committee is well aware that even at that time, nay, from still earlier times, the greater part of the press was not very strongly inclined to develop the themes which I had announced.

The CHAIRMAN: So that the most effective results were brought about by you, your Excellency, by speeches made by you in parliament and speeches which, as is naturally understood, were subsequently further commented upon and further distributed by means of the press; for the influence which the highest governmental branch exerted upon the press, was small at best, as you have just stated.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I believe that I have been misunderstood. It goes without saying that the machine which existed for the purpose of supporting my policy, and also to encourage the lines of thought which I expressed in my speech, was set in motion. As to particulars, I, of course, as Imperial Chancellor, had no knowledge.

Delegate GOTHEIN: On the 5th of February, 1916, your Excellency sent a telegram to General v. Falkenhayn, at that time Chief of the Supreme High Command of the Army, in which you complained that the censorship authorities gave the press free scope, particularly the *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* and the *Kreuzzeitung*, papers which, in the rôle of instigators, called for an early resumption of the U-boat war under more rigorous circumstances than before, and demanded this, and, in utter

ignorance of the dangers involved in a breaking off of relations, were thwarting, by these methods, the attempt to bring about a settlement of the *Lusitania* controversy; and that your Excellency requested at the same time that instructions should be issued to those in authority in the censorship bureau to have an end put to such methods.

While General v. Falkenhayn's answer to this telegram is, in the main, in agreement therewith, he is, however, unable to conclude that the attitude of these papers is in any way dangerous, and is of the opinion that it is very objectionable to put a stop to any one party and its views. From which it necessarily appears that there was a clear-cut issue between your Excellency in person and the military branch with regard to the censorship. Up to the present time, I have not been able to examine the other documents. I wanted to ask whether there were, on this point, frequent complaints on the part of the government with regard to the administration of the censorship.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I ventured to express myself this morning, in that part of my statement in which I spoke of the agitation with regard to the U-boat war, to the effect that I had repeatedly taken such steps as lay within my power to put down this agitation. That was done in the case of this telegram, and it took the form of oral discussions when I met at Headquarters with General Falkenhayn and other persons. It happened repeatedly. I have gone into details with regard to the reasons why, in spite of all, this agitation constantly manifested itself in continuous recrudescence, and, as I should like to repeat here, the most powerful of those reasons consisted, in my opinion, in the fact that broad circles of the German people were honestly convinced that the U-boat war would save us, and was the only means of our salvation. That was the most powerful reason; for no censorship can kill off such a conviction without bringing about the most disastrous results. So, with regard to this particular telegram, I have no further information to give you. I can only repeat once more that I constantly took steps against this form of propaganda, that I did so with the censorship authorities and explained my reasons to those in control, and that, nevertheless, for the reasons which I have stated, this propaganda never ceased to revive.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Your Excellency spoke this morning of the machine for war morale which constituted an equal menace to all the countries. If we had desired to overcome this machine, it would have been necessary to agree upon a platform which would have been acceptable to all the peoples who were involved in the war. Such a platform would, in a certain sense, be found in the idea of a league of nations and, if I recollect correctly, your Excellency, in November, 1916, in an address to the budget committee of the Reichstag, spoke in favor of the thought of a league which should assure the peace of the world. Is your Excellency aware of the fact that, after you yourself had expressed this view, all publications in Germany

which had to do with these ideas, even when considering them from a purely scientific standpoint, were suppressed under the censorship rules? Was your Excellency aware of the fact that those who conceived such ideas were forbidden, under penalty of arrest and imprisonment, to express themselves with regard to these thoughts, even in a purely theoretical form, and that these military measures were still continued in force even when the Reichstag, in its resolution of July, 1917, demanded international guarantees of law?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I must state that it is not quite clear to me how this question is connected with the point at issue, Wilson's peace move.

The CHAIRMAN: Probably Professor Schücking means that the desire for peace in the country would have received an impulse and that, again, for this reason, our own peace move, in the form in which it was prepared by us and was announced on the 12th of December, would have been materially supported thereby. I assume that this was the motive lying at the back of these statements of Professor Schücking.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Certainly.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: For the rest, I am not informed at this time with regard to the details of the matter which Professor Schücking has referred to. And I do not believe that it would be possible for me to get any more information from the files themselves. I remember that; I believe that it was Professor Quidde who was subjected to certain hardships—

(Interruption: Professor Schücking too!)

—I believe that he wrote me about it. I believe that I gave him an interview myself. I believe that he was also received by Secretary of State Zimmermann. This is the way it strikes me; but I do not know it as a fact. I do know that these persecutions, which may have taken place at that time, were not in accordance with my desire. So far as I know, I took some steps in Professor Quidde's case. But it is naturally impossible for me to give any information here concerning details.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I would like to ask once more, whether it was absolutely impossible for the political branch to issue orders or instructions to the censorship direct, or whether it was necessary for those authorities to take the matter up first with the Supreme High Command of the Army.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: That, too, is a question, one inquiring as to the details of the organization at that time, which I can not answer under oath today. I should like to have you bear in mind that whatever of this nature occurred later was brought to my attention by my colleagues, and was eventually submitted for my signature, but that, after all, these were questions which I myself could not work out, involved as I was with all the worries of the World War. Therefore, it is not possible for me at the moment to give any more definite information on this point.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The really important thing seems to me to be this: During the time that you were engaged in the Wilson peace move, neither the press nor the Reichstag was, so far as I can learn from the files, informed of your relations with regard to Wilson. So it naturally happened that your move was constantly being interfered with by public opinion which had no information on the subject. For this reason, it is essential to know what you did in order to bring to the attention of the press and the Reichstag what you had in mind.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I believe that that, too, was a question—it is here put in most pregnant form—but it is a general political question which can only be answered by general statements. We have had to face, I believe, even from the beginning of the war, an antagonism directed against the United States both by the political parties and by public opinion. In the course of confidential conversations with representatives of the Reichstag, I repeatedly pointed out the dangers which were involved in a further growth of this antagonism against the United States. I also gave instructions, the purpose of which was to have a quieting effect upon the press in this connection. But I should like to call to your attention—and this is, moreover, a point to which I have already made reference today—that all my efforts to bring it about that this antagonism of the public toward America, which was perfectly comprehensible to me, should, nevertheless, be confined within certain limits invariably met with the reproach of being an indication of weakness. Those who are present here certainly know how, as a result of political activities—once in the Prussian house of deputies—I was charged with the fact that my failure to proceed sharply and energetically against the United States was to be ascribed to timidity. These were general currents of feeling among the people, against which I had to strive; but to ask me now for details as to what I did to make headway against these currents—it seems to me that that is not—that that is difficult to answer.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: There is, I think, no doubt that even at that time you were pessimistic or anxious about the outcome of the war. You stated this morning that General Ludendorff himself declared that the war could not be won without the U-boat war. Was it not possible for you, above all things, to win over the press and the Reichstag to your policy by giving them full information at all hazards, by militant methods, and, particularly in the case of the Reichstag, if you had no majority, to make one for yourself?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I should like, in the first place, to deny the statement of the recording secretary, made in the course of characterizing my attitude, to the effect that I was a pessimist. I was not a pessimist. I should like to establish this fact with emphasis at this time. I would not care to have my presumed attitude to be considered as having

been established by the assertions of the recording secretary made in this way. From the very first day of the war, I took a serious view with regard to our situation, a serious, a very serious view. But seriousness and pessimism are two quite distinct things.

And now I am requested to answer the question, why I did not explain the full seriousness of the situation to the people. Why, is it by any chance not known that I had to put up with the very sharpest opposition coming from political parties, and from public opinion itself, precisely because they said about me: "He considers that our situation is serious"? (Raising his voice.) That is the precise point which was made out against me, that I did look upon the situation as serious. I would like to remind those gentlemen of the Reichstag with whom I spoke confidentially about the matter, that I never painted the picture in bright colors for them—never. I know, for instance, that Delegate Bassermann, now deceased, made the following complaint: "When I have gone personally to see the Imperial Chancellor, I have gotten a very serious view of things there." So that, with regard to the situation, with regard to the seriousness of the condition in which we found ourselves, with regard to the fact that I considered matters serious, I never made a secret of this attitude in confidential talks. If I had played the part of a pessimist in the Reichstag—indulged in that pessimism of which the recording secretary has spoken (striking the table), we would have collapsed at once, gentlemen. At that time, I kept people's courage up to a high pitch, as it was my duty to do. That was my duty with regard to the people, and it was my duty with regard to the Army. And at the same time—I would like to have my speeches reexamined on this point—although I spoke in terms of pride and self-reliance, I never held up golden visions to the view of the German people.

Delegate DR. COHN: I should like to make the following concrete inquiries with regard to the influencing of the press.

Your Excellency is well aware of the establishment of the press conferences. According to my knowledge, they were first administered by Major Deutelmöser, a major on the Grand General Staff. Later, the administration was taken over by another gentleman, also an officer. But Major Deutelmöser was called away from the press conference and given a position in the Foreign Office, that is, that of chief of the press division or of the political division. If, now, those differences between the political and military departments existed to which you have again made special reference today, how did it happen that a man who was bound, necessarily and primarily, to be influenced by his own military view-point and who would be bound to approach the press in the press conferences from this standpoint, was called in to the Foreign Office by the civil department of the government, although he could represent nothing other than the military points of view?

The CHAIRMAN: But this has nothing to do with the issue.

Delegate DR. COHN: On the contrary, Mr. Chairman, I believe that this is essential here as a concrete example of the conflict between the military and civil authorities, of which Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg has complained, and which is to be considered in close connection with the assertions and information given to us by him. As indicative of the necessity of this inquiry, and of its relevancy to the issue, I should like to make this further statement to the Chairman. Up to the present time, we must assume from the statements of Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg that he believed that, up to a certain point, it was necessary to accept a condition of affairs inevitably brought into existence by the war, not excepting the preponderant participation of the military arm in matters of governmental policy. In reply, I should like to ask definitely why it was that the then Imperial Chancellor deliberately allowed the influence of the military authorities upon the Foreign Office and publicity as well to be increased by accepting in the Foreign Office a man of this past experience and of this point of view.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The influence of the military branch was not increased by Mr. Deutelmöser's assignment, and I considered Mr. Deutelmöser to be an official qualified for the post which he was called upon to fill. I agreed to his assignment at the suggestion of the Foreign Office. I believe it is not necessary for me to state, when giving my present testimony, the reasons which induced me to take this step.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: Your Excellency stated that, at that time, there was a general strong feeling against America and Wilson, and that this universal attitude against the United States constituted another reason for issuing our peace proposal on the 12th, before a move by Wilson.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: No, I did not say that.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: The Supreme High Command of the Army was informed that Wilson was being approached on the question of a peace move by the political branch. This was going on in the fall of that year. At the same time, this hatred of America and of Wilson was, from day to day, being injected into the people by the Supreme High Command of the Army and by their publicity machine. Were any steps taken by the political branch, addressed to the Supreme High Command of the Army, to call to their particular attention that the political move itself, which was intended to bring Wilson to the point of a peace move, was being thwarted by these measures, or, at least, was being most seriously menaced by them? Was the Supreme High Command of the Army not requested to use its publicity machine for the purpose of putting a stop to this thwarting of the contemplated move by putting public opinion on the wrong track, as was being done by means of the press conferences, and to give them a correct view of the situation, in order to lay the foundation for the success of Wilson's move?

Secondly: Did your Excellency not consider the question, whether or not it would have been possible at that time to inform the party leaders, or at least the leaders of those parties which he had reason to assume were inclined to follow his policy of reaching a peace of understanding, at least in a most confidential way, that such a move with Wilson was being prepared—this for the purpose of bringing public opinion back into the proper channels?

The CHAIRMAN: If you please, your Excellency!

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The antagonism against the United States was not a reason for our peace proposal. I believe that Mr. David has not clearly understood my comments in this connection. To the best of my recollection, I did not assign the antagonism of the German people as a reason for making our own peace proposal.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: An accessory reason, an accessory motive!

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I believe that I have not even represented it as a motive today, I believe not.

That the Supreme High Command was informed with regard to our steps in the United States, goes without saying. Moreover, this appears also in the telegrams which I read today.

The question finally put was, whether I did not believe that, by means of confidential information communicated, namely, to the members of those parties in the Reichstag who were inclined to support my policies, whether by means of taking them into my confidence, I could have increased the potency of that peace move of President Wilson's which we were expecting. I would like to venture the statement that it was not necessary for the German Government to increase the potency of Wilson's peace move. In the course of replying to Wilson's peace note, we thanked him in warm terms, and accepted his appeal for peace without letting ourselves be affected by the antagonism which prevailed among the German people.

Delegate GOTHEIN: According to the recent statement of Ambassador Count Bernstorff, your Excellency said to him, after his return from the United States, that if you, instead of making use of the U-boat weapon as a last resort, had attempted to obtain a peace negotiated by the United States, you would not have received the support of the Reichstag in the process of the endeavor, or, at best, that you would have been supported only by the Social Democratic Party in the Reichstag. Was your Excellency not aware of the fact that the progressive People's Party which, I freely admit, jointly with the Social Democratic Party, would not have constituted a majority, was fighting the unrestricted U-boat war for the very reason that it would lead to a war with the United States?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: This last-mentioned point was certainly well known to me, and as concerns my conversation with Count Bernstorff upon his return, I desire to state the following: I have at present

no further recollection of what I stated to Count Bernstorff in detail. Count Bernstorff has testified as to what I said to him, and his testimony is undoubtedly correct as to what I did say. It was my duty—and this is a thought which I touched upon this morning—after the unrestricted U-boat war was finally determined upon, I was under the obligation of not raising a doubt in any way in the minds of any of those with whom I came into contact, with regard to the efficiency of the U-boat war; it was my duty to state, at this stage, that we would get some results from it. And for this reason, in my talk with Count Bernstorff, I did not open my innermost thoughts to him—there was no necessity for so doing—but I gave him those details which were in favor of the U-boat war.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Let me come back to the question which I have already put to you and which, in my opinion, has not been quite fully answered. You knew that General Ludendorff had stated that he had no intention to push the Imperial Government into the unrestricted U-boat war before our peace move had been completed; that he must again state, however, that his view was that we would lose the campaign if we did not push the unrestricted U-boat war. That his impressions on the west front had confirmed him in this belief, and that the sinking of armed merchant steamers would not be sufficient. Now then, Ludendorff looks upon the military situation as hopeless if the unrestricted U-boat war is not launched. You stated this morning that you recognized the danger of the unrestricted U-boat war and that you did not desire it. The campaign could not be won; the means of war which were still available were not, in your opinion, such as would lead to success. Was it not your task, then, to bring about a limitation in the matter of war aims, at least, by making use of this information? Did not that constitute a means of working successfully against the "war machine"? Was it not essential, under these conditions, to do something decisive, on the political side?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I can not quite see the connection of this question. I myself read this morning the dispatch which the recording secretary has read. The standpoint of the Supreme High Command was simply this: "The U-boat war is essential; otherwise, we shall lose the campaign." In my opinion we would not absolutely lose the campaign if we launched the U-boat war. I have already stated today that it seemed possible to me, even after the United States came into the war, to have it reach some other termination than that which it has reached today. I had only the great danger in mind, and I had no faith in the calculations of the Navy to the effect that we would, beyond any question, force England to the point where she would be ready for peace by the next harvest. So that the risk which we took was, in my eyes, enormous. But I have already described to you the enormously difficult situation in which I found myself in attempting to stop the application of an instrumentality of warfare which

was demanded by such powerful authorities as those of our Supreme High Command of the Army on the ground that it was absolutely essential to the winning of the war. I pictured this morning the enormously difficult situation in which I found myself, and I should like to be excused from going into it again.

Delegate KATZENSTEIN: Your Excellency, you have described the tremendous danger which was involved in the U-boat war. General Ludendorff announced that the campaign would be lost without the U-boat war. You must, your Excellency, have considered the danger which would result from the entrance of the United States into the war as greater than those perils which were described by General Ludendorff for, according to Ludendorff's view, the campaign would have been irrevocably lost without the unrestricted U-boat war. I should like to know what those reasons were which induced your Excellency, in spite of this conclusion of Ludendorff's, to be a definite opponent of the unrestricted U-boat war.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I have defined my position with regard to the U-boat war today so completely and in such detail that I ought to be excused from going into the discussion of individual questions on the point, all over again.

Delegate HEILE: In reaching the conclusion with regard to the U-boat war, this involved the taking into consideration of the attitude of public opinion as it existed at that time. The question as to what extent public opinion in Germany was artificially created is material. As a matter of fact, I myself, at that time, and I, too, am engaged in newspaper work, had the experience of being subjected to the prohibitions of the military censorship when I attempted to sustain and defend in the press the attitude of the then Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg. And when I called attention to the fact—and many others in the press had the same experience—that all I was doing was sustaining the policy of the Imperial Government and that I had written an article for no other reason than to sustain the policy of the Imperial Government, the military censorship authorities informed me that, so far as they were concerned, it made no deuced bit of difference to them (*das sei ihr furchtbar egal*) and that they were in no way interested. (Commotion.)

As things stood, there is not the slightest doubt that a struggle was going on for the control of public opinion between the political department and the military establishment. I would now like to ask the question, whether the former Imperial Chancellor knew that the military censorship exerted all its power, not only in such an individual case as the above, but continually, in order to thwart the policy of the Imperial Chancellor, and if the Imperial Chancellor knows whether or not it was possible to take any steps against this and, if so, what those steps were and whether they were taken.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: That the Supreme High Command

of the Army intentionally instructed the censorship authorities to thwart my policies is wholly unknown to me.

Delegate DR. COHN: In connection with this, I should like to ask your Excellency: Do you, perhaps, remember the case of Professor Dr. Hans Delbrück who, as early as the autumn of 1914, was rebuked by the Supreme Command at Berlin because he had written an article with regard to the future relation of Germany to England; and that, when he replied that he was amazed that he was being asked for an explanation, and that he had written the article in direct agreement with the Imperial Chancellor, the reply he obtained was as follows: "So much the worse for the Imperial Chancellor, that does not change my view in the matter." Did you know of this event?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: That Professor Hans Delbrück got into difficulties at that time, I know. But I do not know what answer the censorship authorities gave Professor Hans Delbrück.

Delegate DR. COHN: One more question. Reference was made this morning, I believe, but the fact may also be established by reference to the files, that on December 18, 1916, a neutral Power sent word to Berlin that the Entente was inclined to meet Wilson's proposals if Germany would obligate herself to the restoration of Belgium.

Then, in connection with the general question of the relation existing between the civil and military authorities, I should like to ask the following: You referred this morning to persons who considered themselves authorities on national economics and who had recommended that the U-boat war be launched. Did you have their statements confronted with the statements of other authorities, so that, in other words, the judgment of the civil and political authorities of the Empire was not simply based on the opinion of authorities who had been furnished by the military branch, or such persons who so considered themselves?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I referred the various memorials of the Admiralty Staff with regard to the conduct of the U-boat war, together with their statistical and scientific supplements, in due course, to those who were working with me in the departments, with the request that they give me their expert opinion thereupon; and on this occasion, still other experts in these departments were, for all I know, brought in, in order that they might give me their personal views and their calculations, which could be compared with the point of view taken by the Admiralty Staff.

Delegate DR. COHN: One last question on this point, your Excellency. You announced the view that it might, perhaps, have been possible at a given point of time to have brought greater forces to bear in the effort to hold down the growing preponderance of military power. Are you of the opinion that the claim to the exercise of preponderating military authority was limited to the military arm, or do you believe that civil authorities, too,

held this preponderance on the part of the military to be the right thing, and, to that extent, did not fully support your policy?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: That is a question concerning which I can not inform you.

The CHAIRMAN: The list of questions is now probably covered, to the extent that they are material to the first fundamental question, and to the extent that your Excellency is in the position of answering them today. In the next session we shall have to come back to individual questions and their answers.

I shall now ask his Excellency Mr. Spahn to put a particular question which lies outside of this field of inquiry, and which he would like to settle today.

Delegate DR. SPAHN: Your Excellency, you testified today concerning the document which the committee of the Center party had sent to you, and you characterized it so that one might believe that it was intended to be a proclamation of military dictatorship. Now I do not share this view. However, this characterization does not interest me. It only causes me to put the question, in order that the picture be not distorted, whether you have any reason to believe that the contents and the spirit of this document were taken into consideration in the course of the conferences which the Emperor had with the Supreme High Command of the Army at Pless with regard to the U-boat war.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I have no reason to believe this. I merely stated this morning—and this is still my personal opinion—that I interpreted this document of the Center party in this way: It shall rest with Hindenburg as to whether he considers the U-boat war necessary; it is our desire that the Imperial Chancellor will adopt his opinion; in any case, he will have the support of the Center party if he does this.

The CHAIRMAN: That answers this question.

We will now adjourn. The next session is set for Tuesday, November 4, at 10 o'clock. Your Excellency is again summoned to be present at this session, as is also his Excellency Count Bernstorff, so that, if necessary, comparisons of statements may take place. We shall not therefore, send a special summons.

The session is adjourned.

The session closed at 6:19 o'clock.

FIFTH SESSION

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1919

The session was opened at 10:23, by the Chairman, Delegate Warmuth.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to take up first the administration of the oath to his Excellency v. Romberg, in his capacity as expert. This has not been done up to this time. Your Excellency v. Romberg, kindly give your Christian name and your age.

Expert v. ROMBERG: Gisbert, Baron v. Romberg, born 1866.

The CHAIRMAN: Does your Excellency desire that I administer the oath for experts to you with the religious formula, or without it?

Expert v. ROMBERG: In the form in which it has been administered up to this time.

(The oath for experts is administered to Expert v. Romberg.)

The CHAIRMAN: We will now continue with the hearing of his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg: With regard to question No. 1 of the fundamental question which reads as follows:

What were the reasons which caused the peace proposal of the 12th of December to be launched by the Central Powers, in spite of the fact that Count v. Bernstorff's communications held out the certain prospect of a peace move on the part of Wilson by the end of December at the latest?

there were some points still left unfinished in the last session, which your Excellency desired to take up today. In this connection, and without desiring in any way to anticipate your Excellency with regard to what your Excellency desires to submit here by way of supplementing your former statement, speaking in the main, the answering of the following questions will probably be involved.

To what extent did Bryan's retirement affect your judgment as to whether or not Wilson entertained a real desire to bring about peace by mediation?

On the occasion of his departure in September, 1916, was Gerard informed of the peace conditions?

To what extent was Baron Burian informed with regard to negotiations with Wilson?

Why was the German peace proposal launched, in spite of the fact that Wilson had conditioned his move upon the circumstance that, up to the time it was made, there should be no talk about a peace mediation?

As has already been stated, those are the most important questions. But

we do not mean by this that the discussion of other questions shall in any way be barred.

May I now ask your Excellency to make your statement on these points?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: So far as the first question is concerned, it is obvious that Bryan's resignation, made under the political exigencies of the time, was the object of my close scrutiny from every viewpoint. Its effect upon me was simply to increase that feeling of skepticism which, so far as I was concerned, developed more and more with regard to Wilson's policies as they unfolded in the further course of events.

So far as the disclosure of concrete peace conditions to Ambassador Gerard is concerned, I believe that I stated in the foregoing session that I had never disclosed concrete peace conditions to Ambassador Gerard. Moreover, there was no occasion for me to do so. It is clear that, in the course of my frequent conversations with Ambassador Gerard—it was his custom to visit me after every session of the Reichstag, etc., and on these occasions we discussed the matter—I did not conceal my point of view with regard to possible peace conditions and the peace programs which were submitted and which, generally speaking, in my opinion, went too far. I do not believe that Ambassador Gerard, in view of everything that I said to him, could ever have received any impression other than that the peace conditions which I had in mind were thoroughly moderate in tone.

Now as to the question of whether or not Baron Burian was constantly kept informed with regard to our peace move in Washington, it will be readily understood that, on the occasion of my repeated conversations with Baron Burian, as well as of my talks with the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador here, the possibilities of peace, as well as the chance of a peace brought about by President Wilson, were discussed. It was a matter of common knowledge that the President was moved by the desire to play the part of the bringer of world peace. Wilson, as a mediator of peace in the more restricted sense in which I have lately characterized the term, seemed to Baron Burian little to be desired, on account of his obvious inclination toward the Entente, which was the subject of comment here. Although I was bound to agree on this point with the Austrian statesman, in the course of my conversations I constantly took the stand that, in view of the fact that we both desired peace negotiations to be initiated at the earliest possible moment, we could look upon an appeal for peace on the part of Wilson in no other than a favorable light; a fact which, according to my recollection, was never disputed by Baron Burian. Whether or not Baron Burian was also continuously informed of all our individual steps in Washington, will be made evident to the Committee by the files which are here at its disposal. I could not venture to give a detailed answer on this point from my recollection.

The CHAIRMAN: In connection with this question, Mr. Sinzheimer would like to make a remark.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The point at issue seems to us to be whether or not Baron Burian was informed that Count Bernstorff was instructed to bring about an appeal for peace on the part of Wilson. In other words, whether the connection between the Imperial Government and Count Bernstorff and the endeavor to bring about a peace movement on the part of Wilson, were brought to his knowledge.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I would like to call attention to the fact that, even as between allies, such exact orientation with regard to the outcome of what we were endeavoring to bring about, is not usually the rule. To my mind, the important point would seem to be that, as the result of our conferences, Baron Burian was bound to be perfectly clear on the point that an appeal for peace on the part of Wilson would be very welcome to me, that is, to German policy. To my mind, that would be the requisite so far as the allied relations were concerned: that Austria-Hungary should know that Germany would welcome an appeal for peace—an appeal, not a mediation in the particular meaning of the term, which I lately ventured to explain.

If I may pass over to the next question which is still unanswered, I should like to make the following remark. The Chairman made the statement that my desire to actually bring about a peace by means of mediation by Wilson found, to a certain extent, at least, no echo in my actions. For instance, I had not met Wilson's wish to have his peace proposal precede ours, but, on the contrary, had preferred to have our peace proposal anticipate Wilson's move. My answer to this is that what I had in mind was to bring about peace. I stated Friday morning in detail those reasons which persuaded me to adopt the policy of an individual peace move. I will not repeat now the statements which I made at that time. It was in view of the fact that Wilson's peace call had not been issued by the time when we were forced to come out with our peace proposal, if we really intended to come out with it at all, that we decided to issue our peace proposal.

The Chairman has, furthermore, inquired why I ignored the President's wish, communicated to me by Count Bernstorff, not to come out with our conditions before he had come out with his peace move. My reply to this is as follows: When we issued our peace proposal, we did not reach the point of announcing conditions of peace; instead, we merely announced in a very general way those bases on which we were willing to enter upon peace negotiations. We declared that the proposals which we would present on the occasion of the peace negotiations, the purpose of which was to guarantee the existence, honor, and freedom of development of our peoples, would, according to our conviction, form a foundation adapted to the restoration of a permanent peace. Once we made a peace proposal—and I have already pointed out the reasons for this—then at the very least we were obliged to point out the general basis on which we were prepared to enter into negotiations.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to make a few remarks which, it is true, are not based upon the questions which have been prepared, but which, nevertheless, are connected with lines of thought which have been touched upon in the proceedings up to this time. It is plain that the views entertained in many quarters, that, by announcing our peace proposal simultaneously with carrying out a move in the interests of peace in connection with America, we were not only pursuing a double course of action, the results of which were bound to be injurious, but one which was unjustifiable as well. The newspapers have made reference to duplicity. In support of this view, two telegrams have been mentioned: one of November 26, addressed to Count v. Bernstorff, in which it is stated that "we would be glad to give Wilson's peace move the preference over our action referred to in our telegram No. 116 of November 22," namely, our announcement of our willingness to take up peace negotiations; and the other, dated the 27th of November, that is, on the day on which mention was made to General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg of the psychological moment for issuing a peace proposal of our own, a message to which reference has already been made here. It is necessary to read the pertinent passages of both the telegrams in question. The Ambassador in Washington was telegraphed as follows:

We would be glad to give Wilson's peace move the preference over our action referred to in our telegram No. 116 of November 22. At the same time it is our urgent wish that Wilson will decide to take early steps in the matter; if possible, by the time Congress opens or, in any event, soon thereafter. Should this be put off until the New Year or later, the lull in military operations during the winter campaign would moderate an inclination to peace on the part of public opinion in hostile countries and, on the other hand, would make essential further military preparations for the spring offensive, the carrying out of which would presumably strengthen existing military opposition to the peace move. Please urge these points cautiously and without impressment, and as representing your personal opinion in your talks with House, and keep me continuously informed by telegraph with regard to the situation.

The passage in question in the telegram to the Field Marshal reads as follows:

President Wilson has informed Count Bernstorff confidentially that it is his intention to put forth an appeal for peace in the time elapsing between now and the New Year. Whether he will really carry out his purpose remains wholly uncertain. He is undecided and fearful of a set-back. We must reckon on this, that he will only issue his appeal if he no longer feels certain that the Entente will meet it with a curt rejection, and that means if the Entente finds itself in a situation where it would not be likely to meet a peace proposal emanating from us with a curt refusal. I leave open the question of whether our position at the council table would be more favorable if the negotiations had been brought about as the result of an appeal by Wilson, than if they had

resulted in consequence of a peace proposal made by us. However this may be, it is certain that our situation would be better were the Entente to reject the offer to enter into negotiations made at the instance of Wilson, than if it were to reject a proposal coming directly from us. For this reason, the unpopularity with which an appeal made by Wilson would, to a great extent, be met in our country, must not be allowed to have an overwhelming influence upon our decision. On the other hand, in view of the uncertainty which, until the last moment, will characterize Wilson's actions, and in view of the probable growing disinclination on the part of our enemies to enter upon peace negotiations as the winter season passes by, we will not be justified in letting the psychological moment for a peace proposal on our part escape, irrespective of any hope we may entertain with regard to an appeal by Mr. Wilson.

There is nothing in these two telegrams which in any way can serve as an argument for the existence of duplicity. At a certain stage of preparation, considerations are submitted and conditions are discussed, which it was necessary to submit and which had to be discussed. Neither is the possibility of the American move excluded by the one telegram, or that of our move excluded in the other. There is no contradiction between the two dispatches. If it is asserted on the supposed ground of these two telegrams, that I practised duplicity with regard to the Supreme High Command of the Army and with regard to Washington as well, by an inconclusive handling of the peace question, I shall have to deny the truth of such an assertion as having no foundation.

How is it now with the second version, which is to the effect that I am supposed to have practised duplicity against President Wilson, because I pursued both of these courses at the same time? To that, the immediate answer is that there is no doubt whatsoever that our Ambassador was kept informed with regard to both possibilities. On the 22d of November, our Ambassador was already informed that it was our plan to announce publicly our willingness for peace. If, according to the then existing situation in the United States, this public announcement of our willingness to negotiate was such as could have affected Wilson's action detrimentally, or have disturbed his friendly attitude, our careful Ambassador would certainly not have failed, with his intimate personal knowledge of leading American authorities, to have sent insistent warnings to Berlin. There would have been plenty of time to do this. I do not remember, and I have found in the files no reason to suppose, that this was done. The recording secretary was absolutely correct in stating that, so far as was possible to do so, it was my duty to use both the irons of which I have spoken to mutual advantage. It seems to me that this attempt consisted in sending these two very dispatches, and that there was no real ground to believe that one iron would interfere with the other.

That, as a matter of fact, this did not occur is made plain from the further

course of events. I have already mentioned it, and will only call attention to Count Bernstorff's communication, the purport of which was that our peace proposal had a very favorable effect upon the pacifist element in the United States and that the majority of this pacifist element was very materially in favor of Wilson's attitude. The reproach of having engaged in a disloyal and double game would justly have been applicable to me if I had been seeking to bring about the U-boat war simultaneously with urging on the Wilson peace move. But I did not do this. On this point it is necessary for me to make no further comments. I believe that I have recently made my attitude thereon sufficiently plain, and my entire labors along the line of a peace move by Wilson were directed to the very purpose of making it unnecessary to carry on the U-boat war, which was then threatening, by bringing about a well-timed peace move which, naturally, would have had to offer some prospects of success.

And right here I must call attention to the fact that the American Government was not in the dark with regard to the situation which was developing. In our *Sussex* note, we had stated in so many words that, if the steps which the American Government was taking with regard to the freedom of the seas should not lead to any results so far as England was concerned, the German Government would find itself confronted by a new situation, concerning which it would be forced to reserve for itself complete freedom of action. The American Government was well aware that, in view of the existing failure of its negotiations with England with regard to the laws of the sea, at least to the extent that any such negotiations had taken place at all, we were at liberty to conclude any day that we should make use of our freedom of action. America, as the result of the *aide-mémoire* of the Emperor which Count v. Bernstorff was authorized by me to deliver, and which, as he has recently stated, was delivered by him, knew of the danger of the approaching decision with regard to the U-boat war. In my conversations with Ambassador Gerard, I repeatedly mentioned the conditions and those forces among the people which urged the initiation of the U-boat war. He himself did not conceal his point of view, which was that the pressure in favor of the U-boat war was constantly increasing, and that my personal attitude was one which was constantly being subjected to increasing attacks. I shall ask you to compare this statement with what Gerard himself has to say in his own book. Finally, on the 21st of December, that is, directly following Wilson's call for peace, Secretary of State Lansing declared, in an interview which excited a great deal of attention, that Wilson's note had been issued because America itself was approaching the threshold of war. So it was that the United States was perfectly informed on the point as to what was in the wind. It would seem as if the American Government had instructed its embassy to watch with the greatest care for any signs of a coming alteration of our policy. This, too, shows that it was under no misconception with regard to the

development of the situation. Mr. Gerard states in his book that he obtained information from his naval attaché with regard to the resumption of the U-boat war which appeared to be imminent, that this information had been confirmed by influential German authorities, and that he, after the dinner to which so many references have been made, had immediately notified his government to that effect. I am calling all this to your attention in order to make it plain that Washington was in no way deceived with regard to the situation, let alone the suggestion that we attempted to deceive the United States.

Now, had I put myself in Wilson's hands by urging along a peace move by him? That could only have been the case if we had made him, so to speak, our business manager, and had bound ourselves to refrain from taking any action of any kind which might possibly have interfered with a peace appeal which might, perhaps, have come in the future—which *might perhaps* have come in the *future*. That did not happen, and I gave the reasons why it did not happen, at the preceding session.

We were confronted, then, by the following situation: Our peace proposal had been rejected in such a way as was bound to convince us that the Entente would reply to Wilson's peace note also in such a way as to shut out every possibility of a basis of negotiation which would be acceptable to us, and that, consequently, there was no prospect of a willingness on the part of the Entente to negotiate within a determinable length of time. The Entente's note of the 12th of January, in answer to Wilson's peace note, constituted the proof that our estimate was correct. But with the situation as it was, and in view of the fact, as I have explained, that we had not made Wilson our business manager, we were now left with entire freedom of action, and (with raised voice) we *had* to have it, if we were in any way still to play an independent part in this war; military necessity left us no choice. If from that unwillingness to negotiate which had been made plain our Supreme High Command of the Army drew the conclusions which it did and of which I spoke Friday, and if the circumstances which I have also analyzed made it impossible for me to prevent the U-boat war, that constituted a logical sequence of events, but (raising his voice) not duplicity.

I believe that, by means of these explanations which, perhaps, it is true, go somewhat beyond the limits required by the questions which have been drawn up, but which I have considered necessary to make in reply to many comments which have been made—not in this hall, but elsewhere—I have made matters clear, even with regard to this point; and I believe that in so doing I have supplied the answer to those questions which were put at the former session to which no reply was given at that time.

The CHAIRMAN: Thanks, your Excellency!

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: I should like to have a still more definite answer to the question which was put to your Excellency by the Chairman with

regard to Ambassador Gerard. In the first place, did your Excellency take advantage of the journey on which Ambassador Gerard started at the end of September, 1916, by making it serve as a mission of peace? Your Excellency will remember that this was the interpretation given to it in the neutral and enemy press, and that in the German press, too, there were many announcements, either colored by party feeling, conjecture, hope, or apprehension, to the effect that Gerard was, to a certain extent, carrying out a peace mission on behalf of your Excellency. May I ask that these questions, which are put in a very definite form, be answered by a simple yes or no?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: It stands to reason that I could not request Ambassador Gerard to undertake a journey on my behalf. That was a matter for the exercise of his own free will. Following hard upon our *Sussex* note, I had had all those conversations with Ambassador Gerard—you will find the matter commented upon in his book, which I will ask you to examine—the Ambassador went at that time to the General Headquarters—and, as goes without saying, I was present at the time of his interviews with the Emperor. I told him—so Gerard reports, and I have no reason to doubt that he is stating facts in this case—Gerard says—I can not give the exact terms, but only the general sense: “The Imperial Chancellor told me, when the *Sussex* note was agreed upon and drawn up: ‘Now, President Wilson will have a free hand for a great move in behalf of peace.’” I have stated in detail, in the course of the previous hearings, why it was that I, skeptical as I was, considered it of a certain importance, if it should succeed, to bring President Wilson actually, and at the right moment, to the point of making an appeal for peace. When Ambassador Gerard disclosed his purpose to me, to go to the United States—this probably happened in September—I naturally maintained the stand to which I had held fast up to that time, and adapted my conversations with him, the contents of which I naturally can not give word for word, to the point of again making it perfectly clear to the Ambassador that of course, if the President should direct an appeal for peace to the belligerent Powers at the earliest date possible, that could give me nothing but satisfaction. I believe that, in the intercourse of diplomacy and politics, and particularly in the case of the ambassador of a foreign Power and a Power which had already plunged us into many difficulties, such a conversation could not well have taken a different form. To repeat—and that is my understanding of your question, Professor, whether I had given him instructions of any kind—I was, I say, naturally not in a position to give a foreign ambassador instructions. I could only attempt to create in him by my attitude, by my talk, by the way in which I spoke, the impressions which I hoped that he would reflect when he reached the United States.

Delegate DR. HOETZSCH: One question in connection with this. Did Ambassador Gerard take with him to the United States, as the result of

these conversations, a clear picture of those conditions which your Excellency has described in general as moderate? I may call your attention to the fact that your Excellency, in the course of a public polemic against Gerard, showed in a negative way that there must have been some pretty detailed conversations about the course of events. Your Excellency states, in speaking of Ambassador Gerard, that he simply passed over altogether Germany's aims in the east. The questions having to do with the west were those which appeared to interest him exclusively. Therefore, I may ask as to whether Ambassador Gerard, as the result of these conversations, took back with him a plain and definite picture of the conditions which your Excellency foresaw as essential to the conclusion of peace.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I will give a very exact answer to this question, which is put in such exact terms. So far as the east was concerned, Gerard declared, with a wave of the hand: "The eastern situation does not interest us in the United States." We did not speak together at all with regard to that feature, but his interest was concentrated on Belgium and, in the course of these conversations, I reminded him of earlier statements which I had made. I said to him: "Your Excellency, you know what I said about that in the Reichstag; I refer to that." I also said—and this is a case which was made the subject of further public comment; I have not the speech here and can not cite it *verbatim*; we should have to have the *verbatim* report before us—but I said once in a speech: "Of course, it is our wish to see to it that Belgium is not used in the future as a bulwark by the Entente and to the injury of Germany"—and I added in the Reichstag: "What guarantees"—I believe that is the first time that the word "guarantees" was used, which afterwards caused so much bewilderment in the world—"What guarantees we have individually in mind, I can not myself state; that goes without saying." I believe that it was in this manner that I addressed the Reichstag, and I reminded Ambassador Gerard of this comment of mine. And I said to him, too: "Yes, I can not go into any greater detail on the point; that depends absolutely upon the future outcome of the war." And that I hoped that it would be possible to end the war by a peace of understanding was made perfectly plain to the mind of Ambassador Gerard.

He then attempted to insist: "Well, what do you think about Liège?" So far as I recollect—and I had very many conversations during the war with persons occupying most important positions, and I can not today, as you can readily understand, remember this in such complete detail as to repeat it word for word, and particularly where I am making my statement under oath—but, as I recollect, Mr. Gerard said to me: "Surely we could discuss the question of Liège." I believe that I called attention to that in my denial. But I have not my denial before me.

Then he attempted to insist still further. I remember that at that time

there was much discussion on the question of the coast of Flanders. As is the case in conversations of that kind, my expressions had to be more or less indirect. But Gerard knew well that I, speaking now very candidly—I pray that, if only for the sake of brevity, this be not gone into too deeply—he was well aware of the fact that I was no annexationist. All Germany knew this, in fact. It was exactly for this reason that I was opposed with that bitterness of which Ambassador Gerard was a witness. So it was that Ambassador Gerard was wholly aware of the fact that I was endeavoring to bring about a peace of understanding, and that I was seeking to obtain moderate peace aims. And he knew, moreover, that it was exactly because of these two reasons that a bitter fight was being waged against me by political parties and the press, which fight had given him the impression that I was constantly getting the worst of the struggle. I believe that, with this statement we have a clear picture of the situation of that time. I was convinced that Gerard was fully informed as to this matter. If, in his book, which was written after war was declared—and for this I need not go into any detail—he brings out in sharper contrast those points which do not speak in favor of Germany, that is perhaps a natural phenomenon, which, in view of the war psychology developed in the course of this war, manifested itself in forms which one could well wish had never come into existence.

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: Did your Excellency use the American Ambassador, who, most assuredly was a very important link in the chain of relations with the United States, and particularly on account of the difficulties in the matter of communication—did you, if I may make use of the expression, use the Ambassador in the capacity of a convenient instrument for this peace move?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I would like to recall to your mind what I have already stated in the course of the preceding session, to wit, that one of the points which claimed my particular attention was the circumstance that I had gathered the impression from all my conversations with Ambassador Gerard, that he was without definite information regarding the intentions of his President. As the result of this purely impersonal impression, reached quite apart from estimates based upon personal judgment, with regard to which I have no occasion nor desire to express myself here, the standard by which I measured Ambassador Gerard's actions was the outgrowth of these purely objective considerations.

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: Is it proper to put this question to Count v. Bernstorff? If so, I shall ask him whether he, too, was of the opinion that the American Ambassador over here was insufficiently informed as to the purposes of his own government. Count v. Bernstorff says, in a confidential report, that he has been intimately acquainted with American Ambassador Gerard for many years, and I assume that you have a definite opinion with regard to him.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I would assume that, as the result of my experiences, American Ambassador Gerard was not informed up to the time of his trip to the United States, but that he was informed after his trip.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: May I not express myself, too, on this point? I can only repeat that I am in full agreement with Count v. Bernstorff's view that Ambassador Gerard was not informed up to the time of his trip, and, so far as the question of his being informed after that trip is concerned, I can only repeat that, in the course of those very January days of 1917, at a time when—and this, too, after the U-boat war was determined upon—it was obviously essential for me to know as soon as in any way possible, whether any move by President Wilson was in prospect and whether it was such as to hold out the likelihood of results at a time when it might still have been possible to postpone the U-boat war—it was vital to me—at this time I repeatedly attempted to sound him on the point, for he visited me often—I asked him: "How are things in the United States?" Whereupon, he himself stated to me—I repeat it—in a manner which, in a way, conveyed a reproach against his government: "I have no information; I do not know; I am sent no instructions; they do not cable me." It seems to me that this last certainly goes hand in hand with that description of President Wilson which, apparently is generally accepted in other quarters, and, unless I am mistaken, has also been furnished by Count v. Bernstorff, namely, that President Wilson was not inclined to give any information with regard to his intentions to those who were not included in his most immediate circle of confidants. This characterization of President Wilson has been vouched for by countless Americans in conversations with me, both during the war and after its close. In many ways President Wilson has been looked upon, even in the United States, as no more nor less than a sphinx, and I am inclined to believe that the extent to which he has been so regarded has been manifested by American judgments passed upon his demeanor at Versailles and on the occasion of the so-called cross-examination of which we have lately made mention. So, although not desiring to pre-judge in any direction whatsoever, it is perfectly clear to me, and it was also apparent from Mr. Gerard's personality, that he was not one of those intimate confidants of President Wilson to whom the latter was willing to open his heart.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, the real question seems to me to be whether Wilson could assume that we were desirous of having him act as peace mediator. And, in this connection—and this was probably in Professor Hoetzsch's mind—Count v. Bernstorff telegraphs from Washington: "House informed me that Gerard had telegraphed that we were willing to accept peace mediation by the President and that House's visit to Berlin for this purpose was looked upon with favor."

The question, then, is this: Was Gerard definitely informed as to whether we desired Wilson for a peace mediator, or not?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: My impression is that I have really answered this question already, in the course of the comments made by me today, as well as those of Friday. I made reference today to what I told Ambassador Gerard directly after the *Sussex* note: "So now, Mr. Ambassador, we have made such concessions that President Wilson will have a free hand for his move." That constitutes, in my opinion, the strongest indication that it was my wish that he should make a diplomatic move. Matters can not be differently expressed in diplomatic intercourse. Matters can not be discussed in definite terms; the thing to do is to try to have your man receive an impression. And it is absolutely beyond question that Wilson, quite aside from this, must have gotten the impression that I hoped that he would make a peace move, and that, as the result of the conversation which I had with Ambassador Gerard before he went to the United States, and which I have already attempted to describe, Wilson's impression was made even stronger. And this impression must, moreover, have been strengthened by the instructions which we sent Count Bernstorff. But I beg, after all, to keep this one point in mind—and with regard to this, too, I had repeated talks with Mr. Gerard: that the bitterest kind of antagonism existed against the United States throughout the whole of civilian Germany and in all circles of civilian Germany, and also in the Army—an antagonism which, on account of the American shells, bit every day deeper into the heart of the people. I remember that the leaders of important parties in the Reichstag said quite openly that the German people would decline with thanks, a peace which should come from Wilson. It goes without saying that this attitude was also well known to Ambassador Gerard, and he knew that precisely those classes who most bitterly voiced this animosity were my most outspoken opponents. Gerard was also bound to take these complications into his reckoning, and they were bound to influence and impress his estimate of the situation, which was to develop as the days went on. It could not be otherwise. As is invariably the case in political life, and was particularly the case in this war, a tremendous number of different currents, elements, and forces came into existence, all so intermingled that it is impossible to attempt to concentrate these problems within the confines of a quite simple, pointed, and pertinent question and its answer.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency stated that it would have been desirable for Wilson's peace move and our own to have been mutually complementary. Of course, the first thought that occurs in connection with this is that we should have sent the following communication to President Wilson: "We are making a peace move on our own account, and hope and desire that Wilson will take up and carry on this move in one direction or another." But, on the contrary, Count Bernstorff was definitely instructed

to consider our intention to make our own peace move as strictly confidential and as a matter for his own exclusive personal information. The object, then, was to see to it particularly that President Wilson should not be informed that a peace move was being contemplated by us. As for the question of duplicity, it seems to me that the possible justification for the suggestion is to be found in the fact that Wilson was to be given no information that we were endeavoring to bring about a peace move on our own account. In my opinion, that is the point on which those rely who assert the existence of duplicity.

WITNESS DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I should like to make the following remarks with regard to this phase of the problem. What kind of a situation would probably have resulted if I had instructed Count Bernstorff to say: "President Wilson is to refrain from every appeal for peace of any kind; I am going to make it myself"? That would have had to be based upon the premise that I had already made Wilson our business manager—I have already made use of the term. That was not and could not be the case. What would have happened if it had been said that the Imperial Chancellor had yielded the whole matter of the future action of Germany to the discretion of President Wilson? I would have been swept out of my post on the same day. The mutual complementing of both moves, which I have characterized as intrinsically desirable, would unquestionably have been assisted by our informing President Wilson of our intention to make our own peace proposal, if we could have afforded to do that. But it could not be done, assuming, as I did at the outset, that I would have had to deliver myself, bound hand and foot, over to President Wilson. But in spite of this, the mutual complementing of the two moves did take place as far as was possible. I have already called particular attention to the fact that, on the 22d of November, we notified Ambassador Count v. Bernstorff of our intention to make our own peace proposal, and that Count Bernstorff let this dispatch go unanswered, whereas, of course, if there had been some vital objection to what was being contemplated by us, he would unquestionably have sent me a telegram warning me in urgent terms to make our own peace proposal under no circumstances, as, if we did, it would cause the plans in the United States to collapse.

I have further called attention to the fact that, in the opinion of Count v. Bernstorff, our own peace proposal had favorable results among the pacifist groups in the United States. If we take into consideration—and I have already mentioned this, too—to what an extent President Wilson was dependent upon public opinion in his country, how it was precisely on account of this public opinion that, according to his own statements communicated to Count Bernstorff by Colonel House, he was stopped from taking effective measures of any kind against England, it certainly must have been of the greatest importance to him that the pacifistic element, which constituted a

counter-balance against this portion of public opinion—this pro-English portion of public opinion,—became strengthened. The platform upon which President Wilson had just been reelected to the presidency was that very peace platform, in connection with—what is the technical English expression? (interruption: preparedness for war!)—yes, with the “preparedness for war.” If, now, one of the planks of this platform, the peace plank, was strengthened by our peace proposal (and that is what happened, according to Count Bernstorff’s testimony) this did not mean that the peace move of the President was thwarted, but that, on the contrary, it was supported.

The CHAIRMAN: In connection herewith, I would like to ask Count v. Bernstorff to give us some information on this point. Your Excellency, on the 22d of November, 1916, v. Jagow sent you the following telegram:

Provided the favorable military situation justifies it, it is our purpose, acting in conjunction with our allies, to announce forthwith our willingness to enter upon peace negotiations.

Then, on the 26th of November, a further telegram was sent to you by Secretary of State Zimmermann, the material part of which has just been read by his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg. It begins with the words:

We would be glad to give Wilson’s peace move the preference over our action referred to. Please keep me continuously informed by telegraph with regard to the situation.

May I ask your Excellency what dispatch you sent back to Berlin in reply to this communication? There is nothing to be found on this point in the files. Did you take any steps of any kind in consequence hereof? What was your understanding of this telegram? What was your understanding of this peace move which was contemplated by us, and which, therefore, was connected with a peace move by Wilson?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I believe that I already stated in my first declaration, that, after receiving this first telegram, I did nothing, but that I continuously kept in touch with Colonel House. I looked upon this telegram of the 22d of November at that time as constituting the announcement of a *fait accompli* with regard to which there was nothing more to be done, for the telegram contained these words: “It is our purpose, acting in conjunction with our allies, to announce forthwith our willingness.” Therefore, I assumed that an agreement on the part of the Quadruple Alliance had actually been reached, and that there was simply nothing more to be changed with regard to the matter. Moreover, I never assumed that our peace proposal was going to interfere with the mediation by Wilson. It is true that I lately stated that Wilson’s diplomatic situation was made difficult by this fact, but I did not state that it constituted an obstacle. The statement which I made on the occasion of the first hearing merely had reference

to Wilson's diplomatic position in connection with the peace proposal, and with regard to the effect upon the Entente; but I never believed that Wilson would be stopped from going ahead with his mediation.

The CHAIRMAN: Therefore, you did not consider it necessary to send back a special warning to Berlin?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: No.

The CHAIRMAN: On the other hand, your opinion that, after all, an interference would be involved, might have, perhaps, been sufficient to induce you to call this to the attention of Berlin in some way. But you undoubtedly considered this feature too insignificant to make it the subject of a special dispatch to Berlin.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I repeat, I believed at that time that this telegram of the 22d of November constituted the announcement of a *fait accompli*, of a situation thoroughly worked out, with regard to which there was nothing more to be done, and I may add that at that time I had no reason to believe that our peace proposal would interfere with Wilson's peace mediation; my late remark referred to a subsequent conversation with Colonel House. It is difficult to give an *ex post facto* opinion, because, now we see the situation as a whole, and at that time I acted in accordance with the impressions of the moment. At that time, I had not spoken with House about our peace proposal, and really saw no reason why our peace proposal should interfere with Wilson's peace mediation. It is true that, afterwards, House told me that from the President's standpoint Wilson's peace mediation had been interfered with, because the President was afraid that our peace proposal would result in the Entente being less inclined than before to accept peace mediation by him.

The CHAIRMAN: Then that point is finished.

Now I shall ask his Excellency Mr. Zimmermann to take the stand. What is your Christian name?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Arthur.

The CHAIRMAN: Your age?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Fifty-five years.

The CHAIRMAN: Will you take the oath with the religious formula?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Certainly.

(The witness is sworn.)

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency, as is stated in an article in the *Vossische Zeitung*, you remarked, in so many words, in a confidential conference with the leading newspaper men, which you yourself called shortly before the issuance of our announcement with regard to peace: "We are issuing this peace proposal in order to anticipate a peace move on the part of Wilson, which is expected to be announced in the near future." In this way, the intention to anticipate Wilson's peace move, which was known, was expressed. May I ask your Excellency to tell us about this?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: I recollect that I did make a statement of that kind to the press. If I did make it, it was because I allowed myself to be guided at the time mainly by considerations of internal politics. It was well known everywhere that a peace move on the part of Wilson would, at that time and to the greatest degree, have been unwelcome to the German people—to the majority of the German people and to the Reichstag. On the other hand, I could not avoid a feeling of anxiety that our peace proposal might not only be considered in foreign parts as a plea for peace and as a sign of weakness, but that, above all, and even throughout broad circles within the territorial limits of the country, namely, those circles which based high hopes on the prosecution of the U-boat war, it would receive especial condemnation; the government would not be spared the reproach that we had made the peace proposal for the very purpose of making it unnecessary for ourselves to reach the dangerous conclusion of launching the U-boat war. From motives at once of a domestic policy, as well as of a policy applied to external affairs, I was particularly interested in seeing the German people and the German press, present, as nearly as possible, a united front in support of the policy of the government. In this way I expected to assure that no opportunity would be given the outside world, that is, the neutral Powers and our enemies, to allege that the German people were not upholding the peace proposal. It was to be desired—I can emphasize this—that, if possible, the whole of Germany's public opinion should be back of the peace proposal. For that reason and in order to bring this about, I availed myself at that time of the opportunity to say to those gentlemen: "According to my conviction, or, in accordance with my anticipation, what we are to expect and what is really imminent, is not a peace proposal, but a peace mediation by President Wilson; in case such a mediation is offered, it is of course obvious that we shall not be able to reject it; by so doing, we would injure the President's feelings and make this mighty neutral Power our enemy; I know, and I do not need to emphasize the point particularly, that such a peace proposal, gentlemen, is extremely unwelcome to all of you or to a great portion of you, and also to a great portion of the German people; and it is precisely for the purpose of avoiding this very unwelcome step that we have made up our minds to announce our peace proposal, so that, in a way, we may anticipate the President." Those were the motives which guided my actions at the time when I made that announcement to the press.

The CHAIRMAN: As a matter of fact, then, they were not the motives on which the Chancellor based his course of action?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: No, they were not those motives. I considered that the moulding of the press devolved upon me as a duty in this case, and the aim that I sought was to bring from within a general consensus of agreement in the German press and to have our peace proposal, if possible, receive the backing of the entire German press.

The CHAIRMAN: This was, then, a tactical measure, nothing more.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Does your Excellency remember that a few weeks later you announced, at the session of the main committee, that we did not want Wilson as a peace mediator and that we made this peace proposal in order to eliminate him as a mediator? And did the thought eventually come to you that something might come out with regard to what had occurred at the press conference, even prematurely, at a time when the Wilson peace mediation was still a possibility; or that it might be published in the United States, with the result that this attitude, to put it delicately, would be looked upon as inconsistent?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Certainly, I made a statement of that kind to the budget committee. Why it was that I was against a peace mediation by President Wilson, in the sense that the President was to call a peace conference and preside over it as an arbitrator or unbiased negotiator, I will explain to you gentlemen at once, if you so desire it. I take the stand that we did not want a peace mediation by President Wilson in the sense that he was to play the part of an unbiased negotiator; but I did want a mediation by Wilson in the sense that he would initiate peace negotiations and bring our enemies to the council table. In this connection, our instructions were consistent from A to Z, and it would be impossible to discover an inconsistency in them by referring to the files. I have just lately examined the files. Therefore, in the Reichstag, too, and in the budget committee, I declared that we certainly did not want Wilson to act as an arbitrator in a peace mediation. I have already stated that I made a remark of this kind to the press conference, and explained why I made it. I believed that I could rely upon those gentlemen to consider the matter as strictly confidential. I believed that I was at liberty to assume that they would not make my strictly confidential remarks public, because the gentlemen were known to me as men upon whom I could rely.

Delegate GOTHEIN: But at the time when your Excellency was making these communications to the press, the question had not yet arisen as to whether Wilson desired to play the part of mediator. At that time, so far as we are informed, Wilson's only purpose was to bring the parties to the conference table and he had no desire whatsoever to take part in the first conference which was to be the scene of the real peace negotiations.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Certainly, the moment had not come at that time; Wilson had not yet come out with his wish to mediate directly. At the same time, there was always reason for apprehending and for fearing that he might come out with some such wish as that. In any event—and I must repeat this—my statement was made at that time in pursuance of motives of internal policy; it was my desire that the press should be united in its support of our peace proposal, a peace proposal concerning which I assumed that it would be looked upon as a sign of weakness by very broad cir-

cles of society. If I had said that President Wilson was only going to make a suggestion of peace, this would not, in my estimation, have satisfied the press; I had to say that President Wilson was going to mediate and play the part of arbitrator, that that was what we had to avoid, and that it was for this reason that we were anticipating him. So it was, then, a tactical maneuver.

The CHAIRMAN: I announce at this point that his Excellency Dr. Spahn is representing Mrs. Schmitz.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency states that it was a tactical maneuver. Now, you knew that we had initiated a peace move by Mr. Wilson. You stated that unanimity on behalf of the press was to be established. Was it not destroyed thereby? And did you not influence the press to take a position opposed to Wilson, whom we ourselves had persuaded to bring up the question of peace? In other words, was not a feeling brought about by a representative of the Foreign Office which the Imperial Chancellor has already characterized as being extremely troublesome, a sentiment against Wilson on whose behalf we needed good feeling in order to lessen the effect of those prejudices or conclusions in consonance with the policy of the Foreign Office?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: As you know, Wilson had procrastinated. He had not made up his mind to take a step in the direction of peace which, so far as I was concerned, would have been particularly welcome to me; nor had he come to the point of taking the first step in the direction of peace negotiations. It was precisely for this reason that we had made up our minds to come out with our peace proposal. It was essential from my point of view—and I have repeatedly made this statement—to bring public opinion into a receptive mood for the purposes of our peace proposal, and to bring about a unanimity of feeling on the part of our press in behalf of this step in the direction of peace. In view of this situation, considerations having a bearing on President Wilson were thrown into the background; and that, so far as the press was concerned, I was particularly called upon to present a brief on behalf of President Wilson, I can not see—I can not admit. At that time the press was extraordinarily opposed to President Wilson. It was just for this reason and in order to create a perfect understanding with regard to our peace proposal, that I suggested that we should anticipate this welcome peace move on the part of President Wilson.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I did not say, your Excellency, that it devolved upon you to take up cudgels for Wilson, but for the Wilson move which the government was carrying out. We may ask whether the latter was not destroyed by the information which was given to the press whose antagonism toward Wilson might well have been dangerous at the very moment when Wilson was to become active in the interests of the Imperial Government.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: After we had made up our minds to issue a pro-

posal, we proceeded to look upon the matter as concluded, so far as we were concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: So that, for you, it was a matter of first importance to create a unanimity of feeling with regard to the peace proposal which we had in contemplation.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Absolutely.

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: Just to make one thing clear—

The CHAIRMAN: Excuse me. Statements on behalf of the government have precedence, Mr. Minister of State David.

Mr. Minister of State DAVID: After we had already made up our minds to proceed with our own peace move, the fact remains that, by means of the telegram above referred to, Count Bernstorff in the United States was informed that we would prefer it if Wilson would precede our peace move by his. But it seems to me that your remarks to the representatives of the press meant the opposite. They were to the effect that we were to lead off with our move and that we did not desire that Wilson should make his before we made ours. The following certainly appear to be in direct conflict, to wit, your statement at the press conference, and the communication to Count v. Bernstorff. Now you stated that that was a tactical maneuver. Let me put this question: Were you really at heart in favor of the policy which was restated in the terms of the telegram to Count Bernstorff, to wit, that it would, after all, be more advantageous to us if Wilson came out first with his peace proposal; and did you really do violence to your own convictions when you made that communication to the press, at the same time doing violence to the policy which had been set on foot by the Imperial Chancellor?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Mr. Minister David does not seem to me to distinguish between the dates on which those instructions went out to Ambassador Bernstorff, and the day of my statement made to the representatives of the press. I issued the instructions to Count Bernstorff, I believe, on the 26th of November.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, on the 26th of November.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: At that time, I stood absolutely upon the ground that a move by Wilson should precede our peace move and, as a matter of fact, for the following reasons: I have already indicated that I was afraid that any peace proposal which we might issue would be looked upon as a plea for peace, as an indication of weakness, not only in foreign countries, but here in our country as well. On the other hand, I believed that, in any event, it would be an easier matter for the Entente to reject a peace proposal which we might issue than to avoid a suggestion leading toward peace which President Wilson might issue, and even if Wilson's peace proposal were to be rejected by our enemies, this still appeared to me to be more advantageous for us, because in this way our position would be strengthened in the eyes of

the President and of the entire world. We would have freed the President of his prejudice against us, and would have induced him to take a definite stand against our enemies. I expected that, and I took it for granted. For this reason, I sent the instructions to Washington, to the effect that I gave precedence to a peace proposal by President Wilson over a move by Germany. I stuck to this standpoint later, and I remember that, still later, when the question of the armed merchant ships came up for discussion, I issued an instruction. I stated at that time that, if we were to avoid this discussion and the development of these questions, it would be necessary for President Wilson's peace proposal to come along soon. I hoped that the President would be quick to make up his mind with regard to the matter. But then came the conversation with Lansing, which is reported by Count Bernstorff. On this occasion, Lansing declared once more that the Belgian deportations had given rise again to a very great antagonism against us, and in all ways had so detrimentally affected public feeling that the situation, of itself favorable for a peace proposal, had again taken a change for the worse. I considered this as another relegation of affairs *ad calendas Graecas*. Even in the telegram which reached us here on the 25th of November, and in which Count Bernstorff reported that it was to be expected that President Wilson would make up his mind to take his step by the New Year, Count Bernstorff accompanied his statement by the remark that it was, nevertheless, still a doubtful question, whether or not the President would conclude to do so, since he had to take public opinion into consideration, or believed that he had to take it into consideration, or something of the kind. All these circumstances indicated to me that we could not rely with any certainty upon a peace move by President Wilson. But, on the other hand, it was essential for us to bring about such a peace move at the earliest possible moment. The reasons have been stated in detail by Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg; they are also given in one of my telegrams. We wanted to avoid another winter campaign. We believed that, if this peace move was not made soon, or at least before Christmas, it was possible that the desire for peace and the longing for peace on the part of our enemies might be diminished by a cessation or a lull in the war operations, but, that if the reverse were the case, our preparations for a new campaign might induce our military and naval circles to insist upon the continuation of the war.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that set out in the telegram of the 25th of November?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: It is set out therein in detail. That was the point of view by which we were guided. We wanted to come to the point of a movement in the interests of peace as early as possible and in any event. And if I finally made up my mind in favor of our peace move, in spite of the fact that I believed that, looked at from without, it was susceptible of being interpreted as a sign of weakness, the following considerations were those which weighed with me: First, the fall of Bucharest was an event

which did not fail to leave its impression upon the whole world, and after such an event it was a difficult thing for our enemies to make and justify the assertion that we were coming out with a peace proposal at a moment of weakness or of collapse. In the second place, I did not close my eyes to the point of view which was precisely the one taken by the authorities of the interior departments, and particularly, too, by the Imperial Chancellor, that it was necessary that we should give the people—who, in general, were called upon to suffer very heavily as the result of existing war conditions—some proof that we, the government, would be glad to bring about peace, and that, if the bloodshed was to be continued, we were not the ones to blame. That was the reason which finally induced me, also, to agree to this peace proposal of the 12th of December. And, then, I took this view in connection with the press—to be sure, as I shall have to emphasize again for the benefit of Mr. Minister David, at a decidedly later date, namely, not until the 12th—and I took it for no other reason than purely tactical ones. There may well be a contradiction between this attitude toward the public and this attitude toward the press. But, gentlemen, these are just the methods of which the politician must avail himself if he expects to gain his point, and Minister of State Dr. David probably knows this just as well as I.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: His Excellency Mr. Zimmermann has already pointed out that, on account of communications made by Mr. Lansing, it had become very doubtful as to whether Wilson was going to make any peace move at all, or that in any event, the whole matter had been relegated once more to the far distant future. But it is precisely when we undertake to start on this premise that it is not easy to understand how we could say to the press: "We want to hurry up with our peace move so that we can anticipate that of Wilson"; for, if Wilson's move was put off, this was not the moment which called for haste. For there was absolutely no reason to fear that he would anticipate us. It does not seem to me that this point has been cleared up. The reason for precipitation would seem to have been eliminated by these very circumstances.

Moreover, Mr. Secretary of State Zimmermann, if I have understood him correctly, has once more stated that, for reasons of foreign policy, he would have considered it of greater importance for Wilson's peace move to have preceded ours. And that is obvious. Even if Wilson's peace move had come to naught, if Wilson had at the same time found us on his side, and if he had not been turned against us by any acts of ours, this would certainly have constituted a powerful political point in favor of that consummation, much more to be desired than the peace move itself, to wit, keeping the United States neutral. Wilson would have been our ally throughout the course of the entire peace move (laughter); yes, and we would have been Wilson's allies in the course of this move, which Wilson would have under-

taken for peace. Wilson would have made the proposal and we would have declared, "Certainly, we accept it; we are with you, Mr. President." The Entente would have been on the other side and would have opposed the Wilson move. If that had occurred—I repeat it—that would have created a situation psychologically in our favor, which would have prevented the United States from throwing off its neutrality and entering the war against us on the side of the Entente. What I mean is that, after all, that was the very highest political aim which, in those days, it was incumbent upon us to attain.

Therefore, I understand, I repeat, that it was announced on the part of the Imperial Government that we would prefer to have Wilson's peace move precede ours. If I understand Mr. Zimmermann aright, he, too, took this stand later, and so it is inconceivable from my point of view how, in spite of this, he could urge our press to proceed along a line which was bound vitally to jeopardize this whole arrangement with the United States.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Dr. David, I have already stated the reasons why I was not willing to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: I should consider this question as having been answered.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: I also consider that Dr. David's comments have been answered by my comments. As to what could have happened and what could have possibly occurred if we had taken or failed to take this or that step, these are considerations for the field of politics. In this way, we again enter into the domain of conjecture. What we want to do here is to establish facts. I can simply state, in answer to Dr. David, that I would have given the preference to a peace move on the part of President Wilson for the very reasons which he himself suggested. But the peace move did not come, and we believed that we were no longer able to wait for it. And so, when we had made our peace move, I considered that the matter was therewith settled. I hoped that President Wilson, in case he really desired to work in behalf of peace, would work in connection therewith, and I believed that he would do this, too, without it being necessary that our press here would come out for him in a particularly friendly or favorable manner. He had hesitated for a very long while, and consequently had no right to be astonished when we determined for ourselves to make a peace move on our own initiative. I hoped then that the President would back us up, but if, in the press conference, I took the stand which I have already described, I can only repeat that tactical considerations of national policy induced me to do so.

Was this absolutely the right thing to do? Dr. David would perhaps have handled the matter differently. I, for my part—and on this occasion I desire once more to emphasize the point particularly—was indeed skeptical from the outset, so far as a mediation by President Wilson was concerned. The reasons which caused me to feel this way may be briefly expressed.

The CHAIRMAN: If you please, your Excellency!

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Even the first exchange of telegrams which took place between Emperor William and President Wilson, and which was occasioned by the use of dum-dum bullets by our enemies, gave us, as you know, cause for serious thought. When we had turned to him, the President had given us an answer which was cool, repelling, you might almost say, out-and-out unfriendly. Then came the attitude of the President on the submarine question. From the very start, we had announced and continued to announce that we had made use of our submarine weapon only for the purposes of reprisal against those acts committed in absolute contempt of international law and which constituted a crass violation—

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency, I believe—excuse me if I interrupt you—that we are going too far afield. We really must limit ourselves to the theme which is provided by this information given to the press. I shall still have an opportunity of taking your Excellency's testimony later on, and in this case it would be better to discuss this question from the broad standpoint of your statement taken as a whole. You see, it is of material interest to the committee to learn the exact effect wrought by your statements made at that time, to the effect that it was our purpose to anticipate Wilson's peace move, and since, as I see, we have present one of the main participants at the interview, Mr. Bernhard, who was also the writer of this article in the *Vossische Zeitung* of the 23d of October, I should like, in accordance with the determination of the committee, to hear what Mr. Bernhard has to say as a witness in this case. - May I ask Mr. Bernhard to step forward?

(Witness Bernhard steps forward.)

What is your Christian name?

Witness Managing Editor BERNHARD: Georg.

The CHAIRMAN: Your age.

Witness BERNHARD: Forty-five years.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you care to take the oath with the religious formula included, or without it?

Witness BERNHARD: With the religious formula.

(Witness Managing Editor Bernhard is sworn as a witness.)

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bernhard, you are the writer of this article; it is, in any event, signed with the well-known Bhd. You will find, therefore, stated in this leading article, what I have already mentioned. It was furthermore stated here that it was the purpose of the announcement that the peace proposal should be anticipated; "It was given in that hearty, jovial tone of good-fellowship peculiar to the former Secretary of State." May I ask you to give us further detailed information with regard to the contents itself, in so far as it is still known to you, but above all, with regard to the effect which it had concerning what you took to be the meaning and purpose of the expression of the Secretary of State?

Witness BERNHARD: I should like, in the first place, to correct a false impression which appears to be prevalent here at the hearing. The Secretary of State's statement was not made on an occasion of the so-called press conference, but it was made on the occasion of a special and confidential conference which, if I recollect correctly, occurred in the small conference chamber of the Foreign Office.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: That is true.

Witness BERNHARD: And on that occasion there were present only—it may be that I am mistaken in the number—between ten and twenty representatives of the press, in all; there were present only the editors in chief of the great journals, and very few representatives of newspapers elsewhere. This meeting took place as the result of a sudden special call to conference, I believe, on December 12, shortly before the Imperial Chancellor delivered his speech in the Reichstag. (Witness Zimmermann indicates agreement.) I had retained in my memory the train of thought followed in the Secretary of State's speech, only in a general way, as I reproduced it. In order, however, to make certain that it agreed with the facts and that my recollection was not deceiving me, before publishing the matter I spoke at that time with one of my colleagues who had been present, and he agreed with me in the impression that I had received from the remarks made and, in addition thereto, repeated the words uttered in the form in which they had remained in his memory. I can not state, however, whether the wording is correct or not. But the wording which was repeated to me by my colleague was in exact accordance with the meaning, as I remember it. As I understood the remarks of the Secretary of State at that time, they were so worded: "We are threatened with a peace move on the part of Wilson."

The CHAIRMAN: Threatened?

Witness BERNHARD: Yes, threatened. I mean to say that that was my understanding of it. As I looked upon the political situation, I was very skeptical with regard to all peace moves which might emanate from Wilson. I believed that, for a number of economic reasons, America's interests were so closely allied to those of England that it would be impossible for the President of the United States to play an unbiased part. It was with this conception that I listened to what the Secretary of State had to say. In his words, I saw a confirmation of my interpretation of the political situation. I assumed that the Secretary of State entertained the same view, to wit, that President Wilson, for some reason which was unfavorable so far as Germany was concerned, was contemplating a peace move, and that we were making our German peace proposal in order to stop this from coming to pass. That was bound to be my opinion and my impression, so far as the words of the Secretary of State were concerned. These words constituted for me a confirmation of my opinion. It was not until much later that I learned, and in fact not until Count Bernstorff had returned, that it was we who had initi-

ated peace moves on the part of Wilson, and that it was at our suggestion that the President of the United States made up his mind to take up the matter of a peace move. Immediately after having received knowledge of these things, I published an article in the *Vossische Zeitung*, in which I called attention to the fact that entirely new situations had been brought about as a result thereof, and that we were confronted with duplicity which I, personally, considered most objectionable. But I did not know that before; on the contrary, I got from the Secretary of State's speech at the time that he made it, the impression which I have just described to you. After I learned what had taken place in the United States, I was most certainly greatly alarmed at this communication, at the real meaning or—let me say—at the double meaning of the communication of the Secretary of State.

The CHAIRMAN: We should like to know whether you personally recollect the actual words of his Excellency Zimmermann's statement, used at that time.

Witness BERNHARD: I do not remember the exact words.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you establish the fact in your conversation with your colleague, that this was the meaning?

Witness BERNHARD: Yes, my colleague went so far as to give the words themselves. But I can not testify under oath that they are correct.

The CHAIRMAN: The actual wording is not personally known to you?

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: What was the wording which your colleague repeated to you?

Witness BERNHARD: He told me that Secretary of State Zimmermann had spoken more or less as follows: "We would fix it so that Wilson would not have his finger in the pie."

The CHAIRMAN: That is just the meaning, not the actual wording?

Witness BERNHARD: Yes, that is what my colleague said to me—that that was the wording which he remembered. That is what I desired to suggest when I wrote in the *Vossische Zeitung* about "the jovial manner" of the Secretary of State. But it is just as possible—after my colleague told me what the wording was, I myself remembered that something similar to the wording given had been said.

The CHAIRMAN: Who was your colleague?

Witness BERNHARD: My colleague Baecker, of the *Deutsche Tageszeitung*.

The CHAIRMAN: Is he present?

(Voice: No.)

He is not here. I shall ask the witness to continue.

Witness BERNHARD: I should like to state that it was impossible for me to indulge in any other assumption at that time. I am very much amazed at the information which Mr. Zimmermann has given us here today, to the effect that at that time he gave the press erroneous information. I can certainly conceive how, for tactical reasons, some circumstances may exist

under which it is permissible to manipulate public opinion in a way which, perhaps at the moment, does not quite reflect the fact. What I can not understand, however, is that one can go as far as to withhold from the press the motives which prompt such action. And especially did it never occur to me that, upon calling together a number of the leading newspaper men under the seal of the strictest secrecy—

The CHAIRMAN: Come, Mr. Witness, this is going too far. You are exceeding the limits of what we desire to hear from you in the capacity of a witness; for that would be simply giving us a critical opinion, which is not pertinent.

Witness BERNHARD: I ask to be excused. It goes without saying that I would not permit myself, as a witness, to express a critical opinion. But the point here is to have it understood why it was possible for me to receive only the impression at that time which I have described. I was bound to assume that what I said to you represented the absolute facts. A number of the leading newspaper men were called together and sworn to the strictest secrecy, and I could not believe at that time that all of this was done for the purpose of misleading these men.

The CHAIRMAN: Well, of course, that is different; if that is what you want to show, that certainly comes within the limits of what you are supposed to testify to here. So you assumed that what Mr. Zimmermann had said was absolutely correct and you saw no tactical maneuver in it.

Witness BERNHARD: No.

The CHAIRMAN: So far as I can see, the examination of this witness has been covered.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Is it the witness's idea that if such a conference of the leading newspaper men was held, on the occasion of which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs communicates to them the reasons why a policy is followed, the press, even if such matters are confidential, is to work along these lines and to express these views if, finally, the expected incident comes to pass—in this case, a mediation in the interests of peace by Wilson? In the witness's opinion, was that the general purpose of a conference of that kind, and did the press avail itself of the information given it by the Secretary of State to this effect?

Witness BERNHARD: My view of such a confidential conference is this, that the press learns about the real motives which inspire the government, and makes such announcements as it considers right, according to its personal convictions and its party affiliations, but on the basis of the actual motive which inspires the government.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Well, was the question handled by the press along the lines desired by the Secretary of State?

Witness BERNHARD: At the moment, I can not say. But I hardly believe that anyone would have published an article stating that it was our purpose

to anticipate any move by President Wilson by our peace proposal. For in this case we would have violated a confidence.

The CHAIRMAN: I will ask Mr. Bernhard to retire.

We can now at once take up the question of the Belgian deportations.

Delegate DR. COHN: Another question with regard to his Excellency Zimmermann's attitude. After the United States had broken off diplomatic negotiations with us, or had entered into the war, another conference of the budget committee took place in this hall. As the result of the discussion, I remember one more remark that you made, your Excellency, which seems to me to be of importance at the present time for the purpose of establishing your attitude toward the whole question of a peace move and toward our peace proposal with regard to Wilson. At that time, you expressed yourself thus, to give the approximate meaning of your remarks and, in part, the literal wording: "The good thing about the break with the United States is that we have finally gotten rid of this person as peace mediator."

Witness ZIMMERMANN: I do not remember this remark, but it is quite possible that I made it. I was of the opinion that something had to be said to the main committee, and I was, as will be readily understood, very deeply wrought up by this break and by this war with the United States; I regretted it extremely, for I had always entertained the hope that our instructions, which we had sent off on the 28th of January to our Ambassador to be communicated to President Wilson, and which, certainly from our standpoint, were drawn up in such a way as to go very far to meet President Wilson's wishes, in that we accepted, in so many words, a peace mediation by Wilson, might have resulted in influencing the President to a certain extent. I had taken it for granted that President Wilson—assuming that he had a certain amount of good feeling toward us and that his attitude was, to a certain extent, neutral,—in case he had not actually gone absolutely against us and become our enemy, might even then have gone into the matter and considered that he was not absolutely called upon to decide to break with us. I also deplored the fact that the President had not received the Ambassador personally, in order that the two points of view might be analyzed and compared, and that the further steps which we had taken to meet his wishes and our willingness to meet them might have been gone into. But, as is well known, the President broke off relations at once. Count Bernstorff had already talked the matter over with Colonel House on the 29th. Colonel House had naturally come in touch with the President, and, in view of the importance of the question, it would have only been natural, and we might well have expected it to be the case, that the President would have found an opportunity to talk the matter over with our Ambassador. But he simply made up his mind to break with us. I was, as can readily be understood, very much disappointed by this occurrence, and believed that

I was at least justified in assuming that my skeptical judgment—the judgment which I had always had deep down in my heart—the doubt which I had always felt with regard to the President's neutrality, was now completely confirmed. I believed that I was bound to assume that the President was, in fact, our enemy, and that therefore, on the whole, it was best that we had done without peace mediation on his part. That was what I certainly had in mind if I said anything of the kind, and that was my idea with regard to the situation.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Your Excellency states that you were very much disappointed by the attitude of President Wilson after our declaration of the U-boat war. This is, in a way, contradicted by the contents of the files, according to which the Foreign Office as well as the Imperial Chancellor, with regard to whose intentions the Foreign Office must assuredly be deemed to have been advised, had invariably taken the view that the declaration of the unrestricted U-boat war would lead not only to a breaking off of diplomatic relations, but to a declaration of war by the United States as well.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Certainly we took this view; but this instruction, this new aspect entered the situation through Count Bernstorff's communication which was based upon Colonel House's statement that President Wilson was now offering his peace mediation in earnest, and that, for this purpose, he desired to know what our war aims were. At that point, our action took the form of sending a telegram which, in my opinion, contained concessions of a most extraordinary nature, really going as far as it was possible to go under existing conditions. We were quick to seize this last chance which was offered us for avoiding the danger of a break and a war with the United States; and if we examine and have this telegram read here, it will very generally, I believe, impress everyone as being drawn up in a most conciliatory way and as having expressed our honest desire to come to an understanding. In the telegrams we, moreover, stated expressly that, unfortunately, we could not block the use of the U-boat weapon immediately, because this was a physical impossibility; the Navy stated to us that the orders had gone out; we could not block the U-boats, but we were ready to call a stop to the U-boat war as soon as the President offered us the possibility of entering upon peace negotiations upon a reasonable basis. That was our position, and we believed that, if the President really desired to bring about peace and had not definitely taken a stand against us, he would, as a matter of fact, be able to accomplish it and put it through; and, in my opinion, he could have put it through if he had wanted to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: It will be better to postpone further statements on this point until after the general testimony. I desire now to take up a point which I would like to have answered by his Excellency Mr. Zimmermann. The question involved is that of the deportation of the Belgian workmen to Germany. I believe that his Excellency Zimmermann is better informed

with regard to this question than his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg. In this connection, I refer to a telegram of the Ambassador at Vienna, Count Wedel, of December 21, 1916, in which he expressed himself more or less as follows:

Gerard is of the opinion that it is of the most vital importance that the deportation of Belgian workmen to Germany be stopped. That the good impression created by the speech of the Imperial Chancellor, in which he openly stated that Belgium was not included in any of the war aims of Germany, had been almost entirely destroyed by this measure, and that a quite indescribable feeling of indignation had been aroused in the United States thereby. That this policy carried out against their Catholic coreligionists had made an extremely deplorable impression even upon the Irish. That for this reason many of them had entirely changed their attitude and gone over into the camp of the Entente. . . . The Ambassador hoped that he would be successful in this, since, according to his knowledge, neither Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg nor Baron v. Bissing were supporters of this measure.

Baron Burian (this is what is stated in conclusion) made the following comments: To the suggestion of Ambassador Gerard with regard to representations which he proposed to make in Berlin concerning the Belgian workmen, he had nothing to add, as he took it for granted that your Excellency in person would be able to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of this regulation.

I was able to perceive on this occasion (he concluded) that here, too, wrong ideas are entertained with regard to the carrying out of the plan for the deportation of Belgian workmen. It might be a good plan for more emphasis to be laid by the press on the considerate methods employed by the German authorities, the good maintenance provided for the Belgian workmen and their families, etc.

May I request your Excellency to take up here this communication from Count Wedel, which, after all, is of the greatest importance in connection with the entire feeling all over America, and to state what you suggested as the result thereof and how you sized up all those conditions connected with the Belgian deportations, etc.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: The question of the Belgian deportations was a matter which in no way directly concerned the Foreign Office. It was a domestic measure. From my standpoint with regard to Foreign Affairs, I naturally was a bitter opponent of the whole business. Such measures were bound to have an extraordinarily bad effect from the standpoint of foreign policies, and I never ceased to set forth my views on the subject to the proper authorities. Still, reasons of military necessity were imperatively conclusive for the authorities within whose competence the matter came. I was not in the position to stop these measures. When the telegram arrived from Vienna, I took up the matter once more and attempted to have these deportations checked or, at least, carried out in the most considerate way possible, in order that I might be in the position to say to our enemies

on the outside, who were always declaring that we were perpetrating new cruelties and unheard of atrocities: "*Voilà*, the matter is not so bad as you think. We have done so-and-so." Naturally, I looked upon the affair as peculiarly unfortunate from the standpoint of foreign policy.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency, could you not have exercised all the power that was in you, in view of the fact that you had in contemplation Wilson's peace move which, after all, was to lead to a consummation greatly to be desired, so that the Belgian deportations, of the bad influence of which upon the United States you were well aware and which was particularly brought to your attention by Count Wedel's telegram—what I mean to say is, could you not, in your capacity as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, have impressed your views with still greater vigor upon the military authorities under whose sole jurisdiction the deportations came, impressed these views to the end that a stop be put to the deportations or that they be carried out in a manner which should prevent, or nearly prevent, the rendering of any unfavorable judgment in the matter?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: I can only repeat that I made what use I could of this information and that I followed it up very energetically and impressively.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I would like to say a few general words on this subject. To me, too, from the standpoint of statesmanship, these deportations were unwelcome to the greatest degree. The military branch claimed that they were matters of necessity, regulations resulting from a forced situation, essential for the purpose of carrying out the Hindenburg program, required in order to carry it out at all. So far as I know, it was not possible to carry out this program even then; but the argument of inexorable military necessity always confronted me. In spite of this, I attempted, in full agreement with Governor General Baron v. Bissing, to use all means at our command to do away at least with the severity which characterized the regulations. I personally requested Governor General Baron v. Bissing to come to Berlin. Baron v. Bissing came at once; I talked the matter over with him in detail. I remember perfectly well that at that time he showed me all the letters, his correspondence which he had had with the Supreme High Command of the Army. We discussed individual cases. I thought, in view of existing circumstances, both material and personal, the best thing to do would be to have General v. Bissing take the matter up further by personal interviews with Field Marshal v. Hindenburg and General Ludendorff. That seemed to me to be the best way of coming quickly to the point desired. The Governor General—it is well known that he was a man advanced in years and that his health was such, unfortunately, as to leave much to be desired at that time—went to Pless that same evening—he had left Brussels in the morning—and brought about certain mitigations in matters of practice. At that time, in my opinion, that was the thing which promised most success, and it was done.

And thereafter I was busied in continually working along the lines of putting an end to or mitigating those severities which had been brought to light. The files bearing on this situation must be most copious and part of them must be in the foreign office. The whole incident came up in connection with an order of Governor General Baron v. Bissing, looking toward the forced occupation of those persons in Belgium who were without work and who were unwilling to work, and as the result of whom it was feared that the safety of the entire occupied territory was jeopardized. According to my recollection, negotiations were taken up with the Foreign Office for the purpose of determining to what extent such an order would be in accord with general principles of international law. And then, too, there should be, in my opinion, a very extensive correspondence touching this matter in the office of the Interior Department, within the jurisdiction of which the military government of Belgium also came, among the records of the Supreme High Command of the Army as well, and, as I must assume, also in the War Department, in connection with the subsequent accommodations of the Belgians who were deported. I am of the opinion that if the committee desires to obtain a perfectly clear picture of the whole episode, it will be necessary to call for all of these records in their entirety.

As a matter of fact, a contradiction existed here too, and characterized the whole episode, consisting in the fact that a measure which was designated by the Supreme High Command of the Army as being a forced measure of military necessity, went hand in hand with political results of an unfavorable nature, as has been the case in the many experiences which have come about in this war in connection with situations of the most varied kind; and, as will be readily understood, as far as it was possible I opposed those conditions which were described to me as essential to military aims, with political counter-arguments. This is self-evident.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, was the deportation question—and it is only to this extent that it is of interest to this committee, for in what measure the deportation was or was not in violation of international law will be determined by another committee—a question of higher statesmanship, the settlement of which was important in the extreme, if a desire for peace was to be created in the neutral countries and in the United States? This question was made a question of higher statesmanship at the moment when the United States made its formal protest; and, if I am not in error, Switzerland, too, presented a formal protest coming from the neutral countries, against the deportation of Belgians for the purpose of being put at forced labor, and if I now understand you correctly, the political branch was convinced that, for political reasons, the measure should be revoked. As the case stands, then, is it a fact that the political branch was not able to impose its political will upon the military authorities with regard to a question of higher statesmanship? Is that your idea? What you wanted was

to smooth over the matter, to put an end to it. The demand of higher statesmanship came to naught when opposed to the military arm. That is what I gather from your statement. I should like to ask you if my interpretation is correct.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Naturally, I looked upon the matter as one of higher statesmanship, and hoped that the view-points which I had expressed would be met. On the other hand, military necessities, as I have already told you, led to a point of view diametrically opposed, and it was not possible for me to insist upon the carrying out of my political views in opposition to these military necessities.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Perhaps I may suggest something which may help to bring the contradiction of which the recording secretary has spoken, into the right perspective. Most certainly it was a matter of higher statesmanship, and military necessities were opposed to political interests. But in this connection, I desire to point out—as I have already shown in my earlier statements—that, as a matter of fact, Wilson's peace move was not interfered with, but that it was carried out to the full extent of the intention existing in the middle of November of the year 1916. And here, too, would probably be material, the question whether the deportations of the Belgian workers had the effect of having the Entente not only reject our peace proposal so curtly, but to answer Wilson's peace note, even, in a way which looks to me like a rejection. It is certainly very possible that the indignation or the excitement which resulted from the deportations of the workers from Belgium played its part in bringing about this result. I should like, however, to remark, that the hatred, the slandering of Germany by characterizing it as a nation of barbarians—for we were known by no other name in England than that of Huns, and the nickname "Boches" in France was not exactly an affectionate characterization of German attributes—this hatred, I say, had of itself reached a high point. There were so many lies and calumnies spread abroad concerning the supposed atrocities alleged to have been committed by our soldiers everywhere and generally, not as exceptional cases here and there evidenced by war, which occasionally calls into existence brutal passions in man, but we were very generally estimated to be people of this kind. Whether or not the deportations of Belgian workmen was a conclusively decisive feature, I am inclined to doubt, in view of the attitude in the hostile countries.

And then, again, to come back to the question of the conflict between the military and the political branches: I am of the opinion that if, when Belgian workmen were brought into Germany for the purpose of labor there, the actual carrying out of this policy had not been characterized by measures which were simply such as to find no justification in individual cases; if this had not happened, but if the policy had been carried out in accordance with the original plan of Governor General Baron v. Bissing, not only would

this matter not have invoked questions of international law, but the entire uproar would have been avoided. And in this matter, too, we should emphasize the German standpoint very strongly—at least, so far as I am concerned, I consider it a duty to do so. In sharp contrast to the importation by the Entente of enormous and unlimited amounts of ammunition, with the thought of which the Allies could comfort themselves, we were cut off from the importation of raw materials and had to rely absolutely, throughout the period of the war, upon our labor resources, which were no longer numerically sufficient. The fact that under these conditions the military authorities, whose entire military responsibility for the future was daily before their eyes in connection with every operation which they undertook, now took the stand that we must stop at nothing in order that we might have at our disposal the necessary man-power for the purpose of the manufacture of ammunition, together with everything necessarily connected therewith, is perfectly easy to conceive and, moreover, constitutes a fact which I, as Imperial Chancellor, was called upon to recognize. Those elements against which I had to take measures, and those occasions upon which I had to take them, were merely abuses incidental to administration. The disadvantageous results with regard to the overwrought feeling of the Entente in whose opinion, do what we would, we were bound to remain the barbarians and the Huns who were to be overwhelmed and punished—that was a matter of conviction with the Entente once and for all—these consequences were what we were bound to accept as part of the bargain. If—I repeat it—the measure had been carried out in accordance with the intention which had existed in the mind of Governor General Baron v. Bissing from the first, whose activities aroused my highest esteem in connection with his government of Belgium, and this, too, in connection with matters political—if these abuses had been done away with, it is very probable that the howl in the foreign countries would have been raised anyhow. But we would have been able to meet it much more easily, and we would have been able to say here in this hall and at this time: The incident was not characterized by brutality and hardships which were avoidable. Unfortunately, we are not altogether in a position to make this statement. I took my measures against those objectionable things which did occur.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Did your Excellency know that at that time thousands of people died? Were you, further, aware of the circumstances that, when Belgians were being brought over here by the thousands, as a matter of fact there was no opportunity for them to be put to work, and under these circumstances was it not important as a matter of higher statesmanship to do away with this indignation which perhaps was considered justified by the nations on account of these circumstances, in order to leave the road clear for the desire for peace to return to these peoples, if such desire really existed? Was that not the task to be fulfilled by the statesman

at a time when a peace move was being prepared and where, too, it was necessary to mould public opinion, on which the acceptance or repudiation of such a peace move depended?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Naturally, what the recording secretary has stated is absolutely to the point. I simply permitted myself to refer to the fact that in the course of this war the necessities created by the war conflicted with one another to a great extent and that it was impossible to carry out the plans which were considered sound from a political standpoint, quite aside from obstacles otherwise encountered. That is a matter of general knowledge. Military necessities often made themselves felt in such cases. Moreover, these are matters, Mr. Recording Secretary—I may well call this to your attention—this dualism which we have already mentioned was in principle also present during the years 1866 and 1870. And what little pigmy wars these were as compared to this great struggle between nations where, as all must understand, the element of dualism, the conflict between the necessities and requirements of the political and military branches, must inevitably be much stronger. So when judgment is to be rendered in cases where these two forces have been in conflict with one another, I suggest that you bear in mind that, after all, the one did not come into conflict with the other as the result of malicious intent, but was due to the conviction that the responsibility which either the one or the other force had to assume must be borne, and that the demands imposed must be carried through—the demands which carried with them the responsibility for our people, the salvation of our people, the salvation of our Fatherland. I request that this be taken into consideration.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: But the situation certainly existed, your Excellency, in which either the military point of view or the political point of view was right, and where a fusion of both was no longer possible.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: We are discussing here the great questions which are to be submitted to me. The one question appears to me to have been settled in the main in the committee, and that is the question of the double move consisting of our peace proposal and of Wilson's peace move. The second great question is the 9th of January. There the ideas of the political side and the military side came into conflict. The question of the Belgian workmen, serious as it has been and much as I have deplored it, is, in comparison with the other questions, merely a side issue.

The CHAIRMAN: Were the military authorities not informed that it was possible that the peace move would be definitely jeopardized by this action? Were they informed of this fact, and in reply thereto, did the military authorities say yes, but that either our move or the Wilson move would go ahead? There was no necessity to quibble about terms in order to show that the latter would be put in great jeopardy thereby. Did the military authorities express themselves in reply to this question?

Witness v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Whether this circumstance was set out in such sharp-cut terms or not, the files will show, and since I am appearing merely in the capacity of a secondary witness—at least, that is what I suppose my part is—it is not possible for me to institute a search into the records. I do not believe that the comparison was made in such clear-cut terms. That the deportation of Belgian workmen caused great excitement in the world was to be seen by a glance at the newspapers, and the Supreme High Command of the Army knew that. The Supreme High Command of the Army knew that when Governor General Baron v. Bissing took the matter up with them himself. He probably stated that he had come from the Imperial Chancellor, who absolutely agreed with his point of view. We can readily understand that these conflicts existed. I must, in any event, admit without hesitation, if I am to express myself on this question of the deportation of the Belgian workmen, my object was to take prompt steps to do away with existing cruelties. I could say nothing in opposition to the principle announced by the Supreme High Command of the Army that we needed more Belgian workmen to carry out our Hindenburg program. That would have been to go beyond the limits of my responsibility. I could not say: "No, I forbid that." I would then have received the answer: "Then we shall not finish with our Hindenburg program." We must bear clearly in mind the situation which we occupied with regard to these military questions.

I would now like to come back to one point. I believe that it was Delegate Gothein, or was it the recording secretary?—it was probably the recording secretary who asked me whether I knew that thousands of persons had died, that the Belgian workers found no place in the barracks and, furthermore, found no work. I do not know how many Belgians died. I do not know whether the numbers are accurate or not; I should not like to say that thousands have died. That people did die, that sickness and cold were in their midst, is well known to me. I also know that more people were deported than for whom, for the time being, there was enough work. According to my best recollection, probably General Groener still had charge of the matter at that time. I remember perfectly plainly that I said to the military authorities, or at least gave orders for them to be told: "Now, see to it that the Belgians who are here and who can not be kept busy, and who are suffering under the conditions which exist here, or who are not personally adapted for the work, be brought back at the earliest possible moment."

Delegate GOTHEIN: Was not the Foreign Office already amply provided with authority in this matter, in view of the fact that the deportation of the Belgian people was against the rules of land warfare adopted at the Hague Conference? And I would ask you, too, as to whether representations with regard to this question were not made to the Foreign Office by other neutral Powers in addition to Switzerland, and whether the United States of America did not voice a direct protest against it?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: That must appear from the files. Without a knowledge of what is in the files, I can say nothing. Protests came from the United States. I do not recollect that any other Power except Switzerland protested. I do not know whether the recording secretary has found anything in the files.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Allow me to interrupt you. Reports with regard to the injurious effect of the measure came in from many ambassadors in foreign countries, as in the case of Ambassador Count Brockdorff and particularly in the case of Count Bernstorff.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: There is not the slightest doubt about it; this is the stand which I always took. I said that it was regrettable, that something must be done to deprive our enemies of this reason for inciting others against us. It goes without saying that this was the standpoint which I took as one dealing with foreign affairs, and that is the stand that I always took.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The main point is that at a time when we were trying to pave the way to a peace, this stumbling block was allowed to lie in the way.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: May I add a few words? I have already stated that it would have been the right thing to do from the standpoint of logic and statesmanship, if we had been able to remove this stumbling block. But let me again call your attention to the situation. We had, on the one hand, the demand of the Supreme High Command of the Army, unqualifiedly based upon an absolute war necessity; on the other hand, skepticism, the grounds for which I have already mentioned. But at the same time it is always necessary to keep clearly in mind the actual conditions affecting our own peace proposal and Wilson's peace move, those conditions which would result in case both peace proposals were rejected. In such case, war would once more burst into flame. For this eventuality, too, we had to prepare. In this way, the demands of the military branch, based upon the forced war situation, become entitled to great weight.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Basing your remarks upon reasons of foreign policy, your Excellency argued at the time against the "Auxiliary Service Act" being passed before the peace proposal was made. I mean that in that case you availed yourself of reasons of foreign policy. Might that not have been done in the case of the deportation question as well?

The CHAIRMAN: There are still two questions on the call list, which have been submitted by Delegates Gothein and Dr. Schücking. Have they been answered in the course of the discussion?

Delegate DR. COHN: I should like to call attention to the following feature of the Belgian deportation question. The war began with a statement on the part of the Imperial Chancellor that the injustice which had been done to the Belgian State would have to be made good. It is well known

that the entire conduct of the war was carried on under the disadvantage that, in the mind of the world, it was bearing the burden of an injustice perpetrated against Belgium. Now comes the peace move, and it is ushered in with an act which is looked upon as an enormity of injustice perpetrated against the Belgian people. Was this combination kept in mind and, as the result, was an effort made to nullify this renewed act of injustice against Belgium under any and all circumstances before a peace move was undertaken?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Dr. Cohn, of course, these considerations were weighed by me. It goes without saying that I hoped that our own peace proposal, as well as Wilson's peace move, should not be thwarted thereby, or by other preceding incidents of the war. But, and I have already given the reasons for this, it was even for the Imperial Chancellor a matter of immense difficulty, if not of impossibility, to do away with a measure concerning which the military authorities said: "If this measure is not carried out, we shall simply be unable to win the war."

Delegate DR. COHN: Allow me to make the following remarks. War, representing as it does the highest form of a national undertaking, must, according to the principles of international law, only be carried on by means of instrumentalities which are part and parcel of the nation. Now, leaving the question of the invasion of Belgium quite aside, the Belgian incident stands forth in sight of all the world in crass relief as evidence of the fact that it was the intention of those conducting the German side of the war to carry it on, not only by means of its own resources, but at the expense and by the use of the resources of the population of the occupied territories. This was the thought which, from the standpoint of Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, must have dominated the political direction of the war, and this was the thought which must have been influential in bringing about that view-point which Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg has announced here on a number of occasions—that he was limited, in the scope of his activities, to bringing about a mitigation of the methods in which it was carried on, but that he had nothing to do with the general principle involved. Did not these two conflicting forces, the military view-point and the national political view-point, directly and inevitably come into conflict, and did it not devolve upon the Imperial Chancellor to fight the matter to a finish three or four months before January 9, 1917?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Of course the question can be put in this theoretical form after the fact. It is true that we had to deal with an anomaly of international law. I ask that this be shown by the records of the Foreign Office. I am not in a position to do this. I should like again, as *amicus curiae* of the committee, to consider it my duty to assist in reaching the truth, and not personally to reconstruct the records, which have certainly been at the disposal of the committee for a far longer period, and in

far greater detail than has been the case with me. The records of the Foreign Office will show to what extent the order—I believe that it was in the month of August—of General Baron v. Bissing with regard to the employment of the unemployed can be considered in harmony with the rules of international law. I am not in a position to give information with regard to these details, and I can not really be expected to have been informed with regard to all these points. I remember that his Excellency Mr. Kriege, who is extraordinarily familiar with all these questions, conferred with me repeatedly with regard to the matter. At that time, I was well informed about it, but today, after three years have passed, I do not believe that the committee will expect that I am still just as definitely informed with regard to these considerations.

The CHAIRMAN: May I interrupt? Consul Müller finds that he has a remark to make with regard to this point.

Consul MÜLLER: The records of the Foreign Office contain copious data. Since the fourth subcommittee is probably busied with the details of this deportation question, the data of the Foreign Office are not compiled at this time.

The CHAIRMAN: Then I will ask your Excellency to continue.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The anomaly of international law was unquestionably to be found in the execution; but this plea, I believe, will not be denied me: Are we forever to talk of nothing but our own sins, even those consisting in the anomalies of international law, we who stand face to face with an anomaly of international law like England's blockade through which (raising his voice) our people have been relegated to an existence of misery for generations? (Loud applause from the spectators.)

The CHAIRMAN: That closes the matter.

One question, which the committee would like to have answered, bears on the Emperor's speech which was made at Mülhausen on the 13th of December, that is, on the day after the date on which our peace proposal went out—a peace proposal which you, your Excellency, earnestly desired might really bring about peace. The question which we now have to ask you, your Excellency, is whether the publication of this speech through the W. T. B. took place with your knowledge and consent.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The speech was not presented to me before it was made public.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Was it in accordance with the general order of things, that imperial addresses of this kind had to be submitted before they were published, and who is finally to blame for the fact that this speech was not submitted to your Excellency before it was published, in view of the great political significance which the speech had?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I should like to request that in this connection, too, the general situation be kept in mind. Probably every time

that His Majesty went to the front, which very often took place, he had troops assembled and addressed them. These addresses had, it goes without saying, military aspects. Political questions were more remote. It is likely that these addresses were then given to the press. In this connection, I repeatedly instructed the representative of the Foreign Office at the General Headquarters—for I did not personally accompany His Majesty on these trips to the front—as follows: "Please see to it that if such speeches are made to an unusually large assembly of troops and contain any unusual features, they are submitted to me before they are made public; if they involve matters of political significance of any kind, see to it that you get into touch with me before they are made public." This provision existed. I remember a speech of the Emperor's—I do not know where the address was made but it was in the east—which contained expressions which, from the political standpoint, I should have preferred not to have been made public; the representative of the Foreign Office was of the same opinion. Consequently, certain corrections were made in this speech. Subsequently, the original wording of the address was, after all, I do not know how, published in the press, and this led to difficulties. So much is certain: I warned the representative of the Foreign Office in the General Headquarters, who was generally present on such occasions—and, moreover, he invariably obeyed this instruction to the letter and conscientiously to the extent that it was possible for him to do so,—to prevent addresses which might have a detrimental political effect from being published without having been previously submitted to me. With regard to the Mülhausen speech, I must answer the question put to me, in the negative.

The CHAIRMAN: It naturally followed that this speech, as appears at more than one point in the records, did not have a good effect. The various ambassadors, from the most widely separated neutral States, stated that the impression was a bad one and that something must be done in order to eradicate this impression. Was anything ever done along this line?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: That is a detail. I really can not answer that at the moment. At that time, an instruction went to Berne, in which it was explained to the Minister there what stand he was to take to tone down to a certain extent the comments of the press. I do not know whether you have this instruction in mind; you will in all probability find such an instruction in the records.

The CHAIRMAN: That is right. But it is of no further consequence.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: The instruction is as follows:

Telegram of December 18, 1916. I beg to call attention to the expressions of the Imperial Chancellor in the course of his Reichstag speech of the 12th instant, according to which the world is indebted, above all, to our Monarch for our peace move.

The move will be carried on by us with the earnest desire to bring it to a favorable issue.

But if our efforts should come to naught as the result of the desire of our enemies to destroy us, we shall continue to carry on the fight to the limit of our energy and strength. The natural result of a rejection of our peace proposal was expressed by His Majesty in language which was suited to the temper of the purely military establishment, without involving the idea of a threat against our enemies.

I sent similar telegrams to Berne, Copenhagen, The Hague, Stockholm, and Christiania.

The CHAIRMAN: We now come to the second fundamental question, to which we must give some time, since it has not as yet been fully cleared up by the statements which his Excellency has made up to this time. It is necessary, first, to read the conditions which were drawn up by us in the course of an agreement with Austria to set forth the peace conditions which we would presumably demand. May I ask the recording secretary to read them.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Dr. Burian knew that an agreement was to be reached with regard to the peace conditions which were to lie at the bottom of our peace proposal of December 12. I will now read the agreement which was reached as a result of the cooperation of the Supreme High Command, the political branch, and the Emperor. The conditions are as follows:

1. Recognition of the kingdom of Poland.
2. Annexation of the territory of Courland and Lithuania in such a way that, including the kingdom of Poland, a good strategic frontier against Russia will be obtained, extending from north to south.
3. Treaty of commerce with Russia and, in this connection, economic advantages.
4. Guarantees in Belgium which, if possible, are to be established as the result of negotiations with King Albert himself. In case sufficient guarantees should not be obtained, the annexation of Liège with corresponding areas.
5. Evacuation of the French occupied territory, with the exception of Briey and Longwy, in return for the evacuation of that portion of Alsace-Lorraine now occupied by the French, and strategic boundary adjustments for us in Alsace-Lorraine, as well as war indemnities or compensation.
6. Return of the colonies with the exception of Kiaochow, the Carolines, and the Mariana Islands, under a general agreement regarding colonial possessions; the acquisition of the Congo State or a part thereof.
7. Indemnification of Germans living abroad and of German foreign possessions to the extent of damage done thereto.
8. Incorporation of Luxemburg into the German Empire. This would seem to be necessary in case we should not¹ acquire Briey and Longwy.

¹ According to a correction of these minutes in the minutes of the fifteenth session, this passage should read: "should acquire," etc. See note, *post*, p. 905.

These are the conditions which received the Emperor's approval, were proposed by the then Imperial Chancellor, and were agreed to by the Supreme High Command of the Army.

Austria's conditions are as follows:

1. Integrity of the Monarchy.
2. Slight modifications of the boundary against Russia.
3. Strategic boundary modifications against Roumania (of the Iron Gate and possibly also the Valley of the Bistritza).
4. Restoration of the kingdom of Serbia, involving the following cessions:
 - (a) The territory promised to Bulgaria;
 - (b) The Albanian territory to Albania;
 - (c) The Matshwa and Belgrade to Austria-Hungary.

In order to satisfy Bulgaria, Baron Burian will possibly concede it more territory than is contained in that above referred to. The restored remainder of Serbia is to be closely connected with the Monarchy from the economic point of view.

5. Restoration of the kingdom of Montenegro, involving the cession of certain tracts of territory to Austria-Hungary and Albania.
6. Establishment of an independent Albania under an Austrian protectorate.
7. Strategic boundary modifications against Italy, which simply involve isolated and barren mountains and therefore do not amount to an annexation.

In this connection, I may call attention to the fact that, according to the records, his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg considered that the conditions of Austria-Hungary went too far, and, in so doing, stated that the Russian enemy had gotten a foothold deep in Galicia. I further call attention to the fact that the demand that Briey and Longwy be annexed was characterized by his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg, in a letter to General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg, as not constituting a *conditio sine qua non*. In a later draft this demand of annexation was not set out in definite terms, and only general "strategic and economic frontier adjustments as well as frontier extensions" were demanded of France. I call further attention to the fact that there is a memorandum according to which these conditions are to be looked upon from the outside as maximum conditions and from the inside as minimum conditions, and that the details were to be reserved for the peace negotiations. As I have stated, these conditions were established, according to the records, with the agreement of the Supreme High Command of the Army. General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg took exception to one point only; that is, he demanded that England should pay a war indemnity in return for the restoration of Belgium, provided that no annexations and no guarantees should be considered. His Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg opposed this demand of General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg by pointing to the fact that it was England herself who was demanding restitution and that, con-

sequently, she would certainly not be ready to pay damages; at all events, Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, to be sure, states in this letter to Hindenburg that he was not prepared "to discuss in any way the question" which involved a demand for reparation on the part of England.

Witness IMPERIAL CHANCELOR V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: On what points is information requested from me in this connection?

The CHAIRMAN: Is it correct that these peace conditions were actually drawn up as we have shown to be the case by the records?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Of course, if it is so set out in the records, they must establish the fact. If I may make a statement myself with regard to the matter, I would say that in the course of my general *exposé* on Friday morning I gave my views with regard to the weight to be attributed to an agreement reached concerning war aims. I stated on that occasion that, during the entire period of the war—and later, too—I considered this establishment of war aims, this general agreement on war aims, as labor that led to nothing, as long as the possibility of negotiations did not exist, as long as the opportunity was not afforded to make negotiations possible by the announcement of war aims. This agreement on war aims which was reached between ourselves and Austria, in other words, between us and our ally, had merely one object, and that was to establish a certain agreement between the opposing aspirations of the participants, to the extent that they were in conflict. The recording secretary has called attention to the fact that there is a memorandum of mine in the records. Naturally, at the present time I do not know what it contains. But I may state, for instance, that it was perfectly plain to me that the war aims of Austria went altogether too far and appeared to me to be impossible at a time when the Russian armies were planted in the heart of Galicia. The theoretical purpose of this exposition of war aims is made apparent from this very circumstance. And, so far as our own war aims are concerned, I ventured to state last Friday that, in my opinion, assuming that negotiations could have been made possible, matters would have taken the following course: That if the readiness to enter into negotiations had been once established, as a result of a mutual sounding of each other's attitude by the statesmen taking part therein, we could have said, bearing in mind the military situation and the situation in its entirety: "What can I get at this time, or what must I concede? How does my case stand?" It was not until then that a definite program could be drawn up. Upon how much I was going to insist, to what extent I was willing to go beyond those terms, to what extent I could insist upon them afterwards, to what extent I could announce that this or that was to be considered a *conditio sine qua non*—why, these things simply depended upon the general situation at the fronts and at home; it was these circumstances which would have dictated the attitude to be adopted at the time. Therefore, I should like once more—I have already done so very recently—to

request that an importance be not attributed to a setting out of peace conditions or of war aims to which, under the circumstances of the case, they are absolutely not entitled.

The CHAIRMAN: So far as I am concerned, question No. 2 is fully answered.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, in your statement on the first day of the hearing, you described the peace proposal as a means, as a handle to be used in fighting the aims of annexation. Now, these peace conditions have been read aloud. In part, at least, they involve annexation. How, then, is it that, according to your view, you are in a position to oppose desires for annexation coming from other sources? Moreover, it is stated in the peace proposal which we announced publicly that the rights of other nations are not to be infringed upon. These peace conditions, this annexation of Liège, this annexation of Courland, of Lithuania, etc., would certainly seem to constitute an infringement upon the rights of other nations. So I shall ask you to give us still another explanation on this point. The Congo State! Luxemburg!

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Certainly. Of course, of course! I would, however, like to call your attention to another statement that was made on Friday. By the setting out of these war aims, a maximum of the political war aims was brought into contact with a minimum of the military war aims. It goes without saying that, in questions of this kind, a compromise is involved. Viewing the matter from this standpoint, the Supreme High Command of the Army looked upon certain acquisitions in the east as essential from the standpoint of strategy. I had my own ideas with regard to these strategic necessities. I will talk to you quite frankly on the point.

I recently objected to having been called a pessimist. And I spoke of this, that, even after the entrance of the United States into the war, a peace would have been obtainable by us at any time which, indeed, would not have been a good peace, but under the terms of which we would unquestionably have been able to preserve our existence and to have maintained our position in the world as a great Power. In my opinion, this possibility always existed. I was never a pessimist. But to return to what I was speaking of: It is true that I was of the opinion, with regard to these strategic necessities, that if the war were to end along any lines which could be endurable so far as we were concerned, as I myself hoped would be the case even after America's entrance into the war, then, after the war, the world would have been granted a proportionate respite of peace. It is pretty hard for me to believe in an everlasting peace, particularly when I consider the state of mind of the Entente, and the measures adopted by it at Versailles for the purpose of establishing a perpetual peace. But I believed that we would have peace for a time, at any rate. But how could we at that time foresee strategic necessities in case a future war were to break out? That always seemed impossible to me, in view of the incredible advances of science which

leave the conduct of the next war, and the method in which it is to be conducted, wholly in the dark. I always took this point of view.

And, what is more, these peace conditions were nothing but a compromise between the political and military authorities. And to puzzle our heads at this time, after the event, with regard to these peace aims which were agreed upon at that time with Austria, now when we are actually in the midst of this disaster which has overcome us, after the war aims of our opponents have thwarted our aims in this disastrous manner, seems to be nothing more nor less than useless. I beg to be excused from any further detailed statement with regard to the point.

To revert to what the recording secretary has just stated, that is, that a contradiction is to be found in the fact that though I just stated that it was my purpose, on the one hand, to exercise an influence on the pacifistic elements in the foreign countries, I had, on the other hand, actually set up these war aims of annexation myself—well, gentlemen, we did not make public at that time, in any way or in detail, those war aims which we had agreed upon, but we took our stand upon the general platform of equal rights to all, etc.—the recording secretary had the kindness to make a point of this,—just as is stated in our peace proposal. So that, after all, in discussing the compromise which was actually necessary in order that the whole business should not fall to pieces prematurely—of course, subsequently it did fall to pieces—we are not justified in saying that there is a contradiction here, particularly when it is known that I, who fought hard to bring about a peace by negotiation, would not have made negotiations depend upon the acceptance of demands of annexation.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: May I put another question?

The CHAIRMAN: If you please!

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Was not an absolutely unhampered statement with regard to Belgium a condition precedent to any possibility of arriving at a peace by negotiation? That was, even at that time, the main problem. Is your Excellency not aware of the fact that it was precisely at that time that numerous reports came in here, with regard to some of which we shall probably be obliged to deal in secret session, which most urgently pressed upon the government to draw the conclusion to be inferred from the Chancellor's declaration that "we have done wrong and are willing to make reparation"—and this in the hope that, by so doing, the Entente might be brought to the point where it would be willing to negotiate? Those were the words which America was waiting to hear, which the other neutral countries were constantly looking forward to, and which were never uttered. I ask your Excellency why it was that, at least in connection with the Belgian question, and from the very start and in accordance with the first announcements made, every intention to overpower or oppress in any way whatsoever, whether in the form of guarantees or of annexations of territory, was not

absolutely eliminated from the outset, so that the Belgian question would have been placed completely outside of any question of war aims. It seems to me that that is the question which is to be cleared up here.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: If we are to go into the discussion of this general question, it is necessary to summon up before us the situation in its entirety as it developed here in Germany during the whole course of the war. I would like to be excused from a detailed representation thereof at the present time. Probably full opportunity will be given in the course of further proceedings, to come back to this question. I would simply like to state that now, after the event, it is of course very easy to say that everything that I did was wrong. I was not successful; I ought to have done this; I ought to have done that; I ought to have opposed the invasion of Belgium at all cost; I ought to have prevented the U-boat war at all costs; I ought to have said at the start that war aims involving annexation were simply out of the question, that we would not only restore Belgium but that we would pay her an indemnity and make reparations. All arguments of this kind, since the war has terminated as it has, are within the reach of anybody, can be picked up on the street, are begging to be picked up. But I believe that it serves no purpose to involve ourselves in conjectures as to what could have been accomplished if we had done this or had done that.

If I am to speak of the Belgian question only as it existed at the time covered by the statements here before the committee, in other words, at the time of Wilson's peace mediation, particularly in December and January, I should suggest that this, at least, be considered: That we were confronted by the speeches of enemy statesmen and then by the joint note of the Entente, which made it plain to us that our enemies were willing to enter upon peace negotiations only on a basis which looked toward the destruction and annihilation of Germany. Was I at this time, when our enemies were making us the subject of the most injurious comments possible, to come before the world with the following: "We are going to be good children now, we are going to give Belgium back again and, besides this, we are going to indemnify Belgium"? Well, gentlemen—ladies and gentlemen—I must ask to be excused; I have not gotten quite accustomed yet to the new era. (Laughter.) Was I to do that at that time? To make use of a rather strong expression and to argue according to the views of the individual political parties in the Reichstag—for one can only do in politics what is politically possible,—I should have been kicked out of the door of the Reichstag, considering the opinion of the German people, who were justly indignant at the way in which the Entente had talked about us and at the manner in which it had rejected our peace proposal. That was not the moment for me to say: "But here is Belgium. You will get that, of course. We demand nothing at all." These are, when all is said and done, political necessities, as I stated awhile ago. If you are desirous of reaching a proper conclusion,

keep on investigating the question of the state of mind of the German people from day by day, what effect the experiences and occurrences of the war had upon its development. Unless we constantly put ourselves back again in the situation which existed at the given moment, I do not believe that we can obtain a clear idea of the preponderating motives of the particular moment in question.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Your Excellency, so far as concerns the state of mind of the German people with regard to Belgium, which we all know as a matter of personal recollection, was not this state of mind brought about in part by subsequent announcements which sought to prove what was incapable of proof, namely, that Belgium, in common with our enemies, entertained hostile intentions against us? And how was it possible for these announcements to be made to the public in this way?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Certainly, various views were entertained with regard to this subject, and they continued to be maintained still further, although now I believe that, due particularly to the work which has been done by Colonel Schwertfeger, this Belgian matter has been cleared up to a certain extent. At that time the conviction existed that the Belgian public records were such as to prove that the Belgians, as the result of their negotiations with England at that time, had completely sacrificed any claim to neutrality. I remember that I personally touched upon the matter once in the Reichstag. But I may call attention to the fact that I never followed up this phase of it either in my speeches or in any other official utterance. It is certain that those publications were not without their effect upon the feelings of the parties and organs of the press who were convinced that the Belgians had, prior to that time, already sacrificed every claim to their neutrality. But I beg that too great importance be not attributed to this circumstance. Had I desired to further uphold the view that we had done Belgium no injury, since she had put herself in the wrong, I would have clearly retracted my speech of the 4th of August, on account of which I have been so bitterly attacked. But that did not occur. I passed over the matter. And in this connection, too, there came up questions of political opportuneness, of tactics. Once those semiofficial announcements regarding the discoveries in the Belgian archives had been made, it was a very questionable procedure to have semiofficial retractions take place shortly thereafter. In spite of this, I stood fast by my statement of the 4th of August and, as is well known, was on that account the subject of the most violent attacks during the entire period of the war.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: I should simply like to know, your Excellency, who is responsible for the extraordinarily peculiar manner in which these so-called Belgian documents were exploited for the purpose of misleading German public opinion.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: That is a special question which

I can not answer. In view of the large number of coworkers who were associated with me in the war, I would run the risk of making a mistake if I indicated that any particular authority had done so.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, I assume from what you have said that during the war you were, as a matter of fact, a constant champion of the principle: "Injustice and reparation." And now I ask myself: Are not these conditions which were drawn up (guarantees and a possible annexation of Belgium) certainly in conflict with that principle, in undeniable conflict therewith?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I shall state quite unequivocally that I took my stand on the principle of the restoration of Belgium. I was already concerned with this matter at an early date and, moreover, I had informed those who were engaged with me in my work that in the end we would have to pay Belgium back a great number of billions. I must admit that a restitution such as was decided upon at Versailles, did not come into my mind. I adhered to the principle, but I have already ventured to state that I attributed no practical value to the agreement regarding war aims which took place before our proposal of the 12th of December, considering it, in the main, a compromise between the military and political views.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: But, according to all the reports which came in, the public announcement of your stand that Belgium was in no way to be injured, would, after all, have had practical value.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Certainly. But I have already ventured to point out that at that period of which we are now speaking—I can not speak of the entire period from the 4th of August, 1914, up to the day of my retirement; that is impossible; I refer to the period of the Wilson peace move, that is, the time from December to January—the brusque attitude of the Entente made it impossible for me to select this moment in which to make a statement with regard to Belgium.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The peace conditions were drawn up on the 8th of November, when the announcements of the statesmen of the Entente had not as yet been made.

The CHAIRMAN: We will close the hearing, to be continued tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock. I shall ask Admiral Koch who, I believe is here present, to come tomorrow too, since it is likely that tomorrow we will hear him on the subject of the U-boat war.

The session closed at 1:24 o'clock.

SIXTH SESSION

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1919

The session was opened at 10:25 o'clock by the Chairman, Delegate Warmuth.

The CHAIRMAN: We will continue with the hearings. I should like, first of all, to get information with regard to a matter which, up to this time, has been made the subject of little if any comment, and which involves the fact that the feeling in the United States toward Germany was poisoned to a quite extraordinary extent by the activity of the press, and by films, that is, moving pictures. I should also like to find out to what extent the German Embassy bestirred itself to put a stop to this influence, whose effect was to poison public opinion and which unquestionably had an important bearing upon Wilson's attitude, since a strongly manifested anti-German feeling in the United States must, as a matter of course, have resulted in his policy of vacillation; whereas, had the reverse been the case, a strong manifestation of pro-German feeling would possibly have put an end to his hesitating methods and would have induced him to come out with his peace mediation more strongly than was the case. It is thought necessary to question Count v. Bernstorff with regard to these particular matters, and I ask his Excellency Count Bernstorff to inform us as to what extent it really is true that the press, as well as the moving picture concerns in the United States, worked against Germany; that the press, above all, appeared to come under the direct influence of England; and to state, further, what efforts were made on your part to put an end as far as possible to these injurious influences.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The fact is that, as the result of the blockade of Germany, very great technical difficulties stood in the way of bringing our side of the question to the attention of the American public. We tried to oppose the influence of the Entente in every way; but it was, as a matter of fact, technically impossible to do so always with success.

The CHAIRMAN: Why technically impossible?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Because our cables were destroyed, and the British cables could not be used; so the wireless was the only method of communication of which we could avail ourselves. Every day, we received as many transoceanic telegrams as it was physically possible to send us. And as soon as it was possible we always turned these over to the American press, but we were, of course, at a disadvantage on account of being late. It goes without saying that the fact that the English press was always acces-

sible to the Americans in the original language, was a cause of great difficulty to us, and consequently it was easier for the Americans to get full information with regard to the Entente's side of the question than it was with regard to our own.

The CHAIRMAN: But a special German press existed in America, did it not? And if it was not actually published in the German language, but in English, it was, nevertheless, specially recognized as German-American.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Partly in the German language too.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, and a press which, I may well venture to assume, was quite specially provided with points of view and with information in favor of Germany by the Embassy.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That was the case; but we endeavored, above all, to provide the real American press with news because, after all, in so far as public opinion in the United States was concerned, the German-American press—the press which was published in the German language—hardly reached the public at all.

The CHAIRMAN: It was quite important that, above all else, the American press as such should be influenced. But as a matter of fact, there were announcements concerning supposed German atrocities in France, etc., which were published far and wide, I believe under the supervision of the bureau of public information in New York and under the direction of the English journalist George Creel, which, from the start, must have made apparent the necessity of taking steps against it and of putting some curb to the imagination of this editorial staff.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: But this official American publicity bureau did not come into being until the United States had entered the war. It was not in existence at our time.

The CHAIRMAN: From my point of view, it is very important to determine whether—and it is precisely upon this point that I naturally lay weight—whether that happened before America's entrance into the war, because it goes without saying, as I have already stated, that the public feeling in the United States before the war must have reacted upon Wilson to our disadvantage if it was influenced adversely to Germany. It is for this reason that it seems so important to me to determine to what extent the poisoning influence existed in the press and in moving picture shows, and to what extent the German Embassy, which at that time could operate with a free hand, took steps to counteract this influence.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That happened to a very great extent, but I shall have to admit that, owing to the technical facilities which lay at its disposal, the British propaganda was superior to our own. At that time there was no official American publicity bureau, but the British propaganda and the German propaganda confronted each other; and in this connection I repeat and frankly admit without qualification, that the British propaganda

got the best of us as a result of all those means which were at its disposal, and because we almost invariably came tagging along behind.

The CHAIRMAN: By your statement that there was no official propaganda, you appear to give the impression that you might have been able to have obtained results in the case of official propaganda, but that the private press and the film concerns were entirely beyond your reach, so that it was not possible to make an impression upon them by any methods—

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: —which you, acting in your capacity as ambassador, would have been able to have used to advantage by representations made through the authorities of the American Government.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Personally, in order not to endanger my official position in any way, I kept myself almost completely apart from any propaganda. But we established our own propaganda bureau in New York, which was first put under the management of former Secretary of State Dernburg, and, when he left, was managed by Privy Counselor Albert and Dr. Führ. With the exception of some conferences which took place, however, this propaganda was purposely carried on in the form of a private enterprise, in order that the official activities of the Embassy might in no way be compromised. I must go into detail. Secretary of State Dernburg was at that time the chief of our propaganda in New York City. When so engaged, he at first developed activities which brought about most extraordinary results, and took the form of written articles and the spreading of news, etc. Then came the time when he began to speak in public as well. In this capacity, he was looked upon with disfavor by the American Government because that government considered him an agent whose particular purpose was to start a movement of the German-Americans against the government. For this reason, it was impossible for me, officially situated as I was, to take any personal part in these activities, because the result would have been that I would have placed myself in a position of opposition to the American Government with which I had to deal. So I had to keep aloof from these matters. Afterwards, when Secretary of State Dernburg had to leave, we continued all these efforts, particularly under the guidance of Dr. Führ, who is still in the Foreign Office. We formed our own moving picture company as well as a news bureau, and did everything which could be done along these lines, but we kept it free as much as possible from any appearance of official German support.

The CHAIRMAN: So that your activities were very definitely limited by the obligations of your official position?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: My personal activities were very greatly restricted, because I could not afford to enter the limelight and have a quarrel every day with the newspaper men. If I had done so, I would have injured my usefulness as an official.

The CHAIRMAN: But by the use of subterranean methods, so to speak, it would have been possible, would it not—and I am convinced that it did happen—to exercise your influence to prevent this unfavorable effect upon the press assuming excessive proportions?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Naturally, I always attempted to come into contact with the newspaper men.

The CHAIRMAN: There were many indignation meetings held by the German-Americans, were there not, held precisely on account of these press reports, on account of these envenomed films?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It was precisely from the act of taking part in any public meetings in the United States that I was absolutely precluded during the war.

The CHAIRMAN: Absolutely out of the question. As I have already stated, it is obvious that the only influence which you could exercise is one which would not appear upon the surface; to the extent that you could do so, that influence was exerted.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: With reference to the critical period, perhaps, say, between June, 1916, and January, 1917, it would be essential to know the attitude of the great American press with regard to a favorable acceptance of the Wilson peace move, particularly, the attitude of the Hearst papers, which have such a great influence over there? We have reports from you concerning them, encouraging reports. Will you be good enough to tell us what the attitude of that powerful press was at this time? Pro-German or anti-German, for a peace move or against it?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: President Wilson was reelected on the strength of the slogan that he had kept the country out of war, and the opinion generally current under the surface was, that he would then try to bring about peace. Quite aside from the pro-German or anti-German attitude of individual newspapers, I believe that it can be stated without exaggeration that almost the entire press of the United States was at that time in accord with the idea that Wilson should make the attempt to bring about peace, the Hearst papers naturally taking this view entirely. But even such papers as the *Times* and the *Tribune*, and other papers which, generally speaking, were anti-German, were nevertheless ready to support the President in his attempts to bring about peace.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: In your reports, there is a statement to the effect that Wilson specifically approved of the attitude of these Hearst papers which, we understand, were for the move—Wilson himself.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: That was the case at that time. I remember the report. Colonel House told me once that these Hearst articles had received the approval of the President.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Another question. Secretary of State Zimmermann stated in a report that this mediation in the interests of peace by

Wilson was being carried on subject to English influence. The same statement was made by General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg in his telegram of the 23d of December, which was read by his Excellency Bethmann at that critical time when Wilson's peace move had been made; it was stated that this move must be rejected, because it was due, after all, to British influence. Will you kindly state whether that view is shared by you as the result of your knowledge of the situation, whether at that time Wilson's peace move actually had the reputation of having been made as the result of British influence?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: The very opposite view was taken in the United States.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Was that your opinion?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: From the outset, from the moment when Wilson came out with his note touching on peace mediation, or, as is stated here, with his peace-move note, he was very generally characterized by the Entente press as being under German influence.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Do you suppose that Mr. Secretary of State Zimmermann based his view on special reports, by chance? Do you know anything about that?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I must request you to ask him personally. (Laughter.) I know nothing about it.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Why, certainly, gentlemen, I had very special reasons for proceeding as I did in the matter. You are probably provided with them also. In order not to violate any confidence, I shall not state what the source of the report was. It is to be found, however, in title 5 of the compilation, to be exact, on page 14, and takes the form of a conversation between one of our ministers with a neutral minister for foreign affairs. Our minister proceeded to telegraph us as follows:

The Minister added, by way of explanation, that Wilson's proposal was not clear. According to a telegram from London, reported today in a local paper, Wilson's step is characterized in London as meaning that the President's purpose in making his move was to force the Central Powers to disclose their conditions in favor of England's interests. The Minister stated that he was unwilling to allow himself to be made use for the purpose of such maneuvers.

That is the basis upon which I founded my opinion.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: In a report of an English agent dated either July or August, 1916, and which was addressed to Sir Edward Grey, it is stated that England must see to it that a new *Lusitania* case is brought about. That would result in having the American attitude, which was thoroughly inclined toward Germany, take an exactly opposite trend. I should like to ask the Count if he ever heard anything in the nature of such a statement or such views in the United States.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I am firmly convinced of the fact that, since the time of the *Lusitania*, the British have never ceased to wish that a new *Lusitania* incident should occur as often as possible and as soon as possible; for the entire British policy was exclusively directed to the end of drawing the United States into the war against us. In my opinion, that was the chief end and aim of the British policy from the time of the *Lusitania* up to the final break with Germany, and, so far as I was concerned, that was always the main reason why I looked upon it as the chief end and aim of my policy to keep the United States out of the war under any and all conditions.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Secretary of State Zimmermann relies upon the report of a minister regarding a conversation with a foreign minister. This report is, however, dated the 24th of December; but Secretary of State Zimmermann had already, at a materially earlier date, taken his stand against the United States, and the suspicion that the entire American move was a move on behalf of England was entertained by him a number of days preceding the date of this report. I should like to ask him to explain this difference.

The CHAIRMAN: If you please!

Witness ZIMMERMANN: I had already acquired this precise impression some time before the Minister expressed it. This was only a confirmation. I found the confirmation—perhaps I did not express myself so very clearly before—the confirmation of my unfavorable judgment in this point of view which the neutral minister had developed. When is this supposed to have been the case? I am not quite clear on the point as to when I expressed it. If you gentlemen will have the kindness to assist me, I might, perhaps, be in a position to give you more detailed information regarding the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: February, 1917.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: February, 1917? Oh, that is very definitely later.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: May I put a question?

The CHAIRMAN: Later. First Mr. Gothein.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I may call attention to the fact that the announcement made to the leading newspaper men had taken place at an earlier date, before the 24th of December, and now Secretary of State Zimmermann claims that even at that time he was of that opinion with regard to the meaning of the move.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: That is not so.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Kindly let me finish what I had to say. I would like to state, in this connection, that he now makes special reference to that report of the minister in which it is stated that "the Minister added, by way of explanation, that Wilson's proposal was not clear. According to a telegram from London reported today" (that is, on the 24th of December) "in a local paper, Wilson's step is characterized in London," etc. As I

understand it, the conference with the press, which we considered yesterday, took place on the 12th of December or some days before. So that, in any case, at that time Secretary of State Zimmermann could have had no knowledge of this report of the Minister.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: But, gentlemen, at that time Wilson's move had not yet taken place and I gave the reasons for my action to the representatives of the press only. I made use of the methods which in my opinion seemed proper from a tactical standpoint, in order to have them adopt a unanimous attitude with regard to putting our move into effect. It was a tactical maneuver. I explained that yesterday in considerable detail. I can not see how it can be interpreted as a contradiction. I can not see that.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Mr. Secretary of State, it surprises me that you rely upon this report of a foreign statesman, whose name appears in the files. Just about this time, on the 22d of December, the following report came in from that statesman:

The American note which was made known here today, has . . . surprised . . . that statesman. He stated that he had "not expected so much from Wilson"; the agitation of the English press shows how unwelcome the President's move had been to the Allies. Mr. . . . considers of peculiar significance the announcement which Lansing made by way of supplementing the note. Mr. . . . expressed himself in the following words: "If we could rely somewhat more upon the United States of America" (Hear! Hear!) "and the American Government had not disappointed us so often" (Hear! Hear!) "we would be justified in interpreting Lansing's announcement as a threat addressed to the Allies." In any event, it was possible that the move could serve in the interests of peace, and we must wait and see what happens. That the peace parties in France and England were materially strengthened thereby was beyond doubt; it was true that the feeling in Russia seemed at present very much in favor of war, but it could change quickly under the abnormal and corrupt conditions existing there.

So this same statesman says here that he has been agreeably surprised. The Allied press would oppose Wilson's move.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Gentlemen, certainly, I had my conference with the press on the 12th, and at that time I took my stand and gave the reasons for it yesterday. Here is a telegram of the 22d of November which deals with Wilson's peace move. In this telegram, the Minister impressively emphasizes and very skeptically emphasizes the following: "If we could rely somewhat more upon the United States of America" and "if the American Government had not disappointed us so often, we would be justified." I certainly found here, in the words of a neutral minister, a confirmation of my great skepticism with regard to the President.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I put my question in connection with the statement which you made later, that the proposal had been made at the

suggestion of England. Then, in support of your statement, you relied upon the remark of that statesman. You still owe me an answer to this question.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: When did I make that assertion?

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: In February.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Did I make the assertion in February? Then it was very definitely later. Then we had already received the information.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: You are relying upon the assertion of that statesman. The assertion was different.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: In February I had a complete view of the entire situation, and the reports from foreign countries were actually before me.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I will submit the assertion to you later. It is in agreement with still earlier assertions which you have made.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: If you will be good enough to do so!

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Then I should like to put another question. Why was it that, at that time—I assume that the fact is known to you—precisely at that time (on the 21st), Wilson's peace move was most violently opposed by the French Nationalists, Clemenceau, and others?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: That was probably a tactical maneuver of our opponents, just as we supposed it was after following it up and observing it.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: You consider that a tactical maneuver?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: I am naturally unable to explain to you here the reasons which prompted Clemenceau and the rest. (Very true!) In connection therewith, I can merely limit myself to a guess.

The CHAIRMAN: Privy Councilor Schaefer! Will you handle this special case? Otherwise, we shall postpone the question.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: My question is limited to the question which I put before.

The CHAIRMAN: Then we will postpone it.

Delegate DR. COHN: Count Bernstorff, was the Embassy in continuous communication with the Consul General in New York?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Certainly.

Delegate DR. COHN: You know whether special political reports went in from there?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: So far as I know, no special political report was made; except the dispatches which I saw and, therefore, were not political.

Delegate DR. COHN: Did the dispatches which you saw confine themselves to the same political views as yours?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Probably not entirely.

Delegate DR. COHN: And on what points and in what way did they differ?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: In the idea which was just discussed

here a moment ago. In the interpretation of the political attitude of the United States, taken as a whole; whether the United States would declare war upon us and whether Wilson's peace move promised results or not. Those are the two main questions about which developments were centered.

Delegate DR. COHN: Did the dispatches of the Consul General take a different view both with regard to the judgment passed upon Wilson personally and with regard to his personal intentions?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Yes.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: I should like to refer back to the question, why Secretary of State Zimmermann believed that he was justified in assuming that Wilson's peace move was suggested by England. It was only shortly before that the following had occurred in England:

Grey and Asquith had been eliminated, Lloyd George had taken command. This circumstance was attributed to the fact that Grey and Asquith had toyed with the idea of a peace without victory, and Lloyd George, on the contrary, wanted to see the war carried on until Germany was overthrown. At that time he made a "knock-out" speech. In the course of this "knock-out" speech, there was a passage addressed to the neutral Powers, more or less to this effect: That they should beware of any intervention on the part of the neutral Powers, for the time therefor had not come. We in Germany interpreted this to be a warning addressed to Wilson, and we were, aside from this, of the opinion that the fall of Grey and Asquith was occasioned by the fact that, from their point of view, they had looked upon intervention by the United States with favor.

That was the situation. As I interpreted Lloyd George, what he said was wholly opposed to this assumption that he had encouraged Wilson to make a peace move. This understanding of Secretary of State Zimmermann is of extraordinary importance, because General Field Marshal Hindenburg shared this view, as his telegram showed. Moreover, it was in conflict with the existing fact that Wilson had actually been urged by us to take up this peace move. We knew all that, and therefore it is so much more surprising for the General Field Marshal to have taken the view that Lloyd George encouraged the peace move.

I ask: Did the General Field Marshal know that Wilson's peace move had been suggested by the German political branch?

The CHAIRMAN: Before answering this question, Consul Müller, who has something important to say to us, will take the floor.

Consul MÜLLER: I asked to be permitted to say a few words. I should like to refer back to the discussions which have just taken place and which have a bearing on neutral States; that is to say, to events which took place in neutral States and concerning the reports sent in from neutral States.

It has been recognized here as a fundamental principle that there are some matters which can not be dealt with in the presence of the public, and I

should like to state that, as the result of statements which have hitherto been made in the course of these discussions, it would be easy for those present to draw erroneous conclusions since the whole of the subject matter has not been submitted to them. I would therefore request that the principle be strictly observed, of refraining from handling such cases in a hearing before the public, because erroneous conclusions might well result therefrom.

The CHAIRMAN: The committee recognizes the justness hereof, and will ask the public to retire until this special case has been decided. I must ask the public to retire, because it seems to me a delicate matter; certain conclusions might be drawn in individual neutral States; unfavorable or, in any event, incorrect opinions could be formed.

(Objection by Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER.)

I can not know whether the further replies which his Excellency Zimmermann will give us will jeopardize our position. Consequently, I shall exclude the public until this special question has been settled. I ask those present to leave the hall.

(A secret session follows.)

The public hearing was reconvened at 11:16 o'clock.

The CHAIRMAN: Privy Councilor Schaefer has the floor.

Delegate DR. SCHAEFER: In the dispatch whose contents we have drawn upon, mention is made of the fact that difficulties might arise for England from the increasing power of the United States and, likewise, that that might be the case with the growing strength of Japan. And then the question is further discussed as to the steps necessary to be taken which would involve the successive conquering of one great Power by another. I should like, primarily, to ask the Count if he knows whether such plans and discussions ever found expression in the American press, plans with regard to the possibility of differences resulting from the attitude of the three great Powers which, beyond question, did not have identical interests in all matters.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I must ask that this question be put to me in more definite form, for it goes without saying that the different political aims of the great Powers were the subject of discussion both in conversations and in the press. But I do not know just what question I am to answer. Is it, whether I took any advantage of this? Or in what way I did so?

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: I should very much like to know whether a suspicion was entertained that the alliance of the Americans or their joint action with England might, under certain circumstances, result disadvantageously to them, and that they would not forever be protected by an alliance with England, but that, with regard to certain questions, they might come to be arrayed against England as her enemy. Were such ideas spread abroad? Did you perhaps know that such a suspicion with regard to

England was entertained in broad circles of society? For it is generally assumed—and this is doubtless correct, according to my view too—that up to a certain point England and the United States would be bound together by common interests in the Pacific Ocean. This was, of course, made manifest by the voyage of the fleet in the Pacific Ocean in the year 1908 and by the change in the British-Japanese treaty which was effected in July, 1911. These facts made it perfectly clear that such interests exist, but, in spite of these common interests, which have more than once been the subject of discussion, have the Americans ever taken the possibility into consideration that to pursue a joint course with England might have serious results, so far as they are concerned, and might bring them into difficulties?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: All these questions were discussed in the press over there, very naturally, but I can not recollect that they ever had any particular effect upon the situation which we are discussing today.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: In this connection, I should like to ask the following question: Was anything ever done by the Embassy in the way of taking advantage of such lines of thought, or of bringing about their acceptance, either directly or indirectly?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: So far as activities along the line of propaganda are concerned, it goes without saying that lines of thought of every kind were taken advantage of, but I can not just see how this becomes material for the moment, for of course the subject could well come up for discussion as to whether England, in case of a conflict between Japan and the United States, would take the side of Japan or the side of the United States. It goes without saying that this question was also discussed. But, it really did not come up for discussion at that time; for the point then was, whether the United States would take part in the war against us on the side of the Entente, and, as we all know, the Entente included England *and* Japan at that time, so that this question was really not acute.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: In the report to which we have referred, mention is also made of Professor Münsterberg of Harvard University. As is well known, he rendered great service in the way he represented German interests, and for this reason he was a thorn in the side of all people who were pro-British. And attempts of different kinds were made to eliminate him, too. The person making the report deplores the fact that this did not come about. Finally, after he has stated in great detail that he has spared no pains, he says in so many words: "As in the case of Delarey, something must be left to Divine Providence." Does Count Bernstorff know anything about this?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: Well, I know this much, at any event: That during the two and a half years up to the entrance of the United States into the war, the Entente availed itself of every possible, conceivable means to get us all out of the United States, beginning with me and ending with every other German. Every possible intrigue was tried. Every method of

personal slander, every act of inconvenience which could be thought up against us, was undertaken in order to get us away and to bring about war between Germany and the United States. That is absolutely true. But I would not go so far as to answer the statement of the Expert, which hints that Münsterberg was murdered, by saying that that actually was the case. I do not believe that. I believe that he simply succumbed to a stroke which came upon him in the midst of his activities on account of overwork or some other form of exhaustion. I do not believe that anything else happened in this case. The fact is, however, that during the entire period of the war Professor Münsterberg was subjected to an unfriendly boycott in Boston and Harvard. But that was actually the case with all of us. For those who were opposed to us in the United States tried to engineer a regular boycott system against us. The attempt was made to isolate us socially as well as politically.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: I would like to add that, naturally, that was not my expression or my conviction, but that it is the literal expression of the report of the British Agent as it was handed over to Lord Grey, to the effect that something must be left to Providence, as happened in the Delarey case. I had no thought at all as to how Professor Münsterberg came to die—either as regards the nature or manner of his death. This thought only occurs to me now in connection with what Count Bernstorff has just said.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: We have discussed the question of the public feeling in the United States, and the extent to which it was influenced by us. This question has been answered. The inquiry was then further pursued to cover the point as to whether Wilson issued his peace note as the result of British influence, as the result of an agreement with the British, and I thereupon stated—I am now in a position to assert this—that Secretary of State Zimmermann's remark which was brought out by me was made on the 23d of December and not in February, and that by this assertion the view was expressed that it was possible that President Wilson's peace move had been brought about as the result of an understanding with England. I would like to have a definite answer from you. Do you, who, of all men, were in closest connection with American affairs, entertain the opinion that this note of Wilson's was drawn up as the result of an agreement with England?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: My unqualified belief is that it was not drawn up as the result of an agreement with England. But in order to avoid any misunderstandings on this point, I should like to state that it is always possible that information was acquired beforehand for the purpose of determining whether the British would possibly take part in the peace mediation thereafter and whether they would accept it. I consider that possible.

The CHAIRMAN: But you are not provided with definite facts on this point?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: My impression has always been that this peace note was extremely disquieting to the British.

The CHAIRMAN: And consequently, can not, of course, have been inspired by them.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: May I put a question to his Excellency Zimmermann? Do you remember that a conference was held in the Department of the Interior with regard to this Wilson move and the Wilson question? A conference with the press? Among others, there were present Theodor Wolff, Maximilian Harden, and, I believe, Bernhard too. Do you remember about such a conference having taken place in the Department of the Interior?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: One at which I was present?

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Yes, you personally, as the representative of the Foreign Office.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: At what time?

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: It is supposed to have taken place in May, 1916.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: In May, 1916? Yes, I remember that I even presided on one occasion over a session of this kind. At that time, if I am not mistaken, I gave out some information with regard to the *Sussex* note.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Yes, with regard to the *Sussex* note.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: At that time I wanted to give the reasons for our stand. I remember that at that time the conference chamber of the Department of the Interior was placed at our disposal.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: You heard Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg's statement yesterday, that at that time he was proceeding, in his conferences with Ambassador Gerard, on the basis that the time had then come for Wilson to take a great step forward in the matter of peace. Very generally so. Were these efforts known to you?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Why, certainly they were known to me.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Now, we are informed by those who participated in this conference that you expressed yourself in very bitter terms against Wilson. According to the reports given us by the participants, you are said to have expressed yourself as follows: "Gentlemen, there is no use wasting words about Mr. Wilson's shamelessness and impudence, but we have torn the mask away from his face."

Witness ZIMMERMANN: I do not recollect that I made any statement of that kind. And I do not believe that I did make it in the presence of so many people. It does not recur to my mind. There were at least fifty newspaper men there, and I do not believe that I would have expressed myself in such strong language.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: You have no recollection of it?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: In any case, I have no recollection of this expression.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Well, we will then have to take the testimony, eventually, of Maximilian Harden and Theodor Wolff, who heard this remark.

The CHAIRMAN: I now come back to the examination of his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg, and would like first of all to have you tell us briefly, your Excellency, about the reasons why Count Bernstorff was not received when he came back to Germany, and whether you know anything about possible influences which may have made themselves felt at that time.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I assume that we have now before us a subject which is more or less in the nature of an episode, when compared with the statements bearing on higher politics which have just been made.

The CHAIRMAN: Not exactly, your Excellency; there is still a connection with the question of higher statesmanship.

Witness v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I may, perhaps, be permitted to state why I think so. Count Bernstorff's return was at once announced to His Majesty the Emperor, and the representative of the Foreign Office at the General Headquarters was instructed to take the necessary steps looking toward the personal reception to be given the Ambassador by the Emperor. Besides this, I gave the Emperor a detailed account of what Count Bernstorff had stated to me in the conference which we had had together, so that the Emperor was, therefore, fully informed. Count Bernstorff had made no further proposals to me with regard to our future attitude toward the United States and, according to his own testimony, had no suggestions to make. Consequently, there was no occasion, politically speaking, to insist upon his immediate reception; a reception did take place at a later date. Whether, as the result of outside causes or from any other reason, his reception was delayed, is a point with regard to which I can give no definite information. At any event, I am still of the opinion, even today, that the fact that his reception was delayed had no effect upon the further course of political events.

Delegate DR. COHN: Count v. Bernstorff, when you were examined you told us about conversations which you had had with the Field Marshal and with General Ludendorff as well, and also that you had been received by the Emperor. What impression did you get as the result of your conversation with the Emperor, with regard to his attitude toward the United States, and toward peace proposals, as well as concerning the future course of German politics with respect to America?

Witness COUNT v. BERNSTORFF: When I was received by the Emperor at the beginning of May, this question had actually become so thoroughly settled that there was no occasion for me to insist on having it made the subject of conversation. I can not remember that anything at all was said in the course of this interview which would be of any political significance in this connection.

The CHAIRMAN: That terminates the inquiry on this point.

We now come to the important question of the ruthless U-boat war, to the reasons which were conclusive in respect to the governmental policy. Every thing which can possibly be stated with regard to the question of the ruthless U-boat war must be probed to the bottom and told in detail. I shall cover this U-boat war from the beginning, to the fullest extent possible. For this purpose, it seems to me to be essential for your Excellency to tell us about the possibilities of, and the necessities for, the ruthless U-boat war, beginning with the moment when this question actually made its first appearance upon the stage. Perhaps for the purpose of making your answers less lengthy, and also for the purpose of refreshing your memory, I may begin with the memorial which you yourself drew up on the 29th of February, 1916, and point out quite briefly the main grounds set out in this memorial by you against the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war.

You state in this memorial that the question of estimating how many ships could be sunk by the submarine war in contemplation was one for the naval experts, but that, in view of the difference existing between the views expressed by Admiral v. Holtzendorff on the one hand and Admiral v. Tirpitz on the other, this estimate was very doubtful. You pointed out that the effect of modern methods of defense against the U-boats might well make the question of the efficiency of our ruthless U-boat war a very doubtful one, that the increase in new shipping was one which could not be deemed incon siderable, that the taking possession by England of German merchant tonnage lying in neutral ports, which she would be quite free to do so if the United States broke with us, was a circumstance of no mean importance; that, for the above reason, it was beyond question that, even if 4 million tons should be sunk inside of six months, the tonnage which would be available for England would not be diminished by this sum, but by an amount which could be safely assumed to be considerably less; that, according to your opinion, England had at her disposal some 13 or 14 million tons, but that, with this tonnage at her disposal, even if it were to be diminished by some 4 million tons by fall, it was not likely, much less certain, that the U-boat war would have the ruinous effect which in certain quarters was assumed would be the case.

You further stated that England would be able to overcome completely the effect of those economic difficulties which undoubtedly she would be called upon to bear as the result of the U-boat war, by making better provisions concerning the available shipping space, by limiting importations to those articles which were absolutely essential for the purpose of feeding the people and, further, by a notable increase in shipping space which would be at her disposal if the Saloniki project were given up. You said that an absolute blockade of England was out of the question as the result of the restricted number of the U-boats and the natural limitations which characterized

their fighting capacity as battle units. You stated that the net which was to be drawn around England would always be one with broad meshes, and that it was not to be conceived, particularly when one took into consideration that the arrival of four or five ships daily was sufficient to keep England in foodstuffs, that an actual food shortage in England could come about; that it would seem that, all things considered, while it was perfectly true that the expected decrease in England's tonnage would cause her injury, its effect could not be deemed such as to make it impossible for England to continue the war up to, say, fall; and that, in addition to this, taking into consideration the character of the people as a whole and the danger with which England's supremacy at sea was being menaced, she would sacrifice her last man and her last penny.

Finally, you called attention to the serious danger, which you perceived as the result of having America enter into the war on the side of England, that is to say, on the side of our enemies; that, as the result of this, you would not only expect that the British confidence in victory, that is, the confidence of victory entertained by our enemies, would receive powerful moral support; you also looked forward to the manifestation of a certain tenseness in our relations to our allies, since our allies, Austria as well as Turkey and Bulgaria, were positive in their opinion that the ruthless U-boat war would not turn out to our advantage. And in America's cooperation you foresaw serious material objections, because the efforts of the Entente to finance themselves in the United States, which up to that time had only yielded very modest returns, would become immediately successful to the advantage of England. You stated that the provisioning of Belgium and northern France with American grain-stuffs would cease, as well as the steps being taken to relieve Poland; that if America should enter the war, the war material which would be at the disposal of the Entente would be available to a far greater extent—to the greatest conceivable extent. You point to the fact that the sporting spirit was very prevalent and pronounced in the United States, which might well result in having the army reinforced very strongly by American volunteers; that, as the result of all these objections, you felt that the unrestricted U-boat war was a measure against the adoption of which the most urgent warning should be issued.

Then, in a conversation at Charleville which you had with the Emperor, you again particularly expressed these views which had already been expressed in the memorial—for the memorial itself had also been submitted to the Emperor—and on this occasion you constituted yourself the particular opponent of Falkenhayn and Holtzendorff, who were present at that very conference. The Emperor stated at that time, without any reservation whatsoever, as you say in a letter, that our U-boat forces were insufficient to overcome England, and that, as a matter of fact, England could not be overcome; that if we challenged England to a fight to the finish on the sea

after a break with the United States, every Englishman would give his last shirt before he would capitulate; that he himself still hoped that the calculating business sense of the English would finally make clear to them that they would gain nothing by a continuation of the war. Subsequently, in the castle at Pless, on August 31, 1916, another conference was held over which the Emperor presided, and in which all the civil, military and naval authorities participated. The protocol drawn up as the result of the conference, which reports the opposition between the civil and the military authorities and, above all, the naval authorities, is so important as almost to call for a complete reading, although it is fairly lengthy. I will, however, postpone that for the time being, as it may, perhaps, become necessary in the course of further proceedings. In any event, the summing up which was made by your Excellency at the time is important. You state:

I had intended to issue a call to the Reichstag next week. The parties themselves have certain objections, but I shall not be able to do otherwise than to summon the leaders of the parties into conference. They will doubtless take up the question of the U-boat war. I shall tell them in reply, without revealing the details of the conference of today, that the question has been searchingly considered by all the competent authorities, but that, in view of the present war situation, we have decided that the decision must be put off until later, since Field Marshal v. Hindenburg has stated that he will have to await the developments of the Roumanian campaign before a definite policy can be adopted with regard to the question.

It is, moreover, essential, to refer to a document of the 23d of December, 1916, in which you make a communication to General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg with regard to the U-boat war, and in which, above all, you assert that it devolves upon you alone under the constitution to assume all responsibility in the matter of the decision to be made with regard to the ruthless U-boat war, and that this responsibility is not susceptible of being delegated for the reason that this war enters directly into the domain of our relations with neutral States, since it constitutes an act of foreign policy. In concluding this letter, you state:

Concerning the question of the unrestricted U-boat warfare, the stand which I have maintained up to the present time is that such a step can only be discussed if our military situation is such as to permit us to rely with certainty upon the fact that the European neutrals can be prevented from taking up arms against us. Your Excellency is of the opinion that this time will have come by the end of January, 1917. I therefore venture to assume that your Excellency will be in a position at that time to concentrate the necessary troops at both the Dutch and the Danish frontiers. On this condition, and to the extent that I may find myself able to agree with your Excellency that the advantages of an absolutely ruthless U-boat war are greater than the disadvantages resulting from the United States joining our enemies, I shall be ready to consider the question even of an unrestricted U-boat warfare.

Here, then, we already find the sentiment expressed, in sharp conflict with what has gone before, that after all your Excellency admits the existence of the possibility that the advantages of the ruthless U-boat war might outweigh the disadvantages. Now, from my point of view, it is essential for us to determine what those arguments were, so far as you were concerned—true, this is partially shown in your statements, but I should like to hear them once more and to have them stated succinctly—what the reasons were which caused you to recede from the position which you had taken against the U-boat war, which you had described in so many words as disastrous, and which you had designated as an experiment, the reasons which caused you to recede in favor of those authorities who supported the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war and which, as I recollect your having stated, consisted in the main of the Supreme High Command of the Army, the Supreme High Command of the Navy, the majority of the Reichstag, and the majority of the people, as this last manifested itself in the general expression of opinion presented by the press. You have told us that you had no conclusive arguments to present against the U-boat war, that is, conclusive arguments of so powerful a nature as to have killed the idea of the unrestricted U-boat warfare at birth, so to speak. But, just the same, you had powerful reasons at your disposal. I have purposely summed up and presented all these reasons on which you have already stated that you have relied, and it is now essential to know and to determine what those reasons were during December, 1916, and January, 1917, the time that we are now discussing, which were considered by you sufficient to cause you apparently to recede from entirely, or to qualify, your earlier view. Will your Excellency be good enough to state your view once more with regard to these points?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The very copious records covering the U-boat war are at the complete disposal of the committee. I can only assume that the committee has received from these records a clear idea of my stand on the U-boat war in its various phases. I do not understand that my task consists in reconstructing from memory a very complicated situation, so to speak, a situation which is already known to the committee as a matter of record. I can only assume my task to consist in this, that I am to supplement that knowledge which the committee has, by virtue of the records before it by answering those questions which the committee may ask me on points where they believe that they are faced by a gap with regard to my attitude. I would suppose that these individual points would have to be clearly identified, for if this is not the case I run the risk of having to make an oral statement of such a nature as to call for a study on my part of the records, for which, it would seem, some weeks would be required. I believe that the committee itself must have been impressed with the fact that the questions concerning the U-boat war were, in their various phases, extremely complicated.

Now, the Chairman has had the kindness, as I understand him, to ask me at present only for a statement with regard to my attitude in the winter of 1916-17.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Well, let me refer to the statements which I made last Friday. I am today still of the impression that I set out in detail at that time all the reasons which determined my attitude on the 9th of January, and I should consider it objectionable to repeat now, in the course of an extemporaneous address, statements which I made at that time, based upon careful consideration and which were then made in careful and precise form. I can not supplement them.

I may, perhaps, venture to repeat again the most important passages taken from my statements made at that time. The stenographic notes of the session of last Friday are before me. I believe that the questions which the Chairman has just put to me will be found to have been answered there.

The situation on the 9th of January, when the unrestricted U-boat war was decided upon, was as follows:

The Navy confidently asserted that England would be forced to consider peace by the new harvest if the unrestricted U-boat war were commenced on the 1st of February. The 1st of February was designated as the very latest date if the U-boat war was to be successful. If England was enabled to restock herself by the transportation of grain which was scheduled to take place in the month of February, then the possibility of making full use of this instrumentality of warfare would be gone for another year. The Supreme High Command of the Army demanded the U-boat war be undertaken with the utmost resolution, stating it to be a mode of warfare which was imperatively demanded by the general war situation.

If (I am omitting connecting passages) these two generals demanded the U-boat war as an essential method of conducting the war; if they confirmed the arguments of the Navy and declared that they were strong enough to bear all the consequences of the U-boat war, even of war with the United States, for such time as was stated by the Navy was necessary for the attainment of the success guaranteed, occurred, I would certainly have to be in a position to base my opposition on absolutely clear and conclusive grounds. Did I have such grounds?

I then proceeded to show that, according to my opinion, the success of the U-boat war could no more be considered as proven by the statistical calculations of the Admiralty Staff, by means of which it sought to establish the fact that the U-boat war would be successful, than could the necessary failure of the U-boat war have been demonstrated by a criticism of these arguments.

The U-boat war (I stated) remained an experiment, whether we launched it or refrained from doing so. When the Supreme High Command of the Army asserted, with all the impressiveness which befitted its dignity that a successful termination of the war demanded the U-boat war as an essential condition, and guaranteed its success

as the result of the assurances of the Admiralty Staff, which had been accepted by the Supreme High Command of the Army, I had to have some tangible reasons with which to support my view that, without a U-boat war, it was possible to bring the war to an end in some way that would be acceptable to Germany.

I was convinced on the 9th of January that I did not have this possibility to offer. I have told you how I interpreted the Entente's answer to our peace proposal, the joint note of the 30th of December, as an unqualified denial of the willingness to negotiate—so unqualified, in fact, that I had considerable doubts as to whether the answer of the Entente to Wilson's peace note of the 18th of December would allow me to take a different view. It is true that the answer of the Entente to Wilson's peace note was not given until after the 9th of January; but—and I have recently given my testimony on this point and also the reasons therefor—the reply of the Entente to Wilson's peace note, made after the 9th of January, was not such as to convince me that I was wrong on the 9th of January when I based my attitude upon the proposition that I could not argue that the Entente would be willing to negotiate within a determinable period. I further stated that, leaving aside the advent of peace through the United States, I could not hold out other prospects, and I took up on that occasion the question of the uncertainty of the time of the Russian revolution, which was, perhaps, to be expected, judging from the general situation in Russia. "In this situation," I said, "it was not possible for me to give the Emperor any advice on the 9th of January, other than that I gave him, which was that I could not counsel him to oppose the votes of his military advisers."

I can not see how I can add any material feature to these statements at this time.

I should like, however, to bring up one point. As the Chairman has said, last Friday I stated that I considered the decision arrived at a disastrous one. Certain it is that a tremendous fatality hung over this decision—this must be clear to every human being; for if—and I discussed this too on the 9th of January—if the U-boat war was not successful, it meant the disaster of Germany. But I repeat today that the U-boat war was an experiment. The records on this point are not even yet complete as to the effects actually brought about by the U-boat war. We shall learn this later from Entente sources. I am of the impression that the results were far-reaching. I can not escape the feeling that in May, in June—I can not be absolutely certain as to definite periods of time—England's anxiety due to the effects of the U-boat war was intense, and I am convinced that, as time goes on, we shall receive further proofs of this from the Entente. This feeling of anxiety was so intense, in my opinion, as to have made it possible to bring about opportunities for negotiation toward the end of June or the 1st of July.

I will not go into minute details, for, as it appears to me, we are dealing

here with a question which can not be concluded now or by this committee. But in making this statement, I would like to call attention to the time when Lloyd George sounded in Paris his anxious call for help: "Ships, ships are needed." At the beginning of the war, it was the silver bullets which were going to win; now it was the ships. And if the leading English statesman, if a Lloyd George was the man to make such a statement in Paris, it was a significant circumstance and threw a bright light upon the actual situation. I remember—I shall probably have occasion to speak of it at some other time—that I looked upon Lloyd George's Glasgow speech of June 30 as a feeler, although it had many earmarks of his "knock-out" policy—as a feeler which might, perhaps, have made it possible for us to develop a willingness to negotiate by taking up certain questions, and in a public way, too. I believe that, in many circles of society in Germany, the results of the U-boat war were represented as being greater than was justified by the existing political situation. If England saw that the U-boat war was really menacing her existence, she would not have waited for the time of actual collapse. Long before such time came, she would have held out opportunities to serve as a basis for negotiations, although, of course, they would not have consisted of announcements declaring the necessity for capitulation. In my opinion, that moment existed. It came as the effect of the U-boat war. But nevertheless, it was fatal, for, since these opportunities, just as was the case with later opportunities, did not bring us to the point we sought, we were ultimately confronted with the circumstance of having America landing countless troops in Europe and of facing overwhelmingly superior numbers which, accompanied by the collapse of our allies, brought about that very military situation which actually existed in the fall of 1918.

Thus, to sum up again briefly, I do not know what I can possibly say further to confirm the forced situation in which not only the political department was on the 9th of January, but (with raised voice) the military branch as well. At that time, the military authorities were convinced that we could not bring the war to a favorable end without the unrestricted U-boat war; and I was convinced that "I can not hold out any prospect to you that I can terminate the war in any other way." Under these conditions, something *had* to be done; some decision had to be made. And I have told you that, confronted with the attitude of the majority of parliament, confronted with the conviction entertained by the very broadest circles of society, and based upon an honest belief that failure to undertake the U-boat war would be tantamount to sacrificing the future of the nation to timidity—in this situation—and I am still of the opinion today that I acted correctly—I stated "Your Majesty, I can not counsel you to oppose the vote of your military advisers." That to have retired from the situation, myself, would have accomplished nothing—that is the all-important point—I have already explained to you.

The CHAIRMAN: Is your Excellency certain that the Entente, with their brusque answer, shut the door that led to peace?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: That was my conviction.

The CHAIRMAN: That conviction was not altogether shared by the other States. For instance, the Emperor Karl and Czernin took the stand that, although the Entente note was impertinent in tone, it was not such as to absolutely exclude a continuation of the negotiations; and in the United States the view was very generally entertained by the authorities, as appears from Count v. Bernstorff's statement, that we had to deal with a case of bluff. But I want to establish the following, that it was in any event your personal opinion that it was not possible at that time for us to meet with the Entente at the conference table. There remained, then, the unrestricted U-boat war as a last resort, according to the judgment of military authorities, and in view of the unfavorable military situation of the war on land.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: It was my view that the door to peace had been closed, and I might add that this view represented the overwhelming opinion of the German people, even including those upon the Left, that is, the Social Democratic branches. I remember, without being able to give the statement literally, a speech which Mr. Scheidemann made, in which he stated that it was the Entente, which by its answer to our peace proposal, finally forced the unrestricted U-boat war upon us. Something of this kind was said. I have not the exact words here, but something of the kind was said. This conviction was not my personal conviction only; far from it. It was the conviction entertained by the great mass of the German people.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Did the great mass of the German people, particularly the Social Democratic Party, and all the groups which were calling for a peace of understanding, know that at the same time Wilson had stated to House that he was ready to renew conferences in favor of peace, and that he had already asked twice at this time that the peace conditions be communicated to him, at least confidentially? Did the German people—the mass of the German people—know that this entire move had been made at the suggestion of the German Government?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Whether the German people had any knowledge as a whole of our move in Washington? It had no notification thereof; that is true. And it would have been an evidence of the greatest lack of political sagacity on my part if I had informed the mass of the German people about it. For, in view of the antagonism which existed against America, these proceedings which I had initiated in Washington would have made me an object of contempt and hatred. I could not do that; that would have been no measure of statesmanship.

Now, with regard to the renewed peace moves of Wilson, I must repeat,

gentlemen, that I have characterized Wilson's note to Congress of the 22d of January and have clearly set out the three points which—

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: That was later.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: That was not later.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The 9th of January.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Wilson's actual request, his actual announcement containing the statement that he hoped that now he would be in a position to bring about a peace conference, and asked for the confidential communication of our peace conditions, was contained in a telegram of Count Bernstorff's of the 28th of January. Earlier, to be sure, he stated, and even suggested, that we might make confidential disclosures to him. But that, too, is, to my knowledge, a point which has already been discussed. I can not find it for the moment; unless I am mistaken, I made a statement concerning it Friday afternoon. I stated—I shall venture to call the recording secretary's attention to the fact—that at the time when the President asked us for a confidential disclosure of our peace conditions, we told him that our conditions were moderate. We stated in so many words that we had no intention of annexing Belgium. We made announcement covering the general great international questions. And I may repeat, as is certainly an important point, in my opinion, if we are going to consider individual documents of record, that President Wilson told Count v. Bernstorff through Colonel House that these communications which we had sent him were extraordinarily useful to him.

In my opinion, the situation was simply made more difficult for us by the message to Congress of the 22d of January. The first definite message from Wilson that it was his intention to go right ahead with his efforts for peace was only made known to us for the first time by Count Bernstorff's dispatch of the 28th of January. But, for reasons which I have also stated in detail, it was then simply too late. If it had occurred earlier, then we would perhaps have been able to do something.

In this connection I will call your attention to the fact—I do not know whether I have already done so in my comments made up to this time; probably I have, though—that Ambassador Gerard has specifically stated in his book that already, at the beginning of January, he knew that we were going to launch the unrestricted U-boat war—not, perhaps, in these precise terms, but that he had knowledge of it—and, so far as I know, all the American newspaper reporters here spoke of it. And further along in his book, Gerard says that he had, of course, notified his government about it. I shall make this the basis of no conjectures; but it is, after all, very possible that Wilson knew on the 22d of January, just as he knew it on the 28th, that we had made up our minds to launch the U-boat war.

It has been stated, moreover—I believe that Count v. Bernstorff gave the information—that he later became convinced that our entire dispatch

correspondence had been deciphered by England. Is not that so, Count v. Bernstorff?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, by England.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Count v. Bernstorff gave no information, nor could he do so, on the point as to whether this deciphering had already taken place by January, 1917, or whether the deciphering had been accomplished so quickly as to permit the deciphered telegrams to be made use of by England at this time. We have no absolute proof on this point. But, nevertheless, we can not discard the idea—at least we can not discard it as impossible,—that both the message to Congress of the 22d of January and President Wilson's move of the 28th of January took place at a time when the conclusions which had been reached here were known.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, I am talking of the time preceding the 9th of January, before a decision with regard to the U-boat war was reached. We have two telegrams of Count v. Bernstorff to the effect that Wilson had no other thought than peace, that he was hoping for the confidential disclosure of the peace conditions and trusted to bring about the peace conference. First question: Did you inform the Supreme High Command of the Army about this?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: May I ask that these dispatches be read in order to refresh my memory?

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Yes.

First, the dispatch of December 21:

Several days ago Lansing wired me concerning Wilson's peace note and told me that the American Government finds its position more and more intolerable on account of the continued violation of its rights. For that reason it was hoping for frank statements from the belligerent Powers with regard to their peace conditions. In answer I stated as my personal opinion that this would be very difficult to bring about except at a conference, on account of the press, etc. Lansing replied that disclosures could be confidential and might, little by little, lead to a conference. It would accordingly seem that the opinion which has become general here is correct, that Wilson would like to serve as a clearing house for further steps toward peace. He is strongly supported by public opinion on this side, with the exception of some of our quite rabid opponents, who characterize Wilson's note as pro-German.

Now I should like to refer to the other telegram preceding the 9th of January. It is dated December 29:

House told me that in Wilson's opinion a peace conference could not be brought about in the absence of preliminary confidential negotiations, since our enemies, as things are now, would reject the proposal by making its acceptance dependent upon the existence of certain conditions. This communication on the part of House was accompanied by an invitation for us to take part in absolutely confidential negotiations, a knowledge of which should be limited to Wilson, himself, and

myself. Under these circumstances, we could count upon absolute discretion, since Wilson and House are both fairly able to keep secrets. . . .

I do not believe that you desire me to continue with the reading of this telegram; I would, however, continue therewith except for the fact that it is not relevant to this point.

These were the two telegrams which preceded the 9th of January. After the 9th of January, the request for confidential communications is made in still more urgent form. Count Bernstorff tells us that he communicated the intention not to annex Belgium. He says that House made use of this communication; that he had said that Wilson considered this announcement on the part of the Imperial Government as being of value; that he could say nothing that was definite about the further course of Wilson's move, but that at least so much was certain; that for the moment the President had no other thought than to bring peace about, and that he would attempt to carry out this intention to the extent of his powers and of the means at his command; that an announcement by Wilson in the form of a message was to be expected in the immediate future. Bernstorff said, further, that apparently Wilson would call upon the American people in this message to help him bring about peace; that at least the first newspaper articles which had expressed this view had been received with approval.

On January 19, Bernstorff stated that war was unavoidable if the plan which was in contemplation and which was announced on January 16th was actually carried out; that Wilson believed that peace could be brought about on the basis of equal rights to all nations, which we had proclaimed; that House had stated that Wilson was going to take his step in the immediate future, since, as the result of our announcement with regard to a future peace league, he considered the time favorable for a peace conference.

Now, you just stated: "The U-boat war might mean our ruin." To this extent, it was to be looked upon as involving the possibilities of disaster. At this point, this question occurs: On basis of these communications, was it not possible to make one last attempt with Wilson to get peace mediation by America, rather than war with America? That is the question which, in my opinion, goes to the essence of the problem.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: That is a question which, I believe, I have already answered in the statements which I have hitherto made. (Very true.)

Count v. Bernstorff's communications, his conviction as to the fact that Wilson wanted to make peace, Wilson's suggestion to disclose our conditions to him confidentially—these facts are here characterized as being, alone, decisive on the point. From my point of view, the joint note of the Entente of the 30th of January was the deciding factor. Why I thought so, I have stated at length and in detail, so that I do not need to repeat the reasons at

this point. The joint note of the Entente destroyed the prospect, so far as I was concerned, that the Entente might be ready for peace within a determinable time.

If, aside from this, I may refer to a telegram which the recording secretary has read to us here—a telegram of Count v. Bernstorff of the 16th or 17th of January, in which he says that the President would come out with his peace move in the immediate future—it appears that this step followed in the shape of the message to Congress of the 22d of January, and I have already expressed myself to the effect that I did not interpret this speech as a step in the direction of a peace acceptable to us.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The question, whether the Supreme High Command of the Army was informed of this communication of Count Bernstorff's, has not yet been answered.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I will ask you to search into the records. My memory is not such as to enable me to state whether this dispatch was communicated or was not.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: But the assertion has been made that the Supreme High Command of the Army was not informed thereof.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Then I ask that we accept the fact as asserted. It is impossible for me to make from memory a definite statement with regard to a situation which must be clearly evident from the records at the disposal of the committee.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Was it not possible, by publishing this communication on the 9th of January, to determine whether or not we over here could discover the possibility of arriving at a peace basis in some other way?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: No, I can simply repeat that I would have done violence to my own convictions if I had said, on the 9th of January: "We shall not launch the U-boat war; I can offer you the possibility of peace negotiations." Every word in the joint note of the 30th of January would, in my own conscience, have given me the lie.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Then, on the 9th of January you were in favor of the U-boat war?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I have said all I have to say on the point (raising his voice). I ask that I be not forced again to make a statement with regard to matters which I have discussed in a formal and deliberate way and thus possibly establish a conflict between my statement of today and what I have already said. (Approval and commotion.)

The CHAIRMAN: I shall ask those present to refrain from any manifestation of approval or disapproval; I am perfectly clear with regard to the essence of our question. So far as I am concerned, we have completely exhausted this point.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I just spoke with feeling. I am

far removed from the desire to make reproaches of any kind. I simply wanted to make it plain to the committee how difficult my situation is. I ask that it be borne in mind that I am making my statement under oath and am constantly in danger of being reproached with the remark that "you have not taken your oath to the committee seriously." I am not moved by the suspicion that this reproach may be made to me here. It is possible, however, that it may be directed against me, and the thought is unbearable.

What I mean to say is that if, to the best of my knowledge and in accordance with my conscience, I have explained the situation in its main aspects—and I hardly believe that I can be expected to go beyond its main aspects in my analysis of it—I should be truly grateful not to have questions repeatedly put to me with regard to which I have attempted to show in my present statements that I have already answered them. If, then, I answered the last question to which my somewhat heated remark related—and I am willing to admit that it was heated,—if I answered the question, whether these individual communications of Count Bernstorff were brought to the knowledge of the Supreme High Command of the Army, with the reply: "That must appear in the records," that is simply a statement of actual conditions. Today, after the passage of three years, I am really not capable of making under oath a definite assertion on the point. I am well aware that the Supreme High Command of the Army has taken the stand that it was not sufficiently informed about President Wilson's peace move; and on the other hand, the dispatches which I read Friday show that the High Command was informed thereof.

In connection with this matter, I should once more like to emphasize the fact that the main point, the decisive factor on the 9th of January was that, doing justice to my good-will and my conscience, I could not have held out the prospect that the possibility of negotiation was to be expected. That was a question of the point of view, an extraordinarily vital question of conviction. But that was what my conviction was at that time, and I can do no more today than state that that was the case. I see no reason for the charge: "You should not have entertained that conviction; we can see no conclusive reasons for your doing so." If it is true that Emperor Karl and Count Czernin took a view of the joint note of the Entente of the 30th of December different from mine, I have ventured to state that the prevailing opinion of the German public—that opinion which prevailed throughout the broadest circles of the nation—was the one which absolutely agreed with mine. I am, of course, ready to give any information of which my memory is now capable. Nothing concerns me more intimately than to support the committee—that is my task,—to explain conditions, and to get at the truth. Naturally, this is what I am striving to do, because I believe the German people are entitled to know how matters were handled. But, as I have stated, I am of the impression that, after all, I have done

everything that it was possible for me to do in the way of making explanatory statements with regard to the U-boat war.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I should like to call attention to one point, and that is that the investigating committee has no desire to involve you in contradictions. The question was the result of the general representation that it was against your will that the U-boat war was carried on. The statements which have been made today give rise to a different conception; and I recognize to this extent the fact that you have answered it.

In connection herewith, may I put another question to you? On January 8, that is, before January 9, Secretary of State Helfferich sent you a telegram and pointed out therein that the commencement of the U-boat war on the 1st of February would bring about injurious results, that the fact was that the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war at this time would, if the United States entered into the war, not only fail to injure England economically, so far as her grain imports were concerned, but that, on the contrary, England's position would be improved by the establishment of a policy of food control in the United States applicable to grains, even if 600,000 tons a month were sunk. I would like to ask you whether you turned this communication of the Secretary of State to any account. Did you take up this point of view when the situation was being subjected to its last analysis on January 9?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: So far as I know, I did not put this telegram to any account on the 9th of January. I can not state this with certainty. I can simply repeat that, in the face of the unqualified demands of the Supreme High Command of the Army, in the face of the very decided views expressed by the Navy, that the U-boat war would have to be launched on February 1, such an objection as was contained in the telegram which Secretary of State Helfferich sent me was, in my opinion, lacking in conclusive and convincing force, so that, if I was to get any results, I would have to put forward something definite, and not deal simply with arguments which would be again opposed by new arguments on the part of the Navy and the Supreme High Command of the Army.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: But Dr. Helfferich was, after all, recognized as a leading authority in matters of political economy—this without reference to the political situation. If I am not mistaken, questions of national economy and expert opinions were treated and rendered by gentlemen who can scarcely, I believe, measure up to the qualifications of Secretary of State Dr. Helfferich in matters of judgment or interpretation. We shall subsequently consider the question of who drew up these opinions. They were not, in the main, experts on political economy. Was it not, then, proper to say: I shall check up these economic arguments which the Admiralty was not competent to make, and I do not recognize them as authoritative?

The CHAIRMAN: It would seem to me that all these objections—if I may be allowed to anticipate his Excellency's reply—when confronted with the existing situation, are met by the fact that the war was undertaken as a last resort, and that in view of the fixed determination on the part of the Entente to close the door to peace, which you assumed to be the case, there was nothing else left to be done.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: My view is as follows: The question, whether or not the U-boat war could be successful, was the vital question—not, whether the U-boat war was the means which had to be adopted at that time. What the U-boats could accomplish was the essential feature—not merely what they could accomplish in the way of sinkings, but their economic and political results as well. The question of what results they could bring about was, in my opinion, the vital question on the 9th of January. That is my opinion.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: It is not to be denied that the recording secretary has touched upon an important and interesting point. The only thing is that, on the 9th of January, these considerations for which, intrinsically, much may be said, could lead to nothing on the 9th of January.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Why not, your Excellency?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I have already ventured to explain in detail my attitude as opposed to the attitude of the Supreme High Command of the Army which, on its side, supported and accepted the views expressed by the Navy. I shall ask you gentlemen to consider this point: If the Supreme High Command of the Army was absolutely convinced, and convinced by reasons having to do with the war situation in the various theaters of war, that we would lose the war if we did not adopt the unrestricted U-boat war, and if the Imperial Chancellor was not in a position to say that he could offer them a possibility of ending the war, consisting of methods other than those used in the theater of war, the result is that we have before us a dilemma against which objections to the effect that the statistical calculations concerning political economy presented by the Admiralty Staff would not hold water, could make no headway. What I believe is that the great questions which came up for decision altogether outweighed and put in the shade these considerations, which, true enough, were significant, but which at that time were reduced to the position of side issues.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: If I correctly understand the statement of his Excellency Mr. v. Bethmann, its meaning is this: That, on January 9, he withdrew his opposition as the result of the dilemma in which he found himself; that is, when confronted by the power of the Supreme High Command and of the Navy, which had announced that the war could not be won by Germany unless the U-boat war was launched. If this dilemma had not existed at that time he would, as the result of considering the arguments

pro and *con* in connection with the intensive U-boat war, have reached the following conclusion: That the arguments against it would have won the day, for, if the U-boat war was launched, it would be at the price of America's neutrality, and if America entered the war on the side of our enemies, it would probably or certainly be lost, from Germany's standpoint. The forced situation in which he found himself confronted with a power which seemed to him to be the stronger of the two, would according to his last remark as well, seem to have lain also in the fact that he no longer had back of him, in his fight against the unrestricted U-boat war, the majority of parliament, since this majority had disappeared because one of the structures of which it had been composed had tottered, and since, for this reason, he no longer had the backing which enabled him to maintain successfully his stand when opposed to the strength of the Supreme High Command of the Army. Now I should like to ask the following question: Would it not have been possible to bring the strength of parliament definitely over to the side of the Imperial Chancellor and, in fact, to have had it maintain a firm and determined front against the unrestricted U-boat war? It had been so during a whole year. For one whole year the Imperial Chancellor had succeeded, with the support of a compact majority of parliament which was opposed to the unrestricted U-boat war, to hold off the demands of the Supreme High Command of the Army and of the Navy, on the one hand, and of those political groups which sailed the same course, on the other. So that this parliamentary majority had been sufficiently strong to prevent the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war up to that time, and if it had been held intact, it would certainly have been sufficiently strong to have continued to do so. Was it not, then, incumbent upon the Imperial Chancellor to make the effort to prevent the disintegration of this element of strength and, moreover, to have done this by having informed those parties which had the same political end in view, through their party leaders, of the real situation?

The leaders of these parties were not informed that the announcement of the ruthless U-boat war would automatically put an end to America's neutrality and bring her into the war on the side of our enemies. The leaders of those parliamentary groups which I have in mind knew nothing definite concerning the communications which Count Bernstorff had made to this very effect; nor did they know about Count Bernstorff's telegrams during the course of January. The impression which was entertained in parliamentary circles was that it was very likely that America could be kept neutral, even if the unrestricted U-boat war were declared. That the question as to whether the United States could be kept out of war—not the fate of the peace move—was the vital question. The knowledge that, if it came to the point of such a war, we would lose the war, was the really decisive factor so far as we were concerned. I am convinced that if the parlia-

ment had known at that time that there was no hope of keeping the United States neutral if the unrestricted U-boat war were to be declared, this parliament would have stood like a stone wall on the proposition: No, we will not play this win-all lose-all game. My party, the Social Democratic Party, in spite of all, held fast to that view because it very seriously apprehended that the United States would participate. We were left, however, with one gleam of hope, since we had not been informed of Count v. Bernstorff's communications. Therefore, in my opinion, if the representatives of the German people had been unqualifiedly informed of the enormous risk which was involved in the unrestricted U-boat war, this would have been sufficient to make a solid parliamentary majority and to provide the Imperial Chancellor with that support which he needed to enable him to prevent the unrestricted U-boat war; and if it was not sufficient to stop it absolutely, it would at least have postponed it beyond the critical moment, that is, until Wilson himself would have said: "My peace move was wrecked on the rock of the opposition by the Entente, but Germany was willing." Then, I say, given certain conditions, the situation would have been a more favorable one. This postponement would certainly have obtained the votes of parliament and, if the Imperial Chancellor had given parliament this information, he would have had the solid weight of popular representation behind him. For this reason, I ask him why it was—for what reason he did not inform the representatives of the people, or those who, to his knowledge, agreed with him in his peace policy—why did he not inform them of the situation before this disastrous decision was acted upon?

The CHAIRMAN: If you please, your Excellency!

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I should like to state at the outset that I do not believe that Minister of State Dr. David's conception of the situation is correct, since he construes the dilemma which I have made the subject of comment as a dilemma which existed only for me as against the opposing views of the Supreme High Command of the Army. Of course, I can not speak for the Supreme High Command of the Army; but I assume that the unqualified demand made by the Supreme High Command of the Army, that the unrestricted U-boat war be launched, resulted from a certain dilemma on the military side—from the dilemma which confronted the military branch as the result of the fact that, according to their own view, it would be impossible to obtain a victorious termination of the war merely by activities in the theaters of war on land without the assistance of the U-boat war. I should like to emphasize this point, in order not to create the impression that I was the only person to be confronted with so momentous a decision as that which faced me on the 9th of January. It seemed to me that the military branch was also faced with the necessity of deciding a question which was momentous for it, as well.

Now, Minister of State Dr. David asks why I did not inform the parlia-

ment of the dangers of the U-boat war which would result in the United States entering the war. I am of the belief that no doubt existed either in the minds of the public on the whole, or in the minds of the political parties, that the U-boat war would ultimately bring the United States into the war. (Very true.)

I received this impression from the attacks upon my policy, the purpose of which was to avoid the entrance of the United States into the war, which attacks were based on the ground that I was weak. It is quite probable that the hope was openly expressed in the budget committee by one member or another, representative of the government, that "perhaps we shall still be lucky enough to keep America neutral; they will break off diplomatic relations, but it may be that they will not go so far as to reach the point of war. But I think that every statesman who bore in mind the consequences of the *Lusitania* and the *Sussex* incidents, and the way in which these cases were finally settled, was bound to know that the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war would bring the United States into the war; as to how soon or how late, that would remain a question. By our answer of the 30th of January to Count Bernstorff's dispatch of the 28th of January, we still continued to make the attempt—and this is recognized, particularly by the members of Minister David's party—to so construct this answer, both in form and contents, as to prevent the United States from entering into the war. It is perfectly true that, as the result of my estimate of the American situation, my hope that her entrance into the war might be avoided, was slight. In view of the situation on the 9th of January, which I have repeatedly described, I should by no means have considered that, had a majority in parliament opposed the U-boat war, this fact would have turned the scale.

In my statement of last Friday, I attributed considerable importance to the attitude of parliament in that I said that not only a great portion of the people, but even the majority of the Reichstag, had decided that the final decision with regard to the question of the U-boat war would be the one announced by the military branch; and I laid special emphasis upon this attitude of parliament in order to make it clear that such hosts had answered the question of launching the unrestricted U-boat war in the affirmative, that it was impossible for us not to avail ourselves of this instrument of warfare without leaving in the soul of the nation the bitter feeling that it had put to no use an instrument of warfare which the majority of the people, the parliament, and the leaders of our Army and Navy, considered right and necessary simply because at the last moment its use had been opposed by a timorous and pusillanimous attitude on the part of the political branch. I ask that this moral aspect of the question be not underestimated. It is of lasting significance. It was not the absolutely conclusive feature, but in this question we find elements of the most widely differing kind, concentrated

into a most far-reaching and complicated whole, elements, each one of which has its particular significance, and no one of which can be overlooked if we are to reach a correct judgment with regard to that whole.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: This moral side of the situation was, it is true, a very strong psychological factor which could be injected into the people. We might have said: "The one instrument which would have helped us on our road to an early and brilliant victory was not made use of, and those who stopped us from doing so are to blame because we did not succeed in winning that brilliant victory which was guaranteed us by this instrument." That would certainly have been a powerful psychological factor. There was but one power which was able to bear the weight of it. That was the power of popular representation. The majority of the popular representation in a parliamentary State where it is kept in full touch with the course of events, could have assumed the responsibility if it had said to the opposing party: "Yes, but the use of this instrument does not guarantee the certainty of victory; on the contrary, it involves a game where everything depends upon a single throw, and includes the possibility of bringing us down in dreadful ruin," which, as a matter of fact, it has done. So that the only power which was capable of maintaining this psychological struggle was the power of popular representation and, if I look back today, I find that just at this point, there was an omission. It is for this reason that I put my question. Did it not occur to the Imperial Chancellor to invoke the assistance of parliament, to call upon those powers which the parliament possessed, in order to stop this win-all lose-all game?

And now, the Imperial Chancellor further states that no doubt could be entertained that the United States would enter into the war if we announced the launching of the U-boat war; that every statesman was bound to know that if this was done there was an end to America's neutrality. I can not agree to this, and, in support of my view, I point to the proceedings which took place in this hall in the main committee on January 31, 1917—those proceedings which nobody who took part therein will forget—on the occasion of which the attitude of parliament with regard to the decision of the Supreme High Command of the Army on the question of the unrestricted U-boat war was to be announced. At that time the matter seemed in no way to be settled, so far as America was concerned. The hope that America would stand aside was a very pronounced element at the time and one which was essential to a certain compliance on the part of a majority of parliament, and this hope was strengthened by the remarks made by Secretary of State Zimmermann who, at that time, described the scene which had taken place between himself and Ambassador Gerard, when he told him what had been decided with regard to the unrestricted U-boat war. At that time, Gerard—so Secretary of State Zimmermann told us—by no means looked upon the matter as tragic, and he (Zimmermann) is supposed to have said to him:

"Now, Mr. Gerard, Mr. Wilson can show us once for all whether he is really ready to announce himself in favor of an understanding and in favor of Germany and whether, in spite of this, neutrality will be observed." And Mr. Gerard is said to have remarked: "All right," and to have left without the slightest appearance of indignation. We at once expressed our doubt upon the point as to whether Mr. Gerard had really taken the matter so lightly and had assumed such an easy attitude with regard to it. But I simply refer to this as an incident.

And, so far as the Imperial Chancellor was concerned, too, the hope that the United States would stand aside was, in spite of this, not given up entirely. And it was this thought, that we had not absolutely lost the neutrality of the United States, that the entrance of America into the war would not be the inevitable result, which at that time still influenced strongly the majority of the parliament. For my part, I already felt the likelihood that the United States would proceed against us sufficiently strongly to cause me most urgently to protest against taking this step.

So that I can not concede that there might not have been a way out of the difficulty if, with all the earnestness called for by the situation, parliament had been informed down to the last detail concerning the whole terrible consequences of this decision; and had also been informed about the negotiations which were being carried on with Wilson. But of this, too, we knew nothing. It is from this point that we might have started building up an organization which could have enabled us to refuse to accept this disastrous decision or, at least, to postpone it. The Russian revolution was approaching. The whole situation became changed, and we would have been saved if the war had been postponed.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency Zimmermann, I presume you wish to make a statement on a question of fact.

Witness v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: May I say a word? For the Minister of State has taken certain exceptions with regard to my testimony.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps I had better ask his Excellency Zimmermann first for a short statement.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: I have a very distinct recollection of the words which I spoke at that time in the main committee regarding my conference with Gerard. When Gerard called upon me and I translated our note and handed it over to him, I asked him: "How do you think it will be received in Washington?" and he then said to me: "I don't know what they want in Washington, you may be all right," or "It might be that you are all right." I then requested him, in case the matter might not be favorably received, to be good enough to exert all his influence in order to bring about a favorable feeling toward us and, if possible, to avoid pressure being brought to bear, and he added: "Certainly, I will do my best to avoid friction." Those were the words, and it is in this sense that I addressed the main committee.

But I believe, however, that I also added on that occasion: "These are Gerard's words; how the matter will come out, I do not know." For I believe that, on that very occasion, I expressed myself to the effect that I was somewhat skeptical with regard to the information which the Ambassador had received from his government. I believed that he was not very completely informed. I had already stated so on an earlier occasion. A striking proof of this had come up once before, when I, in cooperation with the Ambassador, on the occasion of the *Lusitania* incident, had worked out plans for settling any further differences with the United States, the Ambassador had received them warmly, and had stated to me: "We are now through with our difficulties." He himself telegraphed the message to Washington, and, as I understood, accompanied it with strong recommendations; for, as a matter of fact, it was in the main his own work; and at that time he received an answer entirely in the nature of a rejection. Even then, and as the result of that episode, it seemed to me that the Ambassador was very poorly informed with regard to the wishes and views of his own government.

If, on the occasion of that session, held at a time when there was no change which could be made in the situation—for the matter was closed—I personally struck perhaps an optimistic note, or if my speech at the time was such as to allow a suggestion of optimism to be read between the lines, that circumstance could not alter the facts. Perhaps it was, after all, quite essential for me not to paint black in black. We had made up our minds to carry on the U-boat war, and it did not seem to me to be quite fitting to say at this moment, right at the outset: "Now, we can certainly expect a break with the United States; now we are sure to have war with the United States."

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The Minister of State referred to the fact that on the 31st of January I had still maintained the hope that America would not take part in the war. In this connection, I should like to make a statement similar to that which has just been made by Mr. Secretary of State Zimmermann. Even if I were personally convinced of the fact that the United States would come into the war, it would have been impossible for me, under circumstances where the U-boat war had been determined upon, and that determination was no longer revocable, to state to the main committee that America's entrance into the war was an absolute certainty. The Minister of State—and this is the main reason why I have again requested an opportunity of saying a word—says that the entrance of the United States into the war was not such a certainty after all. My memory would, however, be playing me false indeed if, in the repeated proceedings of the main committee concerning the U-boat war in its various phases, those reasons against the launching of the U-boat war—and I do not refer to the technical reasons such as an insufficient number of U-boats—had not

been mentioned by me when constantly referring to the fact that the unrestricted U-boat war would lead to a war with America. I believe that my memory does not deceive me on the point that this feature of the question was constantly emphasized before the budget committee during the varying phases of the U-boat war in the summer of 1916, and also, I believe, in the autumn of 1916, so that I do not think that, in this connection, I can be deemed to have laid myself open to the charge of negligence.

The Minister of State has recognized the psychological factor of which I spoke, and has expressed the opinion that a majority of the parliament in a State subject to a parliamentary government would have been able to carry the weight of opprobrium which would have resulted from having ignored the existence of the psychological factor. But these conditions were not those which confronted us, and the majority of parliament had already made it perfectly plain that the decision of the Supreme High Command of the Army concerning the U-boat war would be confirmed by it. The decision in favor of the U-boat war, I mean. For my part, I should not care to use the term "win-all, lose-all game," of which the Minister of State has availed himself. In my opinion, the decision of the 9th of January did not constitute a game of *va-banque*. I have already ventured to state that I am quite willing to believe that the U-boat war did have its definite effects, that it brought about certain possibilities.

Delegate GÖTHEIN: His Excellency v. Bethmann has referred to the fact that the conception penetrated far into the ranks of the extreme Left, that the brusque answer of the Entente had shut the door which led to peace and, as a proof of this, relied upon a speech of Delegate Scheidemann. Can not this speech be also interpreted as meaning that the forces in Germany which were supporting the unrestricted U-boat war got the upper hand from the time that the Entente gave their curt reply? The position taken by the Social Democratic Party in the session of the budget committee of January 31, 1917, as well as that taken by the Progressive National Party at the same session, would seem to support this view beyond question.

And in this connection, there is perhaps another matter to be considered—and I shall ask the Imperial Chancellor to examine this point once more,—whether, after the unrestricted U-boat war was actually declared and the Reichstag was powerless to effect any changes with regard to the matter, since, according to the laws and constitution then existing, questions of the conduct of war were matters over which the Emperor and the Supreme High Command had jurisdiction—whether the inclination was not evinced to support the government and the Supreme High Command of the Army, and not subsequently to criticize the measures which were taken. With regard to the Progressive National Party, I at least am well aware of the fact that, after it was impossible for that party to alter the existing situation, it took no further steps in opposition to the course adopted.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: It was perhaps incautious of me to make my prior reference to the speech of Delegate Scheidemann, since, of course, I am not called upon to interpret what Delegate Scheidemann meant to say while using the words he did. It is quite possible that the interpretation which Delegate Gothein has just placed upon it is the applicable one; needless to say, I will not quarrel over the question.

But, nevertheless, I should like to state that, according to my impressions—and I should have to be shown proofs to the contrary if it were to be alleged that my impressions are wrong—the conception that the joint note of the 30th of December constituted a curt rejection of our peace proposal, and held out no hope whatsoever, was the idea entertained by the great majority. If that were not the case, I should be bound to assume that, in reply to the expressions of the press, which were all in agreement that it was a curt rejection, other powerful factors, such as political parties, would have stated: “that is an absolutely wrong interpretation of the joint note; it certainly offers us possibilities for negotiation.” But so far as I can recollect, this was not the case. Today I can only state that, as the situation appears to me, viewed in the light of today, my impression of that time concerning the meaning of the joint note and its significance was shared by the majority of the public and of political parties.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I should like to make a further comment. It is doubtless the fact that at that time the public looked upon the joint note of the Entente as a curt rejection, but, nevertheless, in the meantime, Wilson's peace move had taken place, and then—if I remember correctly the public opinion expressed in the press—the idea was entertained throughout broad circles of society that a new situation had been brought about and that the Entente Powers would probably not be any longer in a position to maintain an attitude of refusal when confronted with a request by the United States.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: So far as I remember—naturally, what I say today must not be taken as final—the impression made upon the neutral countries was that the joint note of the 30th of December indicated a hopeless rejection of our peace proposal; and I do not recollect that it was stated in neutral countries that the answer of the Entente made to Wilson's note opened up new avenues leading toward peace. Nor do I recollect that it was only in the neutral countries that this general impression prevailed; in individual cases, the contrary opinion may have been expressed.

The CHAIRMAN: In any event, some embassies sent in reports from neutral countries to the effect that they considered this note a bluff.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: We have a report before us—we can tell today noon from whom it came—according to which it was assumed that the purpose of the curtness was to inveigle Germany into launching the unrestricted U-boat war, because it was upon this fact that England based her hopes of having the United States join the Entente. On

the other hand, we have a report to the effect that the neutral States looked with the greatest approval upon Germany's peace proposal, particularly because it was to be assumed that, in spite of its rejection, the desire for peace among the various nations would be given an impulse by this peace note. But others expressed contrary views.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: This last point which the recording secretary just had the goodness to bring out constitutes a strong confirmation of what I said on Friday, to the effect that it was our purpose to influence the point of view in the hostile countries by means of our peace proposal, and that we would give an impulse to the desire for peace existing in the hostile countries; and it is interesting to hear—I had forgotten it, but now when this report is again mentioned to me, I remember it—that this impression was also created in the neutral countries.

But the point which seems to me to be important at the present moment of this discussion, is the presentation of a counter-proof—of course it does not present itself in such form—a counter-proof or the grounds for such counter-proof, against my opinion that the joint note of the 30th of December constituted so brusque a rejection of our peace proposal as to make it impossible to depend upon any opportunity for negotiations in the immediate future—a proof that this idea of mine was by no means wrong. But I have not really heard anything of this kind which could constitute a ground therefor.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I referred particularly to President Wilson's message to Congress, and it created—I had particular reference to the domestic situation, not to neutral foreign countries—an opinion very generally held in newspaper circles, that the opportunity was hereby afforded for further negotiations. This was, of course, sometime after the 9th of January.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: That was long after the 9th of January. I ventured to give my interpretation of the message to Congress of the 22d of January, which, to be sure, differs in many respects from that which seems to be given by Mr. Gothein. But in connection with all these questions, the query will always be, I believe, one of ascertaining how one party or the other interpreted the political situation. Of course, I can do nothing more, even if my view is not accepted, than to make plain here what the view was upon which I proceeded at that time.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Your Excellency then stated that it was impossible, according to your testimony, for the political parties to entertain any doubt upon the point that America would not remain neutral if we announced the unrestricted U-boat war. I will certainly admit that in earlier proceedings this view was expressed by your Excellency as well as by Secretary of State Helfferich—that the view was expressed that it would be very easy to come to the point of war with the United States, but that it was impossible to say how we would come out of it again, on what terms we would make peace

with the United States. But later, if I recollect correctly, this point of view was abandoned and the danger of the United States entering the war was represented to us as not at all momentous. As a matter of fact, we were told in the budget committee that, from the military standpoint, the entrance of the United States into the war would have absolutely no effect. Does your Excellency know that? According to this, the view that the political parties had been sufficiently informed with regard to the danger would not seem quite correct.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Different parties attributed different degrees of significance to the entrance of the United States into the war. It is possible that I, personally, looked upon America's entrance into the war as a more serious matter than other authorities considered it to be. But even though it is true that different views were expressed on this point in the budget committee, it still seems to me that the perspective of America's entrance into the war was so plainly presented to the view of those participating in the session of the budget committee when the case of the U-boat war was being considered that I am hardly going too far in asserting that this perspective must, in turn, have been placed before the eyes of the politicians in the Reichstag after my communications made in committee.

Delegate GOTHEIN: It is perfectly true that all these matters were wholly convincing, so far as I was concerned, but apparently not so far as all others were concerned. Now, your Excellency has stated that the Supreme High Command of the Army did not consider a victorious termination of the war possible as the result of land operations, and for that reason insisted upon the unrestricted U-boat war. The records show us that this opinion had been that entertained in the circles of the then Supreme High Command of the Army ever since January, 1916. But it would be a matter of great interest to find out when this view began to be first adopted by the Supreme High Command of the Army.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I believe that the records show this as well, and in the statement that I made last Friday I ventured to refer thereto. I referred particularly to the dispatches which General Ludendorff sent to me at the end of December and in which he stated that, according to his personal impressions received at the western front, the U-boat war should be launched at once. Thereafter I read and referred to still other dispatches in the course of my statement. I can see how thoroughly right I was in the view which I originally expressed, that there would be great objection to my repeating in the form of an extemporaneous statement, remarks which I have already formulated with great care, and expressed with due deliberation. And with regard to the expression which I have already used, to wit, that the Supreme High Command of the Army did not consider that the war could be brought to a victorious end by means

of operations in the theaters of war on land alone and without the assistance of the U-boat war, I should like to add that I do not know whether this expression exists in so many words in the dispatches and comments of the Supreme High Command of the Army.

(Interruption: Yes.)

In order not to give any false information in this connection, which possibly might be justly criticized by the Supreme High Command of the Army as a false statement, I should like simply to refer to what I read last Friday, literally from the reports themselves.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I remark that this expression, as a matter of fact, appears repeatedly. But above all, I referred to the fact that, ever since January, 1916, the stand was taken by the then Supreme High Command of the Army, that is, General v. Falkenhayn, that the war could not be carried on to a victorious end as the result of our land forces alone. But it would seem that this view had already prevailed at an earlier period in military circles, and my point is that it would be interesting to know when this conviction was first entertained by the Supreme High Command of the Army, that is, by that Supreme High Command which preceded that of General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I should like to suggest that this question could, perhaps, be answered by taking the testimony of the members of the Supreme High Command of the Army. It is readily understood that I am hardly in a position to state when this conviction first prevailed in the Supreme High Command of the Army.

Delegate DR. COHN: The fourth part of these exhibits begins with a *résumé* of the 4th of January, 1916, in your handwriting, and this repeats what Mr. Gothein has just said. In the second paragraph of this memorandum, it is stated:

On the 2d of January, General Falkenhayn had a rather long conference with Secretary of State Dr. Helfferich on this question. On this occasion his view was more or less as follows, so the latter informed me. He stated that he could not bring the war to an end by military blows delivered on land; that Helfferich and I had repeatedly expressed to him the opinion that our financial and economic resources would not last much longer than the autumn of 1916, and that it was also possible that the morale of the people would not hold out. If the war was to be ended before that time, the Navy would have to take a hand.

I should like, in connection with Mr. Gothein's inquiry, to put the question this way: Do you know, your Excellency, that as early as September and October, 1914, the military branch expressed the opinion to various authorities belonging to the political branch of the government, that it would be impossible to win the war by military methods, and that political methods would have to be adopted? That was after the collapse on the Marne.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: That is a special question, to answer which would be extraordinarily difficult for me. Of course, repeated conferences took place between me and the Supreme High Command of the Army with regard to the fortunes of the war. What statements were made by one side or the other in the course of these conferences, which took the form of conversations in which the parties exchanged their views and, perhaps, advocated views at the commencement of the conversation different from those which they entertained at the close, after one or the other of the parties was convinced as to a certain matter, I am really in no position to repeat today.

Delegate DR. COHN: Your Excellency, my question was certainly quite clear-cut. I did not ask whether such conversations took place, but whether, as the result of the retreat on the Marne, following upon the collapse of the war plans in September, 1914, the military branch approached the political branch with the request to proceed to measures looking toward the termination of the war by other than military means, or to lay the foundation for proceeding to do so.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I do not know whether or not the records contain any information to the effect that any such communication was sent to me by the Supreme High Command of the Army.

Delegate DR. COHN: It is quite possible that a suggestion was made by word of mouth. The question is a very general one, your Excellency, and is simply, whether it is in any way known to you that such suggestions had already taken place at that time.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: It seems to me as if General v. Falkenhayn and, generally speaking, the Supreme High Command of the Army had always taken the following stand: "Certainly, our naval forces must help us in order that we may bring the war to a favorable termination." That thought, I believe, is one which was expressed to me by General v. Falkenhayn and, later, repeatedly, by the Supreme High Command of the Army under General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg. I would have to assume, however, that, if special action by the fleet was the necessary action which may be supposed was meant, an understanding would have been reached at first by the Supreme High Command of the Army with the Admiralty Staff and with the naval branch, since to proceed by way of myself would have attracted attention, and it is possible that further details are to be found in the records of the Admiralty Staff and of the Supreme High Command of the Army. I am not in a position to give an absolutely precise reply to the question of Dr. Cohn which has been very precisely put.

Delegate DR. COHN: I fear that I have been misunderstood once more. My question was of this nature: The *tertium comparationis* of the situation of September, 1914, with the situation of January, 1916, which you have reproduced in your *résumé*, consists, according to my question, in this: That

the Supreme High Command of the Army declared as far back as September, 1914, that it was not able to bring the war to an end by the employment of the military arm, particularly in view of the impression which the collapse on the Marne had made upon the War Department, and that at that time—that is my question—the military branch had approached the political branch with the suggestion or the request to end the war in some other way.

The CHAIRMAN: But, Dr. Cohn, we are here limited to a consideration of the Wilson peace move. Since I can see no connection here, I will ask that, after his Excellency has, perhaps, given us his reply, this line of questioning be dropped. In any event, I leave it to your discretion, Excellency, to reply if you will.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I can not recollect, at the moment, that the Supreme High Command of the Army came to me in the fall of 1914 with proposals or statements such as Dr. Cohn has just formulated.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: I should like to ask the Imperial Chancellor to give us his impression of the forced situation with which he was confronted on the 9th of January, from another point of view.

In this connection, I will take the stand of the Imperial Chancellor that a mediation by the United States was no longer to be hoped for in view of the attitude of the Entente. Then, the following alternative would have existed: Either to give up the war as lost, or to try the experiment of the unrestricted U-boat war. Now, it is quite conceivable to me that different views could be entertained with regard to this question. I could see, for instance, how the following view would be entertained: If this experiment contains only a small percentage of the probability of success, it must be carried out; our honor demands that we do this before we give up the war as lost. In this case, if the Admiralty Staff of the Navy demanded the U-boat war, technical details of deduction touching the economic results of the destruction of British ships would have been of secondary importance. But I can, too, readily understand how still another point of view might be reached, namely, the point of view that, bearing in mind the tremendous danger which would necessarily result from a failure of the experiment, this experiment ought only to be undertaken if, by methods of human calculation, the chances would be at least 50 per cent on the side of the probability of success. And I could also imagine how this question would be weighed carefully, cool-headedly and with a calculating deliberation, and how, with this end in view, one might obtain the opinion of all experts on the subject within reach who were capable of furnishing information, with regard to the results upon the economic situation of the nation of the sinking of so-and-so many hundred thousand tons of shipping. I would, therefore, request that the Imperial Chancellor tell us whether he stood on the point of honor in this matter of refusing to give the war up as lost under no

condition, as long as there was any available means of any kind, or whether he took for his basis scientific calculation.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I probably did not take my stand on the point of honor, in the sense in which Professor Schücking has developed the idea. On the 9th of January, I was not able, basing my opinion upon the general war situation, to see before me a clear-cut alternative to the effect that, if it were not decided to carry on the U-boat war, the result would be immediate capitulation with the request to our enemies to stop the war and the submission of ourselves to any and all conditions. In my opinion, judging the matter either from the political or the military standpoint, that alternative did not confront me, so that I should like to have the point of honor eliminated from the question. To my mind, the technical point of calculations with regard to economics could not of itself be conclusive. At that time I was of the impression that the desire to prove by the use of statistics that England could be made ready to discuss the question of peace, in other words, could be forced to do so by difficulties of food shortage, etc.—I was always of the opinion that this was not a matter susceptible of proof. During the course of the war, individual statisticians have repeatedly proved to us by means of statistics that feeding the German people must cease to be a possibility at a given date. Fortunately, we have always been able to continue to do so. But, on the other hand, I was likewise of the opinion that it was impossible to prove by means of statistics that the U-boat war was bound to fail. The terrorizing feature did play its part in the effect brought about by the U-boat war; it simply did not continue to do so for as long a period as the Navy had hoped. Matters of internal politics in England, such as the increase of the difficulty of feeding the nation, difficulties in the matter of imports, etc., played their part too. In my opinion, nothing can be proven by statistical calculations in these premises, either *pro* or *con*. What I mean to say is, what I have designated as the dilemma—it is possible that the expression may have led to a not quite correct conception of what I meant—this dilemma consisted precisely in this, that we who were deprived of any prospects of peace were forced to do something. To sit absolutely passive, staring into the future, and to endure that defeat in war which lay before us, according to the judgment of the military branch, and, at the same time, to have in one's hands an instrument of warfare which had not been tried out, and which, when all was said and done, held out certain prospects of success—well, we had to make use of this instrument; it was not to be avoided. That is what my attitude was with regard to the situation which existed on the 9th of January.

Delegate HEILE: If we look at these questions of *pro* and *con* with regard to the U-boat war on the 9th of January, the following question comes up for consideration: What was actually done in order to make this instrument

of war, which was to be made use of as a last resort, so efficient that the chances of success were greater than the risks of failure? It is known at present that as long as Secretary of State Tirpitz was in office, more was certainly done in a negative way than in a positive way to further the construction of U-boats to the extent required. It is also known that, in the case of Mr. v. Tirpitz's successor—at least, in the first period of his incumbency—the situation was not handled with sufficient energy to make obvious the tremendous risk which was to be assumed. It is known—and I am now coming to the question which I desire to put—that only after Secretary of State Tirpitz had left, was the first contract of any considerable proportions for the construction of U-boats supposed to have been given out by the direct interposition of the Imperial Chancellor, v. Bethmann-Hollweg. I should now like to ask whether the change in attitude which the then Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg agreed to on the 9th of January, in finally deciding definitely for the U-boat war, is in any way connected with the possibility that, in the meantime, he had become convinced that, as the result of his interposition, the U-boat construction had increased to such an extent that the chances of success were now greater than they had been before.

Witness v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: May I answer the question quite briefly? The chances on the 9th of January, 1917, were naturally quite different from the chances in March or June—those, I believe, were the decisive months—of the year 1916. The number of our U-boats had increased to an extraordinary amount, and the continued increase of the U-boats had received a tremendous impulse. I believe, however, that these questions could only be fully answered in connection with an examination of the gentlemen of the Navy Department or of the Admiralty Staff.

The CHAIRMAN: That will take place tomorrow.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: I will state quite briefly and for the purpose of clearing up the question which has been put as to what extent the Imperial Chancellor gave out information at that time as to why he opposed the U-boat war; I will state that on the 14th of September, 1916, the Imperial Chancellor had a rather lengthy conference with a number of gentlemen, of whom I myself was one, and gave as the main reason against launching the U-boat war the ground that it would doubtless lead to a war with the United States and that, thereafter, the United States, acting conjointly with England, would shut us and all neutral Powers off from all imports, and, by so doing, would force our neighboring neutral States into war against us. Those are the reasons which, at that time, on the 14th of September, 1916, the Imperial Chancellor proceeded to give us, and I can not help but think that, if he had occasion to express himself elsewhere with regard to these questions, he did express himself in this way.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I believe that no question has been addressed to me.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, you are aware of the fact that, in the various memorials of the Admiralty Staff, it has been expressly declared that Mr. v. Holtzendorff did not hesitate to state that we, under the conditions then existing, would be able to force England to accept peace in five months by the use of the unrestricted U-boat war. That is what all those memorials say. They made their appearance in great numbers. These memorials, in which a great mass of material has been compiled, were marked strictly confidential. Did you know, your Excellency, that these strictly confidential memorials have, to a very great extent, become public? So that this is an example of how it has come about that the general public could entertain the firm belief that it had been scientifically proven that the unrestricted U-boat war was bound to succeed. You speak of the hypnosis which was brought about by the U-boat belief. Did you know that these memorials had found their way into the hands of the public?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I believe that we shall have to differentiate between the memorials, for different memorials were drawn up. A memorial was prepared in the spring of 1916. This, so far as I know, was brought to the knowledge of a limited number of persons. To what extent the memorial of December 22, 1916, came into the hands of the public, I do not know, and, in this case too, I should like to leave it to the discretion of the committee to inquire of the Admiralty Staff, from which the memorial emanated, to what extent this memorial was circulated or made public. I would not be able to give any definite information on the point.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The memorial of the spring of 1916 came into the hands of the public, as you assume to be the case. I may state that, according to the records, you objected in the sharpest possible manner against the publication and circulation of the memorial. It must, therefore, have come into the hands of the public, and, in so doing, have been of great weight in favoring this "foundation of scientific proof" for the U-boat hypnosis.

The CHAIRMAN: I have still one short final question to put. In your telegram, your Excellency, which you sent to Count Bernstorff at the end of January, and in which you give him information to be announced at the time that the note concerning the intensive U-boat war is to be delivered to the President, you say:

If his proposal had only been made a few days earlier, we would have been able to put off the commencement of the new U-boat war. At the present time, in spite of the best will in the world, it is, unfortunately, too late on account of technical reasons, since far-reaching military preparations have been decided upon from which we are no longer in a

position to recede, and because the U-boats have already left port with new instructions.

I simply want to put the question from whom you received the information that, for technical reasons, the U-boat war could no longer be postponed.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: This communication could only have been made to me by Admiral v. Holtzendorff or by his Excellency Admiral Koch.

The CHAIRMAN: Then, this will be taken up in tomorrow's session.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: In all these U-boat matters, I dealt, to a very great extent, with Admiral v. Holtzendorff and, in individual cases, with his Excellency Koch as his representative. I can not, however, state at the present moment who made this announcement.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: It must have been in the Headquarters.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Then by Admiral v. Holtzendorff at the Headquarters.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: May I add a question? Did your Excellency inquire what those instructions were which were given to the U-boats when they left port, with respect to possible messages from home?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: No, I made no inquiries along that line. In my opinion, a purely military question was involved which I, on my part, could not follow up.

The CHAIRMAN: The examination of his Excellency v. Bethmann is herewith closed. There remains but a very short conference which, however, in view of the fact that it concerns a neutral Power, must be carried on behind closed doors. Consequently, I must exclude the public from this final phase of the examination. I ask those who are not members of of the committee to leave.

I can, however, give the following information with regard to further proceedings: Tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock, we shall continue the hearings and shall begin, in fact, with the examination of Admiral Koch, and possibly additional witnesses. I shall ask that Admiral Capelle and Secretary of State Helfferich be present at the session, so that, if possible, they may be examined. Mr. Secretary of State Zimmermann, likewise, will be present for the purposes of the session tomorrow.

The public session closed at 1:44 o'clock; the secret session followed.

SEVENTH SESSION

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1919

The session was opened at 10:23 o'clock by the Chairman, Delegate Warmuth.

The CHAIRMAN: The session is opened. Before we proceed to the testimony of Admiral Koch, I should like first to give his Excellency v. Romberg the opportunity of putting an inquiry to Count v. Bernstorff. If you please, your Excellency v. Romberg!

Expert v. ROMBERG: After looking over the transcript of the testimony of Count v. Bernstorff, at the taking of which I was not present, I should like to ask Count Bernstorff for certain information of a rather more technical nature, and which, I believe, may be of assistance in clearing up the situation.

It has been noticeable that, during the whole of the critical period which we have considered here, quite material differences in the matter of estimating important factors existed between the Embassy in Washington and the home office in Berlin, and in particular with regard to the estimate of those important elements, the personality of the President and his actual intentions. Count Bernstorff stood, and still stands, absolutely upon the ground that President Wilson was deserving of our fullest confidence and would have brought about for us a comparatively favorable peace. In Berlin, on the contrary, there existed the greatest distrust. I have gained the impression that, as between the Embassy in Washington and the home office, the mutual understanding called for at this critical period did not always exist, and that more than once, in a certain sense—I might say—they telegraphed over each others' heads. This circumstance might well be attributed, first of all, to the difficult conditions under which the Embassy in Washington was working, and to the obstructions and the obstacles which were put in its way. I believe, too, that this point has also been touched upon by his Excellency v. Bethmann. For this reason, it is, in my opinion, necessary to reach a conclusion with regard hereto, because the American Government was, to a very considerable extent, responsible for the existence of these conditions, a government unable to protect an ambassador accredited to it from being subjected to such difficulties and, on the other hand, not even represented in Berlin by an official to whom it gave its confidence and who would have been in a position to take steps which would counterbalance the effect of the difficulties in question. I would, therefore, like to request Count v. Bernstorff to tell us in detail what form these difficulties in matters of communication took, what effect they had upon

his activities and, in particular, whether he was in a position to take a trip to Germany occasionally, or, if he was not able to do that, at least to send representatives of the Embassy over here who would have been able to get complete information with regard to the situation in Germany, and, besides this, to do efficient work in connection with his policies by coming into contact with the influential government circles in Germany. This was done repeatedly and successfully in the case of other German representatives in foreign countries who were not cut off from return. And I should further like to ask him to tell us what steps he took with regard to the American Government for the purpose of doing away with these obstructions, and what the attitude of the American Government was on the question.

The CHAIRMAN: Please, your Excellency!

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It is well known that the only cable in existence before the war which we made use of was destroyed by the British at the beginning of the war. It is, moreover, well known that the blockade stopped all written intercourse, in view of the fact that all vessels had to touch at a British port, so that it was always no more nor less than a piece of luck if dispatches came through, and, moreover, that these dispatches had to be drawn up in cipher. And such correspondence had to be kept from assuming too great dimensions, in order to prevent it from attracting attention. So that, as a matter of fact, communication by means of wireless was the only course left open to us.

At the beginning of the war, the American Government took the stand that the wireless stations had not been in full operation before the war, and that, consequently, according to the rules of the Hague Convention, could no longer be operated by us. And another point came up, which was that the title to these wireless stations was not quite clear. These stations had been established before the war by various private corporations, acting jointly and, for instance, French capital had also participated. Consequently, the French shareholders at once demanded that the stations be shut down. It would have been very easy for them to have obtained an injunction, and in this way the entire wireless intercourse would have been broken up. In order to avoid this, the American Government itself took over the wireless stations, but insisted that they should be fully informed of all the telegrams which were sent by this route. It was true that we were allowed to send messages in cipher, but we had to file the cipher with the American Government. This brought about the result that the American Government knew the contents of all our dispatches which, of course, were kept secret from the Allies. Whether this was invariably the case I can not state under oath. Actual personal intercourse with Germany was only possible under a safe-conduct, which was granted, as I have already pointed out, in the two cases of Secretary Dernburg and Privy Councilor Meyer-

Gerhardt; but it was out of the question for members of the Embassy at that time. The intention was entertained in October—I may well be mistaken about this; for it may have been earlier, in September—the intention, then, was entertained in September, to send the present Under-Secretary of State Albert, who always worked along with me in complete harmony and maintained substantially the same views that I did, back to Berlin by the submarine *Deutschland* in order that he might be able to give an oral picture of the entire situation. But this journey, unfortunately, was not undertaken on account of certain objections that were made by the company, and because the company stated that it was not permitted to take anyone. We had completed our preparations for having Under-Secretary of State Albert take the journey. The journey was, however, given up on account of objections submitted by Captain König, who referred to instructions from Berlin. I would, however, have to get definite information as to why the journey was given up. I can not be absolutely exact on the point, as a mere matter of memory. In any event, I know that we intended to have Under-Secretary of State Albert return to Berlin on the *Deutschland* in order that he might make the entire situation clear upon his arrival, and that nothing came of this journey. I, of course, could not leave, for the Entente would, under no conditions, have allowed me to go through. The American Government, to a certain extent, attempted to make up for these conditions, first, by calling back American Ambassador Gerard to the United States. For this leave of Ambassador Gerard which was taken at that time was taken upon order of the United States Government.

Furthermore, the American Government permitted me, throughout the entire course of the negotiations, to send telegrams in cipher, without the contents of the same being made known to it. Those are the only positive acts of assistance which were tendered us by the American Government. To be sure, it would seem that, in accordance with statements which have been made by those gentlemen who were in Berlin, Ambassador Gerard's journey did not bring about the results which I had expected and which, too, in view of the statements made by the American Government, were to be expected. I am not certain whether this answers practically all of the questions which I have been asked.

The CHAIRMAN: Has your Excellency any further questions?

Expert v. ROMBERG: I may, perhaps, venture to ask his Excellency Zimmermann to what extent the difficulties in communication existed here in Berlin. According to my recollection, telegrams were permitted to be sent by way of the American Embassy only if their contents were divulged. I am not exactly informed on this point, and I believe that it would be important for us to know about it.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: It goes without saying that we deeply deplored the difficulties of communication, and I personally had many conferences

with Ambassador Gerard in which the point was taken up as to whether it would not be possible for him to obtain further concessions from his government in respect to the transmission of our correspondence, and in order to make it possible for us to communicate with our Ambassador in Washington. Gerard stated to me that it was absolutely essential for his government to maintain the outward forms of neutrality; that the Entente would be touchy upon the point; and that, in any event, the Entente would not allow it to pass unnoticed if we made use of the American cable too frequently. Therefore, we were under the obligation of making our correspondence with the Ambassador as restricted as possible. The wireless method of intercourse, of which Count Bernstorff has already spoken, was placed at our disposal, but in connection with the use of a cipher which was known to the Americans, and it was naturally not particularly desirable from our standpoint and, as a matter of fact, seemed to us wholly unadapted to the transmission of secret messages; for we suspected that our cipher telegrams might, after all, be immediately made known to the Entente. We had no other direct method of getting into liaison with our Ambassador. Of course, we could—I will point this out—take a very circuitous and different route by way of various neutral States, but even this was possible to us only where the case was an extreme one; and, in order not to compromise those authorities which accommodated us in this connection, we took advantage of this method only very seldom and, as a matter of fact, were but very seldom able to do so.

Of course, we were extraordinarily anxious to get into personal touch for the purpose of an exchange of opinions with the Ambassador. Equally desirable would have been the transmission of personal impressions on the part of the Ambassador and, with this end in view, we discussed very seriously with Secretary of State Dr. Helfferich whether or not Under-Secretary of State Albert should come here to make a personal report—it was precisely Secretary of State Helfferich who was in favor of this move—and to give full information with regard to the economic situation in the United States. But Ambassador Count Bernstorff has already explained why it was that the Under-Secretary of State did not undertake his journey. I believed that it was the company, the corporation, which was afraid that, if it should permit a passenger to be carried, it would expose itself to difficulties and complications on the part of the American Government, and that it was possible that, as a result, limitations might be imposed upon future trips to the United States, or the opportunity to make such trips might be taken away altogether.

I believe that that is all I have to say on the point.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Count v. Bernstorff, for the reasons which you have just explained to us, and as the result of which you were limited in the use of the cables, did you have no ground for suspecting an unfriendly

feeling in the attitude of Wilson or the American Government in the premises?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: At the beginning of the war, the wireless situation was the subject of month-long negotiations, from August, 1914, at least until, I believe, March or April, 1915; and we continually maintained that the attitude of the American Government was wrong. But that was a question of international law which was not settled. We took the ground that the restriction was wrong, whereas the American Government took the view that, according to the Hague Convention, the matter could be handled in no other way.

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: May I be permitted at this point to ask a question concerning the ciphers and cipher keys?

The CHAIRMAN: That would seem to be connected with the point at issue, and in any event we shall hardly have an opportunity later on to go into it.

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: I would like to ask Count Bernstorff to make us a brief statement covering the use of the ciphers, the key to the ciphers, etc. It is well known that complaints have been made in respect to the use of the cipher. The Count said something with regard to the matter during the first session.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: It is readily understood that, under the conditions which I have described, the cipher was not changed as often as would have been the case under normal conditions. In all probability, if communications had not been interrupted, we would have received new ciphers every month or every other month, so that they could not have been found out so easily. To the extent that my memory serves me, the only occasion upon which we received new sets of ciphers were on the two trips of the *Deutschland*. To the extent that it was possible to do so, we operated the existing ciphers by means of keys; but I learned later, as I already stated in giving my first testimony, that the British decoded all our telegrams.

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: How do you explain the fact that the English were able to get such a knowledge of them?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I am no cipher expert, but the cipher experts now state that there is absolutely no cipher which they can not decode. I do not know how right they are in this, but, in any event, the experts say that there is absolutely no cipher which they can not decipher, provided they have before them a sufficient number of telegrams. And this result, particularly in the case of the United States, was probably due to the fact that circumstances were such as to force us to make use of an extraordinarily large number of ciphered messages, and we often sent our reports and telegrams in double or triple form, in the hope that in some way they should reach Germany. Consequently, the British must have had an

enormous amount of material in the way of cipher dispatches of ours, and in this way it was possible for them to decode all our ciphers.

Expert DR. HOETZSCH: So that, according to your conviction, the question of treachery or carelessness is not involved in the matter?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: I can state under oath that I do not believe that there was any treachery or negligence.

The CHAIRMAN: Then, in my opinion, this question has been completely answered, and I shall now ask Admiral Koch to step forward.

I shall now swear your Excellency as a witness.

Your Christian name, your Excellency.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Reinhard.

The CHAIRMAN: Your age?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: 58.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you desire to have the oath administered with the religious formula?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Certainly.

The CHAIRMAN: Then I shall ask the gentleman to rise.

(Witness Admiral Koch is sworn as a witness.)

May I ask your Excellency to be seated.

Your Excellency, we have noted how, ever since the spring of 1916—our earlier proceedings, as well as the proceedings of the subcommittee, have shown this to be the case—a strong movement for the unrestricted U-boat war became apparent. Nor does this movement lose in strength as the result of the opposition with which on the other hand it was confronted by the civil authorities. In this connection, the Pless conferences of the 31st of August, 1916, in which Admiral Koch took part, as I note from the list of those present, is of great significance. I may, perhaps, take the opportunity of having the comments which were made by Admiral v. Holtzendorff on that occasion, read at this hearing, and shall certainly do so if your Excellency feels that this would be desirable for the purpose of refreshing your memory.

The information which we expect you to give us is included in the replies to these three questions:

1. What was the cause of this clamor for the unrestricted U-boat war? That is, what was the general situation which appeared to make this necessary?

2. What justified the confidence in the results expected from the unrestricted U-boat war?

3. What was the reason that this result, so confidently taken for granted, did not come to pass?

And, finally, we shall have to take up the subsidiary question, which after all is a very vital one, as to what physical possibility existed for stopping the U-boat war when it had once been launched? This, of course, involves

the well-known respite question which became acute at the close of January, 1917. As I have stated, we will consider that question, however, at the close of the hearing. At present, I should like to have you answer the questions in the order in which they have been put to you.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Gentlemen, you are all well aware of the fact that, from the commencement of the war on, the British fleet kept its distance from German waters. With the exception of the isolated sallies on the part of light fighting craft into the German gulf, there was absolutely nothing to be seen of the enemy. So, against all expectation, England refused a sea fight; for it certainly could not be expected that the weaker German fleet would hunt the enemy up on his own coasts and offer him battle under tactically unfavorable conditions. On the contrary, we were bound to believe that the more powerful England would hunt us up, because, as long as it continued to be in existence, the German fleet represented, after all, quite a marked element of danger. Nor did England proceed to initiate a blockade in accordance with the principles of international law, because she was perfectly conscious of the fact that she would probably lose a great part of her fleet in the blockade service and would finally, after all, be forced to use her battle-fleet for the purpose. So England satisfied herself with holding her battle-ships far back from the areas of war, with keeping them safe in protected harbors, with posting patrols, and with carrying out a blockade which, far from being a blockade in accordance with rules of international law, was a parody upon the law of nations. The broad entrances of the North Sea were closed by means of light-armed battle cruisers and by auxiliary vessels of all kinds, as was also the case with the Channel, the purpose being to force the German people to sue for peace by starving them physically and economically and, at the same time, to establish a policy of oppression with regard to neutrals. In this way, there came about the so-called hunger blockade which has entailed such heavy and terrible suffering upon the German people. It was an example of English brutality, and showed her contempt of every principle of international law. Hardly a single principle of international law and of the laws of the sea was left in force as time went on. With sovereign contempt, England stopped at nothing. Ever since the autumn of 1914, England's hand has been at our throat, and Germany was practically powerless in her grasp.

Things being at this pass, Germany found the U-boat weapon an instrument which could, perhaps, strike an annihilating blow against the support of the entire economic life of England and, finally, against its political power—against the means of the Entente's carrying-on of the war, to wit, its shipping space. I believe that, at this point, I may give a brief description of the U-boat. The strength of the U-boat lies in its capacity to attack the enemy under water and to destroy him by means of its principal weapon, the torpedo. The U-boat is small, and, generally speaking, easily handled and

invisible. Its weakness consists in the ease with which it is damaged when it comes to the surface. The boats are not armoured, though of late we have succeeded in covering them to a certain extent. So that any single hit can quite possibly put the boat out of action and, above all, make it impossible for it to submerge. As the result of this last-mentioned weakness it is at once apparent that, when opposed to armed merchant ships—and the use of such ships took place constantly on the part of the Entente during this war—it was impossible to come to the surface and to attempt, as was normally the case, to make sure of the ship's colors and then capture the ship. The door was left wide open, in this way, for a misuse of colors. A further result due to these individual characteristics of the U-boat is to be found in the fact that the U-boat can bring about a permanent result commensurate with its capacity only if no restrictions are placed upon its being allowed to sink every ship within the territory assigned to it without coming to the surface. And from this, too, it again becomes apparent that it is impossible to attempt to make a difference with regard to neutrals and that, consequently, a straining of the relations with neutral Powers can not be avoided.

It was on account of the peculiarities of the U-boat that, to a certain extent, we were given the opportunity for the first time, and without having control of the sea, to "put the axe to the root of the British sea power." But the use of this instrument depended upon the extent of the military necessity and, moreover, upon the significance to be attributed to the relations with the neutral Powers. Gentlemen, as a matter of fact, these points of view always remained decisive with regard to the use which we actually did make of this weapon; in fact, they constitute the real reason for the great vacillation which has occurred in connection with the use of the weapon. In August, 1916, and even in the course of the summer of 1916, it had become more evident that the physical and economic resources of Germany and, above all, those of our allies, would dwindle within a determinable period of time as a result of the war of exhaustion and the hunger blockade. The prospect of a favorable decision by means of war operations on land could hardly be said to exist. The only remaining instrumentality for bringing about a favorable termination of the war was the U-boat, in favor of which, in the opinion of the Admiralty Staff, considerations for neutral Powers would have to be relegated to the background. The memorial of the Admiralty Staff, which went to Headquarters on the 22d of December, represents the view maintained by Admiral v. Holtzendorff with regard to this point in its direct relation to the United States. On page 32 of this memorial,¹ the following appears:

I have considered it appropriate to set out the reasons for and against the unrestricted U-boat war, and to consider in detail the results of a

¹ Page 1269 of this print.

declaration of war by the United States before taking up the question of the general political reaction of a break with the only remaining neutral world Power. It means the complete isolation of the Central Powers from overseas traffic, and it will immediately enkindle anew the courage of our enemies, which is now at a low ebb. But I must state that I do not look upon this last-mentioned moral effect as permanent. The long duration of the war has led to the result that such impressions based on moral support break into pieces when brought into contact with hard facts. The nations have become more cool-headed and now content themselves with looking upon the actual course of the war as it is, with realizing what military successes, hunger, and financial and economic exhaustion really mean so far as the present and future are concerned. Since the war can be brought to an end only by the use of an instrumentality in connection with which we must accept the prospect of a break with the United States, and since, on the other hand, the war must by all means be brought to an end for the sake of our self-preservation, it is only right that we should quietly weigh in the balance the results of a declaration of war, even by the United States. We are left with the choice between two evils, so that we are obliged to decide, although reluctantly, in favor of the lesser one rather than adopt the alternative of certain destruction. By entering into the war, the United States Government will give up by a single move the sources of that commercial prosperity which has given it the towering political prominence which it now occupies. It stands face to face with the Japanese peril; it can neither inflict material damage upon us, nor can it be of material benefit to our enemies; and the U-boat war will menace its own ocean traffic—a danger of which the Americans are no longer unaware since the raid of the U-53.

The U-53 went over at that time in order to take part on the American coast in a war on commerce against our then enemies, and remained at sea about two months.

If England is once brought to her knees, then an understanding will have to be brought about with the United States as well, by virtue of which alone will she be able to recover her commercial prosperity, and which will not necessarily result in political sacrifices on her part. The deciding factor which remains unchanged is the following: We must not lose sight of the American peril, because we must fight our way to victory, and an early victory too, in order to preserve our national existence. And all the more so after the answer to the German peace proposal has made it plain, both by the terms and spirit of the document, that our enemies are still bent upon the political destruction of Germany. I guarantee that, on its part, the U-boat war will lead to victory.

The other reasons which induced Admiral v. Holtzendorff to launch the U-boat war at the earliest possible moment were more or less the following. He stated:

Time is now working against us, not for us. The situation is no longer such that the war can be won by the Army on land, since the war of exhaustion foretells an unfavorable termination.

Moreover, the Supreme High Command of the Army requested the assistance of the Navy. Any inclination on the part of the Entente to join in any peace which might, in any way, be acceptable to us, was, so far as the writer was concerned, out of the question. Our enemies' reply to the peace proposal gives ample proof of the correctness of this view. And, moreover, the Chief of the Admiralty Staff, likewise and even as far back as the occasion of the many conferences which I had with him early in 1916, began to entertain serious doubt as to whether Wilson had the earnest intention of bringing about a really neutral peace. This opinion of his actually grew stronger from month to month.

The CHAIRMAN: May I inquire at this time as to whether Admiral v. Holtzendorff knew that Wilson's peace move had been suggested by Germany, and that, between the 12th of December and the 1st of February, influence was being brought to bear upon Wilson to the same general effect?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I also asked myself this question, and I can not reach an exact conclusion on the point. He was almost continuously at Headquarters and, when there, negotiated directly. But I assume—

The CHAIRMAN: You yourself, Excellency, have no definite reason for believing that it is the case?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No.

The CHAIRMAN: You merely assume it?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Certainly.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: May I be allowed to speak?

The CHAIRMAN: If you please, your Excellency! The question is very important. It was left open yesterday; we would consider it well if it could receive a definite answer today.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: On the occasion of the many conferences which I had with Admiral v. Holtzendorff with regard to the U-boat question and in respect to Wilson's attitude toward a peace proposal, I repeatedly informed him that we were doing what we could to have Wilson issue an appeal for peace. He always received my communications with those expressions of doubt which have just been made the subject of comment by Admiral Koch, to the following effect: "But will Wilson negotiate a neutral peace which we will be able to accept?" This attitude of the Admiral was perfectly well known to me, but it did not cause me to refrain from stating that, from my point of view, we were entirely willing that a peace appeal be issued by President Wilson and we were doing what we could to have Wilson make such an announcement.

The CHAIRMAN: In this connection, I should like to ask whether the Supreme High Command of the Army was also put in full cognizance of the fact that a peace move on the part of Wilson had been suggested by Germany, and whether the Supreme Command was kept informed.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: In this connection, I should like

to do what I did yesterday—make direct reference to the contents of the record. Those contents will show what communications were made by the political branch to the Supreme High Command of the Army with regard to what steps we were taking at Washington in the interests of peace.

The CHAIRMAN: So your Excellency feels that you are not in a position to give a definite answer to this question based on your own knowledge, and that you can do no more than merely to refer to the records?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I should not like to speak from memory in this connection, since the records contain what we want, and because, as I have already indicated yesterday, I consider it of the utmost importance that I be not put in the position of contradicting the contents of the records by statements based upon memory, a circumstance which, of itself, would be quite possible, because after three years have passed since the occurrence of the incident in question, I might well make use of expressions which would not be in perfect accord with the very carefully drawn up statements in the records.

The CHAIRMAN: But we are speaking now about a matter of so distinctive a nature that I should really be inclined to believe that your Excellency ought to be able to say something definite concerning it based on your recollection. The fact that Wilson's peace proposal was suggested by us, and was nursed along by us is something that stands out so sharply in the whole handling of the peace question that I can not refrain from saying that it would seem that it might have remained so firmly fixed in your Excellency's memory that your Excellency would still be able to make some statement concerning it based on recollection. It is, of course, possible that a contradiction may be found between what your Excellency states here on the stand and what is actually contained in the records, but, on the other hand, it goes quite without saying that all that we can receive from you in the way of an answer at this time is what your memory tells you at the present moment. So that any hesitation which comes to you in connection with the idea of failing to meet the obligations of your oath are, in every respect, beside the question. The only thing which we can take as submitted to us is what your memory reveals to you at the present time, as being that which you knew concerning this peace move on Wilson's part which was suggested by us at that time, and to what extent it was brought to the knowledge of the Supreme High Command of the Army and of the Admiralty Staff. For these reasons, I should like to put this question once more.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The remarks which have been made by the Chairman justify me, I believe, in restating my fundamental conception of the situation which I occupy today, and which I described yesterday. I have been requested to attend in the capacity of a person from whom information is to be obtained, and have been examined after taking my oath as a witness. My task, as I conceive it, is limited to this, to provide the

committee with information in those cases in which the records which are before it are unable to give information with regard to my attitude—in other words, to supplement the contents of the record—and, as a matter of fact, this supplementing which I assume to be called for consists in the main, as I take it, in my explaining the causes and the purposes of my actions. I can not, on the contrary, assume it to be my duty to furnish the committee at this time with a statement of facts and events as a matter of memory which the committee has before it in the form of the documents. So that, to use the present concrete case, if I am asked the question: “How, according to the best of your memory, did you inform the Supreme High Command of the Army with regard to the steps which you took in Washington on behalf of the issuance of a peace call by President Wilson?”—if this were the question, the following, according to my opinion, should be the way in which the matter should be put to me by the committee: “It appears from the records that you informed the Supreme High Command of the Army in this way or that; but so far as the records are concerned, they are not clear on the following points. Are you in a position to give us information, based upon your recollection, with regard to these matters—to fill up these gaps in the records?” I believe that if the matter is presented in this way, it at once becomes plain that I am a person who comes before this committee for the purpose of being of assistance to it, and that is what I conceive my position to be. For the time being, at least, I am not here in the capacity of an accused person, but I am here in the capacity of one who has information to give and in the capacity of a witness, and I certainly lay great stress upon the proposition that a sharp distinction be maintained in this connection.

We are engaged in a very unusual procedure. I may venture to emphasize this point upon this occasion. We are now engaged in establishing a fact on the faith of my testimony given under oath, as the result of which it is possible that I may have to appear before the national courts in the rôle of one accused. This is an interpretation which is wholly incomprehensible from a juristic standpoint. It goes without saying that this situation would not prevent me from withholding one word of the truth in the course of my statements. As I see it, it is my obligation to state conscientiously and to the best of my knowledge what has taken place. Whether, as the result, I am proceeded against as an accused, will in no way affect what I have to say. That is out of the question. But since this is the case, let me renew my request. Kindly do not assume the task of forcing me to undertake a reconstruction of facts on the basis of my recollection, facts which are already made known to the committee by the records themselves, but kindly limit your questions to filling out the gaps which you find to exist in the records. And I repeat, that I do not believe that I will be expected, as the result of my former position as Imperial Chancellor, to give information here with regard to the details of the execution of directions

which I gave as such. It was in order that these directions might be carried out that I was given my collaborators, that I was given the various branches of my department, who worked with me and who, I believe, always directed their efforts in full cooperation with me in the desire to carry out instructions. It goes without saying that I gave my personal attention to the execution of orders, and that, in the course of having these orders carried out, many documents were brought to me for signature, but, in view of the tremendous complications of this world war, I can only give you the main features, particularly when I am addressing you as I am today, and it seems to me that, if we really want to get a correct idea of the entire situation, it is essential, above all, to get a clear idea of these main features and to determine what the then Imperial Chancellor wanted, why he wanted it, and what means he employed in order to have his intentions executed.

I repeat that whatever I can testify here, I will testify, in order to assist the committee in getting a complete conception of the situation.

My attention is just called to a document, taken from the records and which, of course, is before the committee. In Part IV, page 192,¹ there is a telegram of October 1, directed to Baron v. Grünau:

You will hand the following telegram to General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg and a copy thereof to Admiral v. Holtzendorff.

To Admiral v. Holtzendorff, too! So this question is answered, which was formerly put to me. This telegram says:

At the personal command of His Majesty, Count Bernstorff has been instructed to approach the President on the subject of issuing an appeal for peace.

Well, then, the situation is entirely cleared up by this. This telegram is before the committee. The committee knows that the Imperial Chancellor even on the 1st of October instructed his representative in the Foreign Office to once more expressly communicate to the Supreme High Command of the Army, as well as the Admiralty Staff, the fact that Count Bernstorff was taking these steps in Washington by command of His Majesty the Emperor.

Further, I have just been handed a telegram from the second part of the compilation of the records, of November 27, which was sent by me to General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg. It is stated therein:

President Wilson has informed Count Bernstorff confidentially that it is his intention to put forth an appeal for peace in the time elapsing between now and New Year.

On November 27! On October 1 I had had the General Field Marshal informed that Count Bernstorff was taking the necessary steps in Washington by the Emperor's command.

¹ Page 1168 of this print.

It seems to me that the question has been cleared up by these two telegrams which I can offer, naturally, only as a fragment from the contents of the records and to which I can only refer as a fragment. The situation was known.

Now, this is the way I look at it: If the committee believes that, in spite of these communications, the situation is not cleared up, then further definite questions must be put to me for the purpose of filling the gaps left in the record. It is possible that I may make the request that these questions be put to me, definitely drawn up, and that I be given time to study the records for this purpose. It is possible that I may be able to answer the questions at once. That is a result of asking me quite special questions and of forsaking what appears to me to be the correct general principle of asking me only questions concerning the main issues of the situation.

So I believe that I have in the first place made perfectly plain my main conception of what my duties here are, and I should be greatly obliged if the chairman will be good enough to state whether I am right or whether the committee's idea is different from mine. So far as the particular point is concerned, I have probably answered the question which the chairman put to me, by referring to the two telegrams.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: This information conveyed by the records establishes what the Imperial Chancellor has just stated to be the fact. But a communication of the 10th of December calls for further attention, as it is germane to General Ludendorff's knowledge of the situation. Here, General Ludendorff is informed in so many words by Admiral v. Holtzendorff, who was told by means of the present communications that the peace move was impending and had been initiated by us, that "I am in doubt as to whether it is now opportune"—he means the revocation of the announcement made to the United States—"on account of the peace move which we expect on the part of the United States,"—but also for different reasons. Wherefore it results that, according to these documentary proofs, General Ludendorff had knowledge of the fact that a peace move was under way and was impending.

But further on, there is another fact established by the records which calls for attention. This refers to a later period. According to the records of the Admiralty, on January 25, 1917, General Ludendorff was sent by Secretary of State Zimmermann an important telegram of Count v. Bernstorff in which it was stated that the prospect was that Wilson would redouble his activities on behalf of peace. So that, therefore, at that time, the fact that steps by Wilson on behalf of peace were intended and were in actual prospect was, according to the records, a matter of which General Ludendorff had been made cognizant.

But there is one question which is necessary in order to make the record proof complete, your Excellency, and that is the question which I allowed

myself to put yesterday. The point is, whether, during the critical period when preparations were undertaken for the purpose of launching the U-boat war, that is to say, in the period running from about the 26th of December to the 9th of January, those telegrams of Count Bernstorff which, in my opinion, are so important and which stated that Wilson was willing to continue with his peace move and asked for confidential disclosures concerning the peace conditions, were communicated to the Supreme High Command of the Army and to the Admiralty Staff. On this point there is nothing to be found in the records. For this reason, I believe that, if you can possibly give us an answer from memory, in order to fill out this gap, your reply would be very valuable.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: That is to say, this present question has a direct bearing on the point as to whether, during the period which elapsed between the 26th of December and the 9th of January, the Supreme High Command of the Army and the Admiralty Staff were informed of the contents of the dispatches which had been sent by Count Bernstorff, if I understand you correctly. I venture further to assume from what you have said—it was not quite possible for me to get every word—that the records throw no light on the subject as to whether the contents of these dispatches were transmitted.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Certainly.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Relying upon my memory, I can only say that, so far as the Supreme High Command of the Army is concerned, I am not in a position to assume that the contents of the dispatches were communicated, either *verbatim* or fully, to the Supreme High Command of the Army. So far as I recollect, I conferred but once with the Supreme High Command of the Army during the period running from the 26th of December until the 9th of January; so far as I can remember, it may have been more than once; in any event, on the 29th of December. I do not believe that the question came up on this occasion—on the 29th of December. I am not in a position to say anything absolutely definite at the present time. I do not know where Admiral v. Holtzendorff was during the period running from the 26th of December to the 9th of January, or whether he was in Berlin; I believe that he was in Berlin—

(Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes.)

—At that time, I had repeated consultations with him with regard to the U-boat war and the steps which were contemplated. In view of my personal relations with Admiral v. Holtzendorff, it is likely that I told him of the general contents of Count Bernstorff's dispatches. I can say nothing more definite about the matter.

Witness Secretary of State ZIMMERMANN: May I make a remark which may fill in this gap? It goes without saying that I had all these telegrams which came in here immediately presented to Admiral v. Holtzendorff in

great detail and called particular attention to their contents. It is stated in the first communication, which is contained on page 10¹ of this compilation, that:

Referring to the conversation which I have just had with your Excellency, I respectfully transmit herewith the answer of the Imperial Ambassador at Washington to our instructions.

When this telegram came in from Washington and had been brought to me from the cipher bureau at first in an informal version, I had—

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: What was the date of this telegram?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: The 22d of January.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: That is not the critical period.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Ah, yes, the time before.

Delegate SINZHEIMER: You are telling us about something entirely different, the instructions for the U-boat war.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: That is true. So far as concerns the preceding period I should like to state that, if the records do not make it plain that the telegrams were sent to the Supreme High Command of the Army, I have no doubt whatsoever that I took up all these dispatches which came in from Washington with my representative at the Headquarters, Baron v. Grünau, went into them very much in detail over the telephone, and very naturally communicated these matters to him for no other purpose than that he should take them up with the Supreme High Command of the Army, and with the Emperor. I talked with my representative, Baron v. Grünau, almost daily over the telephone, and I took up everything and anything that arrived with the Headquarters. Naturally, I did not communicate it simply for the purpose of information to Baron v. Grünau, but, as I have already said, in order that he might take it up with the Emperor, the Supreme High Command of the Army, and the Chief of the Admiralty Staff if he was there. This all goes without saying.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I should like to put another question to his Excellency Bethmann. Could we go so far as to assume that the Emperor was informed in respect to those telegrams of v. Bernstorff, particularly before your conference of the 9th of January?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: In respect to what telegrams?

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: In respect to the telegrams which I read yesterday.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The course of affairs leading up to the situation would indicate in a general way that this was the case. And I believe that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, within whose jurisdiction this phase of the matter would come, will confirm this. A great number of those telegrams which came in were sent to the Headquar-

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ters in order that they might be literally placed before His Majesty the Emperor. Another portion of the dispatches which came in were—if I was not at Headquarters, in which case I personally informed the Emperor of the contents of the incoming telegrams—another portion of the incoming telegrams, as Secretary of State Zimmermann has just told us—and by these I mean the telegrams which came into the Foreign Office—were made the subject of telephonic conference with his representative in the General Headquarters, who was also my representative. I refer to Baron v. Grünau, and it goes without saying that these conferences were always accompanied with the general instruction to take up the contents of these telegrams with the Emperor, provided that critical and important considerations were involved.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: In this connection I have to add that the records contain varied information concerning such telephonic conferences and the reports sent in by Baron v. Grünau with regard to what was done in consequence of these conferences. But I can find nothing in the records which has to do with any communication of this particular period of time. I do not know whether his Excellency Zimmermann can state definitely that the contents of this exchange of telegrams was made the subject of these communications over the telephone; they were not transmitted by wire.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: In my opinion, I did transmit them by telephone. Naturally I can not state with certainty that these particular telegrams were transmitted. But, in view of the significance of the telegrams, I must take it for granted that their contents were communicated. I had not the least reason to withhold the contents of such important dispatches; on the contrary, the authorities who were concerned had, in my opinion, to be informed with regard to this matter under any and all circumstances.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, you probably telephoned these communications to Vienna. There are different bits of information on this point. Did you correspond with Wedel by telephone, just as you did with Baron v. Grünau?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Yes, I telephoned constantly to Wedel.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Then I must call to your attention a telegram which Wedel sent on the 26th of December and which is certainly of some importance in this connection. Wedel wires as follows:

On the basis of our telephone conversation of yesterday, I told Czernin that a telegram from Washington indicated that Wilson was attempting to prevent conference and to centralize the peace move in himself; so that complete agreement as to our plan of action was all the more important.

The telegram which, presumably, was to block the conference is dated December 25, and its contents are not to this effect, but quite to the contrary, in that our Ambassador telegraphs from Washington:

Several days ago Lansing wired me concerning Wilson's peace note and told me that American Government finds its position more and more intolerable on account of the continued violation of its rights. For that reason it was hoping for frank statements from the belligerent Powers with regard to their peace conditions, etc.

Where did you get the impression—for we have now heard all of Count Bernstorff's telegrams—that Wilson was endeavoring to block the conference, whereas, as a matter of fact, it was made perfectly plain by the exchange of telegrams that he did not want to intermeddle with the direct peace negotiations, that he did not desire to make any proposals with regard to mediation, and that the only part that he desired to take was in connection with the later peace conference concerning international questions? So that if this information was further transmitted to Baron v. Grünau, then, in my opinion, misleading information was transmitted which most certainly could have been very dangerous.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Why, I got this meaning from the following words of Count Bernstorff:

In answer, I stated as my personal opinion that this would be very difficult to bring about except at a conference, on account of the press, etc. Lansing replied that disclosures could be confidential and might, little by little, lead to a conference. It would accordingly seem that the opinion which has become general here is correct, that Wilson would like to serve as a clearing house for further steps toward peace. He is strongly supported by public opinion on this side, with the exception of some of our quite rabid opponents.

What we wanted was a conference with our enemies, and we wanted it quickly. And we did not want a clearing house in which Wilson could confer in respect to our peace conditions with our enemies and, as we feared, little by little go over to the enemy's point of view and accept this enemy's point of view with regard to us with all the force which he could exert as President of the United States. That was what was giving us concern. For this reason, we wanted no clearing house; for this reason we wanted a direct conference with our enemies, and it was to this conference that we desired to submit our peace conditions.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Did you ever speak with General Ludendorff at that time?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: That I really can not say.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: For General Ludendorff telegraphed the King of Greece at that time, as follows:

In spite of all peace blasts, the war will be carried on with all means available.

That was on December 25. So that the purpose of the Supreme High Command of the Army appears to have been—it will, of course, have to be

established by testimony—to proceed no longer on the assumption of any peace move on Wilson's part but to look upon it as a dead issue in the light of our peace proposal.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: I do not recollect that I had a conversation at that time. I was in Berlin, and I do not believe that General Ludendorff was here at that time.

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The records will reveal the fact that the skepticism of the Supreme High Command of the Army, both with regard to President Wilson personally and also to his policies, was quite tremendous and went far beyond the skepticism felt by me. As a result of this skeptical attitude, taken in connection with the comments of the hostile statesmen upon receipt of our peace proposal, even before the reply in the joint note, I assume that General Ludendorff came to the point of sending telegrams very similar to the one which has been read by the recording secretary, and I assume that the knowledge of the fact that President Wilson always kept wanting to mediate more and more, as the dispatches say, was wholly powerless to affect the general impression which General Ludendorff had, because it was on account of this skepticism and of the attitude maintained by the Entente that he took this view of the situation.

But I am of the humble opinion that this whole matter can only be taken up after having the committee take the testimony of a representative of the Supreme High Command of the Army and, if certain conflicts should possibly arise, to have them cleared up by statements subsequently submitted by both sides. I am afraid that we are involving ourselves in conjectures with regard to what the Supreme High Command of the Army is supposed to have believed, without any statement having been made on its behalf up to this time—a point which seems to me to be of extraordinary importance in order to clear up the entire situation.

The CHAIRMAN: It is my opinion, too, that it would be better to let this question lie until the occasion of General Ludendorff's testimony, which we expect to take on the 14th. I should, therefore, like to know whether the gentlemen have any objections.

(No objection.)

Delegate DR. COHN: I should like to put this question to Secretary of State Zimmermann: At that time, in addition to the reports of the Ambassador, did you have any other source of information in the United States, and in particular, did you have any exchange of correspondence with the Consul General?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: I had no personal exchanges of letters with the Consul General, but it is true that I received information from the Consul General. Letters were sent to an official of the Foreign Office, and this official put me in touch with this correspondence.

Delegate DR. COHN: I assume that that was an exchange of political correspondence, was it not?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: It was news of a political nature.

Delegate DR. COHN: Generally speaking, was the trend of these letters received from the Consul General in New York different from the policy which Count Bernstorff recommended to you and himself advocated?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Certainly, it was different.

Delegate DR. COHN: And what was that trend?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: So far as I remember, a very different estimate was placed upon President Wilson in this correspondence from the estimate of Count v. Bernstorff, and, according to my recollection, attention was called in the report to the fact that the opinion held by the writer of the letters was shared by the greater part of the German colony in New York—more particularly, that the unfavorable opinion concerning President Wilson was entertained by these people.

Delegate DR. COHN: If I understand you correctly, we would be characterizing the contents of these letters correctly in saying that they were of such a nature as to increase the feeling of skepticism which was entertained by many authorities in Germany with regard to President Wilson's views.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Without a doubt.

Delegate DR. COHN: And, first, did you mention the contents of these reports in your conferences with the Imperial Chancellor, and, secondly, did you make use of them in your interviews with the representatives of the Supreme High Command of the Army and Navy?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: I discussed the reports with the Chancellor, but I do not believe that I did so with the Supreme High Command of the Army or with the Admiralty Staff; in any event, I have no recollection of it. I merely read the reports through hurriedly, and then handed them back to the gentleman who showed them to me. I do not believe that I caused them to be entered in the files. Since they were not official reports, but reports which the gentleman in question sent to a colleague, if I may so call him, in the Foreign Office, I did not care to have them entered in the official records.

Delegate DR. COHN: Is it possible that these reports may have contained other features, perhaps the suggestion that the United States would, under no circumstances, go to war with Germany, no matter what Germany did?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: I regret to state that I can not remember that; I do not know. Perhaps the reports are, after all, in the records.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: There are very many there.

Delegate DR. COHN: They are not before the committee.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: If you would be good enough to show them to me, I should be greatly obliged to you. At that time, and so far as I know, I did not personally enter these reports in the records. If you know about

them, then you have no right to ask me such questions. In so doing, you are leading me, perhaps even to the point of perjury. I have not the slightest intention of concealing anything. Whatever took place, I will tell you.

Delegate DR. COHN: There was no occasion for ascribing this intention to me, and I state again, emphatically, that these reports are not before the committee. It is possible that the recording secretary has looked into these matters; but in those compilations which contain extracts from the records, there is nothing of this kind before the committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I can only confirm this.

MINISTER OF STATE DR. DAVID: I would like to ask Secretary of State Zimmermann if these reports played their part in bringing him personally to the view, as early as the 28th of December, that the unrestricted U-boat war should be launched at the earliest possible date and, if possible, even on the 2d of January.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: I beg to call to the attention of Minister of State Dr. David that on this occasion we were not considering the unrestricted U-boat war, but the U-boat war against armed merchant ships; and I certainly advocated this war against the armed merchant ships. I often had interviews with Admiral v. Holtzendorff at that precise critical period, and my obvious desire was to avoid the unrestricted U-boat war. Admiral v. Holtzendorff said to me—and I have a very plain recollection of this fact—“If I am only permitted to proceed in ruthless fashion against the armed merchantmen, that will be enough for me.” Consequently, I had a very careful memorial drawn up in the Foreign Office dealing with the question of the armed merchant ships, and I believe that the exact points of view which we advocated in this memorial would meet with recognition in the United States. I remind you that in January, 1916—I believe it was January 18, 1916—Secretary of State Lansing addressed to the belligerents a communication of a very important nature, which attracted a great deal of attention and in which he discussed this question of armed merchant ships in detail. He took the general ground that merchant ships which were armed would, in any event, have to be looked upon as cruisers, and that, in case our enemies did not accept this point of view, the Government of the United States would be forced to consider the taking of steps for instructing its competent officials with regard to the stand which it had taken, namely, that, in case such ships were to be found in ports of the United States, they would be subject to the provision governing war vessels. According to my recollection, in his comments he called particular attention to the fact that these armed merchant ships constituted a great menace to the light under-sea boats.

These considerations induced me to assume that, in view of the attitude taken by the United States with regard to this contention with respect to

the question of the armed merchant ships, which was exactly what we were putting forward at this time, we would probably come to an understanding. And it so happened that we were able, in drawing up this memorial, to point to a large number of steps which had been taken, particularly to a conference held on the subject by the English statesmen and over which, I believe, Admiral Jellicoe presided, with regard to the arming of the merchant ships. In the course of this conference, it had been definitely stated that all the merchant ships should be armed, and detailed instructions on the point were given out in advance, containing information as to how these merchant ships would conduct themselves in case they came into contact with a submarine; detailed instructions as the result of which we were bound to assume that the ships were ordered to attack immediately. This memorial was worked out with extreme care and in great detail, by the then director of the Foreign Office, his Excellency Krieger, and our point of view was, in my opinion, most convincingly represented therein. And so I hoped that, if this memorial were presented to Secretary of State Lansing in the United States, we would be understood, and that from then on the Americans would no longer take it ill of us if we conducted this campaign against armed merchant ships; in any case, that they would not make it an excuse to break with us. As I have already stated, I hoped continuously, even at that time, that we might end by avoiding the ruthless U-boat war altogether.

MINISTER OF STATE DR. DAVID: I assume that you expressed your view to the military authorities as well, that the unrestricted U-boat war against armed merchantmen would not interfere with our peace move—in other words, that it could be launched. Is this correct?

Witness ZIMMERMANN: Undoubtedly, so far as the Admiralty Staff was concerned. We were dealing with a subject which was very generally a subject of discussion between myself and the Admiralty Staff. Admiral Holtzendorff was generally here; consequently, it was easy for me to come into personal touch with him.

MINISTER OF STATE DR. DAVID: I can then take it that I am stating the fact when I say that his Excellency the Imperial Chancellor and Secretary of State Helfferich did not share this view—

(Former SECRETARY OF STATE HELFFERICH: I have not as yet been sworn; I will express my views on this point later.)

—but were of the opinion that even this unrestricted U-boat war against armed merchant ships was bound, politically speaking, to have the most dangerous consequences.

Witness ZIMMERMANN: As appears in the instructions which were sent to Washington, I acted with caution in this question. I requested the Ambassador first to take up the matter confidentially with Mr. Lansing. I did not wish to confront Mr. Lansing with a *fait accompli*. I wished

first to go over the ground and make things as smooth as possible in contemplation of our step. And then, as is well known, in the replies from the Ambassador, etc., to the effect that, if we were going to proceed along the lines set out in this memorandum, we would certainly have to expect a break. But I believed—and this will appear from my instructions—that I might come to an understanding on the matter of the armed merchant ships with the United States as the result of this communication.

The CHAIRMAN: Well, this feature of the discussion is probably settled.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I only desire to call attention to one thing. These reports are not to be found in the excerpts which have been submitted to the consideration of the gentlemen, and for the very simple reason that, when I examined the record, I did not personally attribute any particular weight to them. There are many such reports coming from many different persons of note; from America, from Europe, from delegates and non-delegates, from the delegates of all parties, etc., from great industries and small industries, from professors and non-professors. If I had had to gather all these things into the records, then the files themselves would have had to be submitted, and not extracts from the files in accordance with the resolutions of the investigating committee. That was the reason why these particular reports, which were not official reports, were not included.

The CHAIRMAN: The reply which I should like to make to his Excellency v. Bethmann, in answer to the general question which he put to me—a reply as to whether the view of the committee was in consonance with his view, to wit, that our committee is an investigating committee which, generally speaking, looks toward the taking of testimony from the witnesses who testify here for the purpose of supplementing the records, and to the extent that those records which are before us do not give full information on the subject, has already been answered in part by the statements made by Dr. Sinzheimer. So I can only assure his Excellency v. Bethmann that his interpretation of the duties of the investigating committee is absolutely in accord with our own. Of course, it will be practically impossible to avoid addressing a question to a witness in one case or another, which has already been answered by the records themselves. This is on account of the very nature of the subject matter, since it is impossible to have every detail of this great mass of material constantly before one's mind. On the other hand, the inquiry which I made of his Excellency remains unanswered, so far as the records are concerned, and constitutes a gap which was to be filled by means of the precise question which I ventured to address to his Excellency.

For the rest, I should like to administer the oath to his Excellency Helfferich, since I believe that it is now necessary to call upon his Excellency to be ready to take part in one way or another in the proceedings.

Your Christian name, your Excellency?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Karl.

The CHAIRMAN: When were you born?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: 1872.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to be sworn by the religious formula?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Certainly.

(Witness former Secretary of State Dr. Helfferich is sworn as a witness.)

The CHAIRMAN: Dr. Cohn, on the order of business.

Delegate DR. COHN: I should like, after all, to state the following with regard to Mr. v. Bethmann's remarks, and in respect, too, to the Chairman's decision: The fundamental question which Mr. v. Bethmann has brought up has not come up as yet in the committee and, so far as I am concerned, I can not answer it broadly, as Mr. v. Bethmann has done, by saying that it is the duty of the investigating committee to furnish itself with a picture of certain past events by reference to the records, and to conduct an examination of witnesses merely on the theory that their statements are to be made to us for the purpose of helping us out, and only to the extent of filling gaps left in the records.

That is not my view. According to the constitution, the task of the investigating committee is to obtain a picture of certain past events by means of testimony taken face to face from witnesses, by means of statements of experts, and by original documents, and all other modes of proof imaginable. Under the constitution, we have not met here for the purpose of studying records, but for the purpose of creating a picture as the result of living testimony taken face to face.

The CHAIRMAN: What Dr. Cohn has said can not cause me to change my opinion; on the contrary, both our statements proceed along the same line. Methods of comparison are certainly essential, not only in the sense that we are to examine witnesses in such cases where it appears to us that there are gaps left in the records, but we are to hear witnesses with regard to matters which are contained in the records. In my opinion, this goes quite without saying, because this will result in having the actual picture of what occurred stand out in bolder relief than could be the case if we limited ourselves to the cold words of the record. It may very well be the case that what the records contain may gain a decidedly increased value as the result of statements of witnesses, for, after all, the statement of a witness under oath is of greater value than original documents. But I believe that it would be better to have this question of order of business referred to private session for further discussion.

Delegate DR. COHN: Just one more remark with regard to Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg. I should like to put my objection to his view-point in the following form: The witness is not a means of corroboration for the records, but, on the contrary, the records constitute a means of corroboration of, and are supplemental to, the statements of the witness.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: If I may be allowed to speak. I should like to contradict that last remark. I can not interpret my task in this way. That would assume that I am supposed to have full knowledge of the entire contents of the records. I called attention a short time since to the fact that, only for the past week or so have I been permitted to have recourse to the records. I have not looked at them for two years. It is utterly impossible for me to provide you with a reproduction, at this point, of those phases which come into question here—a faithful reproduction of those incidents to the extent that I participated in them. I must maintain my view that the committee, which has formed a picture of the situation as the result of its examination of the records—a colorless picture, it is true, in many cases a thoroughly colorless picture—that the committee obtains a supplemental statement in the process of asking me: “What were your motives on this occasion? What were your purposes?” These elements are not to be found in the records, and that is what seems to me to be the material thing. To that extent, I believe that I have a very material duty to fulfil. But I can not look upon it as devolving upon me to erect a living reconstruction of the entire contents thereof, and to reproduce an actual situation as is the case when the testimony of witnesses is taken in a judicial proceeding. In order to do this, I should probably need to study the records for months; and in order to carry out such a study, I should have to be given assistants. Then, perhaps, I might be in a position to reconstruct the entire situation for you by giving you a description by word of mouth. In my opinion, the committee fulfils its purpose absolutely by asking me: “What did you want in this case? What were you trying to bring about?”

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now return to the examination of his Excellency Admiral Koch. Please continue. Or does one of the gentlemen desire to put some particular question?

Delegate GOTHEIN: Your Excellency stated sometime ago that the great vulnerability of the U-boats was such as to stop them from coming to the surface and from visiting armed merchantmen for the purpose of search, and that, consequently, for this reason, no different methods could be adopted in dealing with neutral Powers. Now, Secretary of State Zimmermann told us that Admiral v. Holtzendorff would be satisfied if he could be allowed to proceed against armed merchant ships. In my opinion, we have a discrepancy here. I have understood up to this time that the comments which your Excellency made in respect to the nature and manner of the use of the U-boat weapon represented views which the deceased Admiral v. Holtzendorff had accepted as his own. If this is the case, how was it that he stated that he would be satisfied to limit himself to a U-boat war directed against armed merchant ships, if he was of the view that the U-boat would be at once dangerously exposed when it came to the surface, if it should attempt to visit and search an armed merchant ship?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: The weakness of the submarine consists in this, that it can not afford to come to the surface. It can not see well under water. It can only see well with the help of the periscope—

(Delegate GOTHEIN: Only with the periscope!)

—At that time, in the so-called intensive U-boat war, it was a question of attacking only armed steamers. We were convinced at that time that more than 50 per cent of all enemy steamers were armed. At one time, the arming merely consisted in having one gun of no particular caliber, fully exposed either on the stern or at the bow. This the U-boats could see. But afterwards, everything was concealed, everything was behind bulkheads, and these, in turn, were covered by some kind of superstructure which was removed at the last moment, and then they were ready to fire. For this reason, it was of the utmost importance for us at least to be allowed to attack armed steamers if the fact of their armament was established without question.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now request you to proceed with your general statement.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: In my statement of yesterday, I had reached the point where I was discussing those reasons which induced his Excellency v. Holtzendorff to endeavor to bring about the launching of the ruthless or unrestricted U-boat war. Finally, those conducting the naval war, that is to say, Admiral v. Holtzendorff, came to the full recognition of the fact that the German people were subjected to unheard-of suffering because of the inhuman hunger blockade maintained by the British. He knew that the tremendous offensives of the Entente which had destroyed so many precious human lives in our army were only possible on account of the streams of war material, artillery, shells and aircraft which had been pouring in uninterruptedly from the time the war began, coming from America to France, or, by way of Archangel, to Russia. Consequently, he concluded that it was his duty to launch the submarine war as soon as possible and to conduct it to a finish.

This was his argument, so far as the question of time was concerned: If we want to finish up by the end of the year 1917—I talked all these matters over with him personally, and for this reason am well prepared to state his views—if we want to finish up by the end of 1917, I must decide upon the most crucial moment, so far as the economic life of England is concerned. That would probably be the time when the new harvest had not yet been brought in and when the old harvest was nearing a point of depletion; in other words, when the influx is at its lowest mark. That is August. He said: The U-boat war will have to be given six months time, for the boats will need one month to get into position, and one month will be needed for preparing for the step. Therefore, the unrestricted U-boat war must begin early in February, at the very latest. It would be better

for it to begin earlier, for, in this case, I may be able to proceed against the vessels coming from Argentina with all the greater security, at the most favorable period of the year, that is, before winter sets in—the season during which U-boats suffer severely. These were approximately his reasons. At that time, we were quite strong enough to await the results which we expected and for which we hoped; but, as I have already made plain, quick action was, above all, necessary. Basing our calculation on those results which had been gained up to that time by the U-boat war which had been carried on as a war on commerce under the rules of prize, we could calculate the extent of losses in shipping space which would occur monthly as the result of the intensive U-boat war and the unrestricted U-boat war, which, to be sure, had only been in operation for a very short time, and could do so by taking as an element of our calculation the number of the U-boats which would be at our disposal, and the means of defense against U-boat attacks which were already in existence and which could be expected within a determinable period.

The Chairman stated sometime ago that it would be well for me to give certain data with regard to the U-boats. I have not the material with me. If it is desired that I give estimates with regard to the number, I shall be glad to do so, and perhaps tomorrow to bring to the hearing a statement of the figures in question.

The CHAIRMAN: It seems to me to be very necessary to do so, and I will ask you to be good enough to make a report in writing, so that we may have written compilations of the events which took place in the spring or the autumn, which are the most important points of time with which we have to deal. We should be greatly pleased to have them at our disposal.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: The Admiralty Staff has ceased to exist, and none of the old personnel have remained; the records are in the Admiralty. We would need considerable time in order to submit decisive data.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The situation is different, so far as the records are concerned. We have statements made by Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg, according to which, in March, 1916, there were about 38 U-boats available, and in May, 1916, about 50.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: According to the statements of the Chancellor, which perhaps can be later confirmed by his Excellency Helfferich—I believe that his Excellency Helfferich is well acquainted with the figures—those are the figures which his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg himself noted in the records as the result of inquiries; much correspondence passed on the matter; in March, there were 38, and in May, 54. But these 38 boats were not all ready to go to sea, but only a portion thereof. It was necessary to hold back the others, and, besides this, a number were still undergoing repairs, etc. That is the gist of the memoranda which are to be found

in the records of the Foreign Office. The number of the U-boats on the 1st of February is the next important point. At that time, no definite number was given. Strange to say, we had no exact estimates at that time. At best, we can infer by implication that, by the 1st of February, there were 120 boats available, but that all of these were not seaworthy, only a portion meeting the requirements in this regard. That is the picture which is given us by the records of the Foreign Office. I can not say to what extent the records may not agree with the views of the Admiralty—for these views were, to a certain extent, disputed by Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz—and statements still have to be made by the representatives of the Navy, which might fill in the gaps. I can only say that this is what is ascertained by relying upon the memoranda of the Chancellor in the Foreign Office. This conclusion was reached as a result of conferences had with Admiral v. Holtzendorff.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: But, Mr. Recording Secretary, I only need to be told how many boats were present on such and such date, and how many were ready to leave, etc., and I will give the estimates.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: We now come to March, 1916. In March, 1916, the Navy insisted upon the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war with the most unqualified determination. At that time, Tirpitz supported this desire, and even today he takes the ground that that was the only proper time to do so. It would be best to mention at this point the number of U-boats of the 1st of March: About 38 U-boats. The second point is the 1st of February. For the purposes of the inquiry of the effect of the U-boat war, we naturally need to know how many boats were available at that time. The only conclusion that we can reach from the various memoranda is that there were about 120. The main argument which the Chancellor used against launching the unrestricted U-boat war in March was the small number of U-boats in March, and at that time he was successful in having this view sustained. This is shown by the records themselves—

(Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Certainly.)

—A later argument which was submitted as a reason why he withdrew his opposition consisted in the circumstance that, at that time, the number of the U-boats had increased to the extent herein set forth. And the point to be determined is, whether the naval authorities considered that this statement contained in the records of the Foreign Office is correct. A representative of the Navy will give us his opinion on this point.

REAR ADMIRAL V. BÜLOW: I should be greatly obliged if we could get a copy. It could be compared with the data that we have in the Admiralty to see whether it agrees or not.

Consul MÜLLER: The comparison will be made.

Delegate DR. SPAHN: I desire to call attention to the fact that in the main committee there were constant differences between the Admiralty

and individual members with regard to the number of the U-boats. The members were constantly informed by the Navy Department itself. During the last few weeks, perhaps during the course of the last fortnight, new analyses have been made. In the *Frankfurter Zeitung* there is a statement of Delegate Dr. Struve, who at that time was well informed on the subject.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I have the article here, it has just been handed to me by Dr. Cohn. I note that the figures for the individual critical periods were, in the main, given correctly to the budget committee by the Secretary of State for the Navy, who is present, and that various corrections which were made by Delegate Struve and myself, as well as differences of opinion touching the reliability of the figures which were compared at that time, were made the subject of debate. So that, as a matter of fact, the figures are, generally speaking, to be had in the records of the budget committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Is his Excellency Helfferich perhaps in a position to make a definite statement on this point?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I can confirm the fact that the opinions rendered with regard to the number of the U-boats were, in part, in conflict. This was probably due to the fact that, on one side or the other, different opinions were entertained as to what could count as a U-boat. Estimates were made, in which the mine U-boats were listed as such, and then again, estimates which omitted them; further, there were estimates of the number of U-boats which included those boats which had come off the ways and were still undergoing their trials, and further estimates which did not contain these boats which were undergoing their trials. It is in this way that the individual differences which have thus come up for comment can be explained.

The CHAIRMAN: His Excellency v. Capelle calls attention to the fact that he is in a position to tell us something about this. For this opinion I should like to administer the oath.

The CHAIRMAN: Your Christian name, your Excellency?

Witness v. CAPELLE: Eduard.

The CHAIRMAN: Your age?

Witness v. CAPELLE: 63 years.

The CHAIRMAN: Does your Excellency desire to take the oath under the religious formula?

Witness v. CAPELLE: Certainly.

(Witness v. Capelle is sworn.)

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now ask his Excellency v. Capelle to give his opinion.

Witness v. CAPELLE: Gentlemen, estimates with regard to the number of U-boats available are extraordinarily difficult for all laymen to understand. I expect that we had perhaps as many as ten types: large, medium, and small U-boats, U-boats which were fitted out for torpedo warfare

alone, and U-boats which were fitted out for the mine war alone. Of these U-boats, a certain portion was under construction, some were being received by the commissions, some were being used for the training of personnel, some were on duty at the submarine points of support where they were getting the finishing touches in the way of military preparation before they took up their duties in foreign waters, and some were engaged in such duties. In connection with such duties, we must differentiate between the out-bound trip, their presence at the station where they were to engage in active warfare, the return trip, and, finally, repairs. Then we would have again to differentiate between minor repairs and major repairs which would spread over a period of several months, so that if the number of U-boats is estimated, the laymen can perhaps get no complete idea therefrom.

If, on the other hand, we give an absolutely complete answer with regard to all these different classes, the person asking the question would become, for the most part, so confused as not to understand it at all. I refer to the fact that I was asked a number of times in the budget committee—a number of the gentlemen are here—not to give a complicated representation of the matter, and only to give definite figures for the purpose of comparison. I have often spoken about the matter in the budget committee, and my speeches on this subject are to be had in the stenographic reports in the records of the Reichstag.

I would, therefore, be inclined to think that the compiled statement of the U-boats which the investigating committee wishes would give no accurate idea. For my own personal use as Secretary of State, I kept a very detailed list carried on from day to day. Yesterday afternoon I looked for this list in the Navy Department, and was unable to find it. But I did succeed in finding another list which, it is true, begins only with September, 1917, that is, a date which is subsequent to the critical period.

Delegate GÖTHEIN: I can only say that the statements which were made to us in the budget committee constantly left much to be desired in the way of clearness, and that as a result of these statements views could be formed at that time in such a way as to cause a certain amount of confusion. We did what we could even then to clear up the matter. This confusion, as I remember it, was due, above all, to the fact that we were always given a total number of U-boats in connection with which, however, no distinction was made with regard to the number of U-boats ready for the front. In the course of these proceedings, I always laid decisive weight upon the fact that the number of U-boats actually ready for the front should be communicated to us. The great difference between the figures given by Secretary of State v. Capelle and by me in the budget committee was to be explained in this way, that I gave the number of those U-boats ready for the front, whereas the Secretary of State sometimes included in his figures the other U-boats, and occasionally failed to deduct the U-boats which had been lost,

a circumstance which was revealed only as the result of further discussions.

The CHAIRMAN: That there arose much confusion with regard to the number of U-boats ready for the front and those which were not, appears also from what follows. I have here, for instance, a letter written by Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg to Mr. v. Jagow in March, 1916, in which reference was made to a conversation with the Emperor, on occasion of which it is stated, with regard to Holtzendorff, that he gave the number of available U-boats but that, at the same time, the number of those which were ready for the front was confused with those which were building, and that no clear conclusion could be drawn even with the aid of the questions which were put to him. That is a situation which, as I recollect, occurred again and again in the proceedings of the main committee.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Does the witness know that the very highest officials of the Navy made a point of having the number of the U-boats kept a secret from such authorities as were asked for their opinion whether the U-boat war should be launched or not—that this happened, for instance, in the case of German ministers who returned to Germany from foreign countries, and who were asked to come to Berlin and to give their opinion with regard to the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war, and that those authorities who were to give their opinions on this point were told that it was forbidden to tell them how many U-boats there were—that this was a purely military matter with which the civil authorities had nothing to do?

The CHAIRMAN: May I ask his Excellency v. Capelle to answer the question?

Witness v. CAPELLE: Gentlemen, the expression "U-boats ready for the front" of itself included two great classes: First, the class of U-boats which is on the way. This class is again divided into thirds, one-third of which is composed of U-boats on the trip out to the west coast of Ireland, a third at the west coast, and a third on the way back. So that those are the U-boats which are ready for the front and which are on the way. Then, those which are ready for the front—

Delegate GOTHEIN: But U-boats which are on the return trip are certainly no longer ready for the front.

Witness v. CAPELLE: U-boats which are ready to go and are waiting at points of support. At one time, there was considerable discussion in the budget committee with regard to the question as to what was the right thing to do: To send all that we had out at the same time, or to divide the U-boats in equal parts. The views expressed on these points differed very greatly.

Now with regard to the question of Professor Schücking, as regards keeping matters strictly confidential, I can only say that as long as I continued to be Secretary of State, I personally exerted every effort to keep the budget committee and, in individual instances, the party leaders only,

completely informed with regard to the entire situation. As a matter of fact, I always exerted myself in opposing extreme views. I shall, perhaps, have the opportunity during the course of my examination to offer you proof of this, taken from my speeches, if the committee desires to go to these lengths. I was made the subject of constant reproach by the Navy as well as by the Admiralty Staff, on the ground that I said too much, and, as the result, I was to a certain extent ignored by the Admiralty Staff.

With regard to the third point, that ministers in the diplomatic service came here, from whom the number of the U-boats was kept secret, I have never had occasion, at least, to discuss this point with German ministers from foreign parts. The probable fact is that these gentlemen called upon the Admiralty Staff. In doing so, they certainly went to the right source—the source from which naval operations were carried on. My office was not the right place.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: May I add a statement?

The CHAIRMAN: If you please, your Excellency.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I believe that the relations of Admiral v. Holtzendorff with his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg were such that I should have considered it out of the question that the former would not have given the Imperial Chancellor absolutely complete information with regard to all the figures. His Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg will be able to testify to this himself.

It is quite possible that a minister in the diplomatic service may have knocked at our door and have gotten no reply. Why did he not go to his superior? He was the only one who could judge whether or not it was necessary to instruct the particular party. That is my view of the situation. So many gentlemen came to the Admiralty Staff that we not only could not express ourselves confidentially to each and every one, but we were not allowed to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: The recording secretary desires to make a statement.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: In regard to this last statement coming from the Admiralty Staff, I should like to show by the records that it was precisely v. Bethmann himself who was obliged to have a struggle with the competent authorities in order to get a clear and direct statement with regard to the number of the U-boats, and that it came to the point of a personal difference between v. Holtzendorff and the Chancellor—to the point that Holtzendorff reproached Bethmann because his Excellency v. Bethmann asked him to give him definite information with regard to the number of the U-boats. The stand taken by Mr. v. Holtzendorff at that time was that he was under no obligation to do so, and it was necessary to exert unusual pressure before his Excellency v. Bethmann finally obtained information with regard to the number of U-boats. And it was on this that he based his opposition to the unrestricted U-boat war in the spring. This

exchange of correspondence between v. Holtzendorff and his Excellency v. Bethmann is in the records and might possibly be read.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: In any event, I got the impression—and Admiral v. Holtzendorff told me so frequently—that he talked over everything with the Imperial Chancellor.

The CHAIRMAN: I will ask your Excellency to proceed. At the same time, I shall voice the request for us not to delay by interrogations the testimony which is to be given, but to defer putting our inquiries until his Excellency Koch has finished.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Taking as a basis the results which had been obtained up to that time in the U-boat war against commerce, that is, in the war on commerce under the law of prize and as the result of the intensive and unrestricted U-boat warfare which, to be sure, had only lasted for a short time, we perfected our calculations regarding the probable monthly result. After most carefully considering the attendant conditions and circumstances, the Chief came to the conclusion that the net military results would be about 600,000 tons per month, a number which was maintained in the first year of the U-boat war. It was obvious that the enemy would be hard hit by the loss in tonnage; but that alone would not suffice, for the Chief considered it essential to endeavor to ascertain, on the basis of information carefully selected, whether England would be able to support this loss for any length of time, or whether she would collapse economically to such an extent as to incline her toward peace. It was in this connection that the memorials of the Admiralty Staff came into being—these memorials which are so well known to you gentlemen,—a work which was carried on in the economic and political division of the Admiralty Staff as the result of long observation of English commercial life as a whole, the disruption of which had, under these circumstances, become the chief task of the Navy, particularly that of those conducting naval operations. I should like to state with regard to these memorials, that the sources which were utilized above all others were official English sources. There is no reason for my referring to them in detail; I must, however, emphasize the fact that we are not considering in this connection work casually performed, but that the memorials were the result of information and actual experience submitted in its totality to a most painstaking process of analysis. The official British material was available to us up to the commencement of the U-boat war. After the U-boat war commenced, it was no longer available to us. In order to guarantee to the greatest possible extent the correctness of the contents of the memorials, they were submitted to the consideration of a number of persons whom we considered experts, almost all of whom expressed themselves in agreement therewith. The memorials were sent to the government departments for the purpose and in the hope that they would be submitted to the expert criticism of these officials. This resulted in a

criticism by his Excellency Helfferich which, however, in so far as I remember it, had nothing to present in the matter of figures, but in which, to be sure, different conclusions were drawn. As the result of these careful preparations, the establishment of still further facts became necessary. I suggest that, perhaps, the recorder be heard upon this point.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Let me state the following, your Excellency. As the result of these careful preparations, the views expressed by his Excellency Helfferich, who had opposed the conclusion reached by the memorial on the economic situation ever since spring, was maintained. The records reveal the names of the following persons who cooperated: There was a Captain Vanselow, there was an acting bank director, Dr. Fuss, and there were some other bank directors whom I do not need to name—perhaps his Excellency Helfferich will have occasion to do so—and, besides, Professor Levy from Heidelberg. How does it happen that you gave the preference to these gentlemen, part of whom are wholly unversed in matters having to do with matters of national economics, part of whom only had a domestic commercial education—how was it that you gave these men the preference in the Navy Department over the statements of his Excellency Helfferich which, after all, are entitled to very great weight, and which, moreover, were supported by an expert opinion of Mr. v. Treutler, which also was made available to you gentlemen, and, in addition, an expert opinion of a Mr. Simon with regard to the fixing of the date when there would be an actual shortage in cargo space, in which he took issue in detail with the propositions of those various bank directors, etc.? Did you see no occasion, particularly in view of the fact that such an authority in political economy as Dr. Helfferich had opposed your view, to call upon other experts of Germany, recognized political economists, to pass upon so vital a question instead of limiting yourselves to what Dr. Fuss, Professor Levy, and the other gentlemen, bank directors, etc., had given you in the way of arguments in support of their estimate of the economic situation?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: We submitted the first memorial to a number of experts and scientific men too.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: What are their names? Who are they?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: They are named in the memorial of the 22d of December.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Not in the memorial.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: In the memorial of the 22d of December.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Admiral Koch, on page 2 of the opinion of December 22d, it simply states that certain gentlemen were asked certain questions in February, 1916. The vital question is, however, Who drew up the memorial, and how was the information that these gentlemen gave used?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Well, there is no doubt that their opinions were used.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Yes, but who used them? Who was it that worked up the memorial?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Dr. Fuss, mainly.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Who is Dr. Fuss?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: He is a director of the Diskontogesellschaft in Magdeburg.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: How did you come to select Dr. Fuss? He is not known in the science of political economy.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: Admiral v. Holtzendorff's memorial drawn up on the 12th of February, 1916, was supported by nine authorities—

(Admiral KOCH: Twelve.)

—I know only nine. Among these there is a bank director named Salomonsohn. There are six North Germans and three South Germans. These gentlemen are by no means only bank directors, but people who are prominent in commercial affairs. And in part, industrial experts of the first water.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: But are they people who are capable of judging the effects of political economy, of world economy?

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: That is precisely what they do know and what they stated. They are experts. For the moment, I can not state specifically who they were.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I can tell you now. In the memorial of the 12th of December, 1916: Imperial Councilor W. Fink, head of the banking house of Merk, Fink & Company, in Munich; Chief Privy Councilor of Finance Waldemar Müller, president of the board of directors of the Dresden Bank in Berlin; Dr. Arthur Salomonsohn, business manager of the Diskontogesellschaft in Berlin; Max Schinkel, business manager of the Norddeutsche Bank in Hamburg, president of the Chamber of Commerce in Hamburg; Privy Councilor of Commerce Zuckschwerdt, head of the banking house in Beuthen, etc. Those are the financial men. From commerce: Privy Councilor of Commerce Englehard, member of the First Chamber of the Constitutional Estates at Baden and president of the Chamber of Commerce in Mannheim; from the industries: Privy Councilor of Mines Doctor of Engineering Beukenberg, Director General of the Phoenix Stock Company for Mines and Foundries; Commercial Counselor Doctor of Engineering Reusch, director general of the Good Hope Foundry; Commercial Counselor Doctor of Engineering Strickhorn, director general of the Hoesch Iron and Steel Works Stock Company; from agriculture: owner of Manorial Estate v. Kries; Privy Councilor of Agriculture Säuberlich, president of the Chamber of Agriculture of Anhalt at Gröbzig; and Councilor of Agriculture Schmidt, member of the First Chamber of the Constitutional Estates of Württemberg at Platzhof in Öhringen.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I should like to ask your Excellency for what particular reason this selection was made. The president of the Chamber

of Commerce in Mannheim to represent the commercial side! There are, I believe, other presidents. And why did you not call upon the outstanding authorities in political economy, such as Schuhmacher, Professor Max Weber, Brentano, and perhaps others; they may even be in the present gathering. Why were no representatives of science called upon? Why were only a few persons selected for the purpose of having inquiries addressed to them? And why was the writing of the memorial turned over to a gentleman who, I may well venture to say, is unknown in the scientific field? But I should be glad to be corrected. I do not know Dr. Fuss, nor do I know upon what Mr. Schinkel's reputation as an authority in science and in the field of political economy is based. Nor do I know where the representatives of the industries obtain their knowledge concerning England's grain provision—

(Interruption: Iron supply.)

—Will you kindly express yourself on this point?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Henry Newman in Hamburg was questioned about the grain supply and, in addition to him, Weil, in Frankfurt.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Well, we can perhaps call upon them to appear, in order that the gentlemen here present may be able to form a personal opinion. (Laughter.)

Delegate GOTHEIN: I should like to observe that high finance was very well represented! It is extraordinary that no representative of the science of political economy, with the exception of Hermann Levy, the one who drew up the memorial, was present. Hermann Levy was, to be sure, a member of a British agricultural corporation and had published some works upon the English agrarian situation. But in any event, his name was not so authoritative that it was fitting to rest satisfied with his opinion alone as the representative of science in so important a question. For we certainly have in Germany in the scientific field of political economy, experts of the first water on English conditions. And the selection of experts from amongst those engaged in the grain business was, comparatively speaking, very restricted, in view of the fact that one grain dealer from Hamburg and another grain dealer from Frankfurt were all that were called upon, while, as a matter of fact, the main grain centers are situated in other places, particularly in Mannheim—

(Interruption: Berlin.)

—and in Berlin, and indeed to a great extent in Hamburg. But it certainly seems peculiar to me that even in this instance they limited themselves to a single individual.

And I would also like to put the question touched upon by Admiral Koch, that as *almost* all the experts expressed themselves as being in full agreement with the memorial, which experts did not express agreement?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I have not the expert opinions before me, I do not know. I can not say.

The CHAIRMAN: Will it perhaps be possible for you to do so tomorrow?

Delegate GOTHEIN: Perhaps his Excellency Helfferich knows about it.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I do not remember, either. However, the agreements were made more or less with reservations. What weight is to be attributed to the reservations is a matter to be decided by him who reads the expert opinions. The reservations were generally inserted and, very naturally, were in connection with the technical efficiency of the U-boat war. But as to who made strong or mild reservations, or who failed to make any at all—you certainly can not expect that, after more than three years have passed, I should have retained these facts in my memory. In any event, these opinions are probably before the committee; its members have the opportunity to convince themselves by examining the original.

Delegate DR. COHN: The commission hasn't them; if it had, the entire inquiry on the point would be useless.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I haven't them either.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: May I venture to say that I have just been informed that Professor Harms, then Rector of the University at Kiel, published the result of investigations made at that time, which were independent of ours and led to the same conclusions?

In any event, as the result of the study which had been made of the economic effects which were to be expected from the sinkings and which found their last expression in the memorial of December 22, 1916, Admiral v. Holtendorff came to the conclusion that he could, in accordance with his duty, make the announcement that the U-boat war would make England accept peace after five months.

And then we were confronted with the task of convincing England, by means of these sinkings and their economic effects, that she could endure this blood-letting for a limited time only and would not be able to hold out as long as Germany. Gentlemen, you must bear in mind this fact that, as the Imperial Chancellor suggested yesterday, aside from the physical and material effects of the U-boat war, a certain moral effect had also to be obtained. It is perfectly obvious that, in order to bring about this last result, it was essential that during those critical months, particularly when they came to a close, no doubt should manifest itself in England as to the ability of Germany to hold out, both from the military and moral standpoint. In this connection, things would have to remain as they were in Germany in December, when the decision was reached to launch the U-boat war.

The hoped-for result did not come about at all, much less in five months. Where was the mistake in our calculations? It was not the U-boats that left us in the lurch. On the contrary, the expectations of those conducting naval operations were more than reached in this respect. Gentlemen, in my opinion, the economic calculations contained in the memorial can not be properly tested at this time. The foundations thereof are lacking today.

And whether or not it will later become possible to discover a mistake or mistakes, is a question.

But we have today evidence from the lips of our enemies, forming a judgment on the general effect of the U-boat war after the first three months. I refer to Churchill and Sims. Certainly we can attribute some importance to the opinions of these two gentlemen. May I, perhaps, venture to read Sims' statement?

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: We know it.

The CHAIRMAN: Please read it.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: At the beginning of his report Admiral Sims tells us how, in March, 1917, he was called back to Washington from Newport, where he was stationed in command of the Naval War College, and given his instructions to proceed at once to London and to get into touch with the British Admiralty there. The Admiral, together with his adjutant, made the journey under an assumed name and in civilian clothes on the American steamer *New York*, which ran onto a mine upon entering Liverpool but was only slightly damaged. His report concerning his arrival in London and his contact with the men in whose hands was placed the control of the British fortunes, is so interesting as to call for a literal repetition. The Admiral tells us with what optimism he had looked upon the situation of the Allies up to that time, basing his view upon newspaper reports, and then proceeds:¹

And yet, after I had spent a few days in London, all these illusions vanished. The British Admiralty gave me facts and figures which they had not communicated to the press. These documents put me face to face with the amazing fact that Germany was in the process of winning the war and, in fact, at a speed which in four or five months must lead to the unconditional surrender of the British Empire.²

On the day of my arrival in London, I had my first interview with Admiral Jellicoe whom I had known personally for many years. After exchanging the usual greetings, Jellicoe took a roll of paper out of a drawer and handed it to me. It was a report of the shipping losses of the last months, and showed that the German U-boats had sunk 436,000³ tons in February, that the number had risen in March to 603,000 tons, and that the sinkings in the first days of April were such as to lead us to expect a further rise in figures up to about 900,000 tons. These losses were three or four times as high as one was led to expect by the deliberately inexact reports of the press. I would be speaking too mildly if I stated that I was surprised by these revelations; I was absolutely staggered. I had never imagined anything so dreadful, and I made no

¹ The German text of the following passages from Admiral Sims' book, *The Victory at Sea* (New York, 1920), which appears in these minutes, does not always conform with the original English. It has therefore been literally translated.—EDITOR. Cf. Sims, *op. cit.*, pp. 7 *et seq.*

² This paragraph is briefer than the English original. It is a summary but gives the substance.—EDITOR. Cf. Sims, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

³ The original English gives 536,000 tons.—EDITOR. Cf. Sims, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

secret of my amazement to Admiral Jellicoe. "You see," he said quietly, as if we were talking about the weather and not about the future of the British Empire, "it is impossible for us to continue with the war if these losses continue." "What will you do," I asked. "Everything that we can do. We are increasing the number of our fighting craft in every way we possibly can, for the purpose of fighting the U-boats; we are putting in every ship that we can find, we are building destroyers, mine-sweepers, and other ships as quickly as possible, but the situation is very serious and we need everything that we can get." "It looks as if the Germans were on the way to win the war," I said. "They will win it if we can not check these losses, and do it very quickly." "Is there any other solution of the problem?" said I. "Absolutely none, so far as we know at present," declared Jellicoe.¹

I discovered (continues Sims) that the reports with regard to the sinking of countless German U-boats were not true. From the beginning of the war, they only knew of 54 German submarines which had really been sunk, and Admiral Jellicoe told me that the German shipyards turned out three new U-boats a week. In the press, articles had been published about cases where individual German U-boats had voluntarily surrendered. These reports had no foundation, for not one single case of a German submarine having surrendered voluntarily had been proven. These reports were simply published for no other reason than to undermine² the enemy morale. I was able to discover how even an English government officer, who really should have known better, and even naval officers, believed at that time that many captured German U-boats were lying hidden in the harbors of Portsmouth and Plymouth. In view of this fact, that the figures of the monthly loss of tonnage was approaching the million mark, it was an easy thing to calculate how long the Allies would still be able to hold out. The best informed circles calculated that about the 1st of November, 1917, would be the extreme limit in point of time to which they could endure. In other words, unless a new method were immediately discovered which would constitute a successful defense against the U-boats, Great Britain would have to lay down her arms before a victorious Germany.³

I talked over the situation with the members of the British Cabinet, for instance, Balfour, Lord Robert Cecil, and Sir Edward Carson. Their attitude toward me was very different from the attitude which they assumed toward the public. Of course, these men allowed nothing to appear in their speeches⁴ which might have resulted in raising the morale of the enemy. But in their private talks with me, they repeated everything that Jellicoe had said to me.

The seriousness of the situation finally induced Balfour to send the British mission to the United States. What a dark moment that was for the Allies' cause! Not only were the German U-boats sweeping

¹ On the whole this paragraph is accurately translated in the German. Cf. Sims, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 8, and 9. Over a page of the original is omitted after the first sentence of the paragraph.—EDITOR.

² This word in the original English was "depreciating."—EDITOR. Cf. Sims, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

³ On the whole the German translation of this paragraph is accurate.—EDITOR. Cf. Sims, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁴ Sims, *op. cit.*, p. 13, gives "in the newspapers." The original of this paragraph is found on pp. 12 and 13.—EDITOR.

the British commerce from the sea, but the German armies were also gaining victories in France over the English and French armies. The climax in the results of the U-boat war was reached exactly at the time when General Nivelle's offensive on the west front failed.¹

And then Admiral Sims goes on to tell how Lloyd George was the only member of the British ministry who took an optimistic view. His further remarks have nothing to do with the present issues.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Let me ask your Excellency a question. We often talk nowadays with Englishmen—I am convinced that other gentlemen do too—who were there during the critical period and who state that there was never any real shortage in England. I would like to ask you: There was never at any time any ration system adopted for bread in England. Would not that indicate a different conclusion with regard to degree of danger existing at the time?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes, if this is the case, the British unquestionably at that time released their shipping space wherever possible. We can assume that either the transport of troops or the blockade between Scotland and Iceland was, for the time being, allowed to lapse, and that they said to themselves, "Well, we will slack up a little on the blockade for a few days and, to make up for it, we shall put our ships on another course."

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I wanted to cite, in connection with the estimates of the effect of the unrestricted U-boat war, that, as a matter of fact, England was never brought to the point where any control of the bread supply was necessary; a fact which would, after all, have to be considered an indication that her plight could not possibly have been as bad as ours.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Perhaps because the British laid particular weight on the bread supply no effort was spared in order to bring in bread first of all. But they paid for it in other ways. For instance, they obtained no fat for months; in the course of the first months, no fat got in at all. They must have suffered in very many respects, but not to the extent that we did.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: According to my knowledge, England did introduce a system of bread rationing, but based upon a very different plan from ours. They had no bread cards, but the grain which was available was made the subject of uniform control and was distributed in definite amounts to the individual counties, etc., and then by a voluntary system individual purchasers were given only limited quantities of bread and meal. So that the bread rationing system was carried out differently from ours. But that it did exist in England, is a matter which we know to be the case.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Do you know, your Excellency, what the size of the bread ration and of the meat ration was under this system?

¹ This paragraph is a free and incomplete translation of the original.—EDITOR. Cf. Sims, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: It is impossible for me to know this because the system was more elastic than ours and did not call really for a definite ration; everything was divided that was available, so far as I can judge the matter.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: Admiral Sims' reports are obviously looked upon by Admiral Koch as statements which should be taken literally. Was it not advisable for the English statesmen and for the chief of the British Navy to paint the matter in just as dark and menacing colors as it was possible for them to represent it? For what was under consideration at that time, what they had in mind at that time, was to arouse America, to persuade America to build at once, with all the energy at her command, ships, ships, ships. And that was the motif of the speech which Lloyd George made in Paris, which sounded the cry: "Ships, ships, ships, or else we are lost." The political purpose of these communications of the British to the American press is obvious, and it is from that point that the real object of these communications must be estimated. Do you not agree with me, Admiral?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I consider that absolutely out of the question. Admiral Sims is an outspoken enemy of the Germans. He was already retired, and yet he was sent for quite particularly from Washington to go to England for the purpose of sizing up the situation there. My firm conviction on the point is, therefore, that Admiral Sims was told frankly and without any *arrière pensée* everything just as it existed and just as it was necessary to do in order to convince him that the time had now come for the United States to take part in the war.

The CHAIRMAN: I see that various memoranda are before you. It is possible that their contents may have an effect upon your answer.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Here is a statement by Churchill of January 12, 1919. Churchill speaks as follows:

If I may say so, we barely succeeded in coming through. The more we learn about the conflict, the more clearly do we recognize by what a little, thin, and perilous thread our success hung. France was nearly annihilated at the first onslaught. Just a little more, and the submarine war against commerce would, instead of having brought America over to our side, have forced our country to an unconditional surrender by starvation. Even after the 21st of March, the danger which threatened Paris was extremely great, just as it was for the Channel ports. It was a tremendous race up to the very end. But we came through safely at the end, because the whole nation worked together with a single intention, because our people were sound at bottom in all those affairs which called for solid, manly qualities, and because we had back of us the sense of justice of the world. Let us be thankful. Let us always compare the inconveniences and irritations with which we have to contend at present with that which could so easily have come upon us if we had been beaten and if the war had lasted for one year longer.

Delegate HEILE: Speeches and articles appearing in the year 1919 could certainly not have been used by the Navy at that critical time for the purpose of forming its judgment. As a matter of fact, they have relatively little value at this time. I should like to inquire whether the advertising columns of the English papers were not read at the time when we believed that England was suffering from shortage. It could always have been concluded, as the result of reading the advertising columns, which, surely do not contain misrepresentations—for what was offered there really existed—that whereas, in Germany, nothing but substitutes, and a great dearth of substitutes, was shown to exist, over there everything was announced as being of good quality. In this connection, this would at least have been just as important, from the standpoint of forming a judgment with regard to the situation.

The CHAIRMAN: But all this has much more to do with the examination of his Excellency Helfferich which we shall take up later. What concerns us here is rather a purely technical question.

Delegate DR. COHN: I should like to limit myself to the following question: Admiral, at that critical period, that is, during the first six months of 1917, did you, perhaps, have any occasion to talk with people who came from England and who had formed an opinion there as the result of observations made in connection with their private homes concerning the existing economic conditions?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Personally, no.

Delegate DR. COHN: Had you, by any chance, received reliable information from others who had themselves spoken with such persons?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes, we must have received quite a number of such bits of information.

Delegate DR. COHN: Do you remember whether or not the people making these reports stated that they were able to buy at that time, for only slightly increased prices, each and every article of food and clothing in the open market, from rice to boots and clothes—everything?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I did not know that.

Delegate DR. COHN: Do you know anything about the supplying of England with rice?

The CHAIRMAN: But these are all questions which we can take up and settle later when Dr. Helfferich is examined. I should like to have the present hearing carried on, above all, on the technical side. And, primarily, we still have to consider the great question of the extent to which the U-boat war could not be postponed beyond the close of January. For that is a matter of the most outstanding importance and one with which I should like to finish today.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, you just read us Lord Churchill's statement. In this connection, I should like to have this statement submitted to us in the original, in the English text, in order that we

can get an exact knowledge of its contents. If I am not mistaken, this is an excerpt from the entire article or speech. I would like to ask that the original, in English, of this article be submitted to us in order that we can determine, by reference to the context, what the real significance of his remarks was. Moreover, does it not occur to you, Admiral, as you refer to this as a piece of evidence, that Lord Churchill was, in his capacity as a statesman, very strongly interested, after the war, in painting in the most favorable colors and for the benefit of the people, the course taken by the British Government, and the endless amount of energy which it had shown? If you think of this, can you really attribute any value to this statement as a piece of objective evidence?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I certainly believe that the English actually conducted themselves during this time as stated. It is well known that the British will put up with anything, if I may say so, when their sporting spirit is aroused. That they endured to the extent that we did, I certainly do not believe. At the same time, I believe that in this instance the British came out very strong, simply because it was absolutely necessary for them to keep their grip on their tonnage, and that all of this, in turn, was required for their military operations. It was absolutely impossible for them to permit things to come to the point of having their tonnage still further diminished, so far as the years to come, the future, was concerned. That is exactly the vital point. It was not our intention "to force England to her knees." This expression was not coined in the Admiralty Staff. What we wanted to do was to bring her to the point where she would accept peace negotiations, and we believed that the U-boat war was the very instrument to bring about this result.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Admiral, I have a technical question to put to you at this point. We find in the records which have come to our knowledge in this connection, and in which it is shown that the Headquarters were working in behalf of the unrestricted U-boat war, a document, in which it is stated that Ludendorff was of the opinion that the unrestricted U-boat war would have to be launched, among other reasons, so that the transports loaded with ammunition and bound for France would no longer be able to be convoyed across the Channel. And it is obvious that this was one of the main purposes in mind. Was it possible, as a purely technical matter, to stop the transportation of ammunition from England across the Channel by the unrestricted U-boat war?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I gave instructions yesterday touching the precise question of furnishing a compilation dealing with war material which was sunk. It has not been possible for me to bring the figures here today. I know that the figures exist, for I made use of them myself in connection with my reports at Headquarters—figures which deal with the amount of material which was sunk at this time.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Was it not rather, on the contrary, a notorious fact that, in defiance of the unrestricted U-boat war, the transports continued, completely unchecked, to hold their course across the Channel?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I do not believe that they did so wholly unchecked, or, if they did, it was only over the short courses across the Channel, because at such points they used all of their defensive material; first, ships equipped with listening apparatus and, behind them, light ships, and behind them, again, two lines of scout steamers armed with guns. So that between the narrowest points of the English Channel the U-boats could not operate. At these points, it is true, little steamers acted continuously as transports; but these operated as such only by night, for in the day-time even they could not travel on account of the U-boat danger.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: How did it happen, your Excellency, that you were not able to stop the transports which came from the United States, either wholly or in part or to any material extent? Did you not examine this question beforehand? For, of course, we had to calculate upon this contingency, that great masses of American troops would come over; and we had to ask ourselves whether it would be possible to stop the transports. As a matter of fact, no transport was stopped. That certainly does not speak in favor of a fundamental efficiency on the part of the U-boat war.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I believe that the fundamental efficiency of the U-boat war is to be shown in the amount of tonnage which was sunk. It was impossible for a U-boat to be sent out to attack one or two transports. The U-boat works within its own area and, as I have already stated, must handle everything that enters its area, whether transport ships or anything else. If the U-boat had been left free in the matter of choosing the ships against which it was to proceed, it would naturally have chosen the transport first of all.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, in this connection we again come face to face with an important point. In that session of the Reichstag of the 31st of January, in which final measures were taken, Secretary of State v. Capelle stated clearly and flatly as follows: "We do not need to worry about the United States; not one ship or its complement of personnel will reach this side; that is why we have the U-boats; that is just the kind of prey that we want to hunt." That was the expression used. The committee would be greatly interested to hear what you have to say about it.

The CHAIRMAN: Does your Excellency care to make a statement with regard to the matter? If not, we could postpone the reply until tomorrow. The point is, then, that it was officially stated that we had no cause to fear transport steamers.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Just as it was not possible for us to cut off direct intercourse of all steamers headed for English ports and England—as

the Chancellor has already said, we could not seal England hermetically—we could not absolutely block the coming of transport steamers.

Delegate GOTHEIN: We have been informed that just one American troop transport was sunk, in all. This fact is in violent conflict with the complete destruction by sinking of all transports bringing troops, the prospect of which was held out to us on January 31, 1917. I should now like to ask the following question: After the crest of the sinkings was reached in April or May, 1917, the amount of the tonnage sunk proceeded to diminish little by little and very steadily until, in the year 1918, the number of ships sunk was quite inconsiderable. So it would certainly seem to be useful to determine once for all the reason of this failure of the U-boat weapon, the reason why the longer it was in use, the less efficient it became. Is that to be attributed to the convoy system applied to the transportation of troops, which was carried on so systematically by the Americans by means of war-ships, swift cruisers, etc., which particularly protected and covered the transports? Or is it to be attributed to the fact that it became possible to detect clearly the proximity of U-boats by means of vessels fitted out with listening apparatus, etc.?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: We will probably not be able to answer this question fully, because at the present time we are not able to tell to what extent and how the situation was brought about. We are, however, of the opinion that the English counter-measures were made effective above all by inventions which had been perfected in the meantime, particularly by the ships armed with listening apparatus, swift vessels, by reason of which the U-boats were continually forced to remain under the water and consequently suffered heavy losses. Moreover, the system which the Americans and the British, too, initiated, and which in the main consisted of convoys and the constant shifting of the routes taken by the vessels, as well as changes made with regard to arrivals and departures, were of very great effect. For this reason, we constantly suffered correspondingly increasing losses. The U-boats themselves did not cease their efforts.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: Admiral, you probably have a legal department in the Navy. Consequently, there is no doubt that the question of law was considered when the expert opinion was drawn up. Now, in every text book which deals more extensively with international law there is a chapter entitled "The Law of Angary," and there it is stated that, according to an old principle of the laws of naval warfare, a state which is engaged in a naval war has the right to commandeer the neutral tonnage which is found in its harbors upon making proper compensation. This principle, which was of tremendous political significance in view of the fact that, in reliance thereon, England took over millions of neutral tonnage, was, so far as I can see, made the subject of absolutely no attention whatsoever in the memorials. Do you know anything about this?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Why, I certainly believe that it was considered.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: That England could at once lay claim to neutral tonnage?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Certainly, the matter of the control of neutral shipping will be found to have been dealt with in the official compilations. So that it must have been made the subject of consideration.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: According to newspaper reports, it was first spoken of on the occasion of the peace resolution in July, 1917, and it was asserted in the Reichstag that the effect of the unrestricted U-boat war was, to a very great extent, counterbalanced by the fact that England was taking over the neutral tonnage.

The CHAIRMAN: The memorial of the Imperial Chancellor of the 29th of February called particular attention to this feature, and it goes without saying that this memorial was brought to the attention of the Admiralty. It necessarily results that, as a matter of fact, this feature was given consideration.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, you stated that the Navy had never gone further than to assert the intention of bringing England to the point where she would be willing to entertain the idea of peace. I have before me the memorial—

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: To *force* her to accept peace.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: This concludes this question, then, for it is stated here that "as conditions are now, we should be able to force England to accept peace by means of the unrestricted U-boat war within five months."

Still another question. You know that at that time the press was always announcing in very lofty tones how we were going to force England to her knees. That is no official expression, but simply an expression used by the newspapers at that time. Now, you had the authority to censor. Was it not possible for you to curb these expectations, which were exalted to such a terribly dangerous extent and which, consequently, had to be submitted to such final revulsion—to curb these expectations by exercising the authority of censorship which you had in your hands? Was it not possible for you or your department to do this?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: The censorship authority was not in any way vested in the Admiralty Staff, but, so far as censorship was concerned, we were referred to the Supreme Command here or to the Supreme High Command of the Army. There was no other possible method available to us. It is true that articles which dealt with naval matters were sent to us, but in this connection we acted merely as experts, and the articles were then turned over to the censorship authorities there. I do not know whether this expression was officially opposed. So far as I know, my associates never used the expression "to force her to her knees" in private conversation between themselves or at my office. I took pains, so far as I was concerned,

and I can state this with direct reference to his Excellency Holtzendorff, that he, too, took pains that this expression should not be used. It came automatically into being and automatically disappeared.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: May I put another question to you? Do you know, your Excellency that, through the participation of the naval authorities, a movement was deliberately brought about in favor of the unrestricted U-boat war?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I have had the reporter for the press come to see me. I will ask that I be permitted to reply to this question later, for I have not been able to confer with him. I was not aware of the fact that an active propaganda on behalf of the U-boat war had been carried on by us.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, were you aware of the fact that the memorial which was marked strictly confidential had been very broadly distributed amongst the population, and that the people had been prepared by means of "scientific" arguments to accept this very dangerous conception of the unrestricted U-boat war? Did you know anything about that?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Only that the memorial was published?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes, I knew that, but later; if we had known at the time how it was being published, we would certainly have taken steps to stop it. The memorial, and even the first memorial, was only sent to the government departments, and to those experts who had been selected and of whom I have spoken, and, besides this, to the military authorities, the commanding officers of vessels, etc.; only to military authorities.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, were these experts bound to secrecy, too? Among these gentlemen, there were a number who had a frank way of talking.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes, the memorial was sent back by these people with the expert opinion. We required that.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: But perhaps they kept copies. That would not have been prevented by this proceeding.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: As this was what took place when the first memorial was sent out, we marked the second memorial numerically and delivered a certain-numbered copy provided we were given a receipt for it. The last memorial of all, to Hindenburg, was issued, I believe, to the extent of only a very few copies.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: So that, in some way, the copies must have "disappeared" and have come into the possession of the people by the thousand?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I do not believe that the last memorial addressed to Hindenburg—the one in which, I believe, the expression "five months period" was used—was in any event given out in numbers exceeding six or

eight; and, as a matter of fact I believe only one copy to Hindenburg, one for his Excellency the Chancellor, and then, subsequently, a few copies were requested from us. With the exception of the above, absolutely no copies were given out by us.

Delegate DR. COHN: Admiral, you said that the Admiralty Staff only had recourse to the press by way of the Supreme Command, and the Supreme High Command of the Army?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Certainly.

Delegate DR. COHN: It is possible that other views may have been entertained upon the subject. Let me call to your attention the following telegram. On January 11, 1917, the representative of the Imperial Chancellor and of the Foreign Office with the Supreme High Command of the Army telegraphed as follows:

General Ludendorff suggests that until the 1st of February our press should be held under strict check touching arrangements for the U-boat war. He believes that Reventlow and Rippler can be persuaded to keep still, either by the Navy or—or!—by the Supreme High Command, if they are personally and confidentially informed of our plans.

And he proposes additional unimportant measures; they do not interest us at this point. In any event, General Ludendorff would appear, according to this, to have assumed that the Navy had access to the press. All that the Navy needed to do was to send for Reventlow or Rippler, and to give them confidential information. Do you not know, Admiral, that such modes of access existed?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes, I know it.

Delegate DR. COHN: And did you know, in particular, that Count Reventlow enjoyed direct, permanent, and personal relations with certain higher authorities of the Navy—

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No.

Delegate DR. COHN: And wrote his articles as the result of direct information received?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I did not know that. I know of one individual case which concerns myself. But this case was precisely to the opposite effect. I personally requested Count Reventlow to call upon me, and told him about the U-boat war and requested him to engage in no propaganda and, as a matter of fact, to postpone such publicity, and this, in fact, at the request of his Excellency Zimmermann.

Delegate DR. COHN: About when did this occur, Admiral?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: It can only have occurred during the time running from the date, or shortly before the date on which the decision with regard to the U-boat war was reached, up to the date at which it was started.

Delegate DR. COHN: That is, then, the period of time referred to in the telegram.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I am wholly unacquainted with the telegram; however, I did talk with his Excellency Zimmermann at that time. His Excellency Zimmermann asked me: "You know Reventlow, do you not?" As a matter of fact, he had once been my first officer. "Will you be able to put the brakes on Reventlow for a while?" to which I answered: "Why, yes, I think I can do so." I had him come to see me, and the result followed as the facts show.

Delegate DR. COHN: Just so, your Excellency. I believe that this happened as the result of this telegram. The telegram is dated January 11, 1917, and is addressed to Secretary of State Zimmermann.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: In this way, yes, his Excellency Zimmermann asked me about it at that time, and I told him that I would do so.

Delegate DR. COHN: Quite right. It was sent by Counselor of Legation v. Grünau, addressed to the Foreign Office. Mr. v. Grünau was the representative of the Foreign Office with the Supreme High Command of the Army. So it is presumed that we are talking about the same incident.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes. But that is no propaganda; on the contrary—how shall I say it?—that is counter-propaganda.

Delegate DR. COHN: Of course it is. I am simply drawing the natural inference from the fact that General Ludendorff says here that the Navy will probably be able to prevail upon Count Reventlow and Rippler to hold their peace—I draw the inference that it was at least assumed at the Supreme High Command of the Army that access to the press was a very simple thing for the Navy, and did not exist simply by means of the circuitous route by way of the Supreme Command at Berlin and the Supreme High Command of the Army.

I have still another question with regard to the effects of the U-boat war. I understood you to say, Admiral, that the purpose was never entertained of attacking individual and distinct transports—that that would not have been practicable—but that the purpose was to control certain areas which would be traversed by these transport ships and in so doing—this is how I understand you—to produce an effect which would result in a general diminution of tonnage—

(Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Certainly.)

—Now, when this matter was taken up in the budget committee, this view was not so very clearly expressed by Secretary of State v. Capelle. On the contrary, in answering the doubts which Dr. David, then delegate, expressed with regard to the military effect of the entrance of the United States into the war, he expressed himself in far more favorable and confident terms. But perhaps I might be allowed to put this question to Secretary of State v. Capelle. In the report of the session of the 1st of February, 1917, we find the following:

And finally, Delegate Dr. David made certain statements involving the military effect of the possible assistance which the United States might give. Gentlemen, I certainly also belong to those who would look upon the entrance of the United States into the war on the side of our opponents as a serious blow to our interests. But my apprehensions are not based on military considerations, but on quite different considerations, which have already been stated in full. Looked at from the military standpoint, I consider that the assistance which will result from the entrance of the United States into the war on the side of our enemies will amount to nothing.

(Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Indeed!)

In the first place, the hundreds of thousands of American volunteers, of which we have heard so much, will have to be found.

In England, the universal service obligation has been introduced. The war has now lasted more than two years, with the result that many a man has become skittish. Whether they will be able to find many volunteers in the United States who will be willing to allow themselves to be brought to the theater of war, I very much doubt. But I will assume, for the sake of argument, that they can be found. But in this case, they would, first of all, have to be organized and then trained.

And then he goes on to say that, after they had been trained, they will have to be transported. Then he proceeds:

But that is by no means the crux of the matter. So far as I am concerned, let us assume that hundreds of thousands of people are recruited, organized and trained in the United States. How are they going to get over to England? I will ask the gentlemen to realize what is necessary for the transportation to this country of an army with its trains, etc.!

And now the figures follow. 400,000 tons for 100,000 men. That is the decisive point: that is, that 100 ships of 4,000 tons are required.

But where, in view of the existing shortage in cargo space, are they going to get these hundred ships? If they really could succeed in getting them together, we could not possibly imagine any game that would be better hunting for our U-boats on the high seas.

The committee report notes that a "bravo" was heard at this point.

So that the American peril, I repeat, so far as the millions of volunteers are concerned, amounts to nothing, looked at from our military standpoint.

Now, this certainly seems to be a contradiction, Admiral Koch, which is very difficult to explain away.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you desire to make a statement at once upon this point, Admiral?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Well, in any event, we on the Admiralty Staff did not underestimate the military importance of the United States. That

there was practically nothing more to be expected from the United States in the way of an increase in the amount of munitions of war which it would send over—I believe that, after all, everything had been accomplished in this respect in the United States that could have been accomplished, even before its entrance into the war. The personnel, as his Excellency v. Capelle has already stated, would first have to be trained. That in spite of all this we would have to make the greatest possible headway in working to attain our goal, was a point to which we gave the most painstaking consideration. This is beyond any question and is shown by the extracts which I have already read from the statements made by Admiral v. Holtzendorff in which he unhesitatingly admits it. Moreover, I may perhaps add the following—I have just received the figures: In the course of one year from the 1st of February, 1917, until December 31, 1917, 565 vessels loaded with war material, of which 57 vessels were loaded with ammunition, were sunk.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: How many sailed in all?

Delegate DR. COHN: One question more. Do you know the exact number of American soldiers who were brought over on the transports?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No; in any event, I can not remember the number. I have heard it, but I am not in a position to testify about it.

Delegate DR. COHN: Do you, perhaps, recollect that it was about 800,000? That is what one authority gives as the number.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I heard that the number was somewhat greater.

Delegate DR. COHN: And you reckoned on four tons per man, did you not?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: On this point, Admiral v. Capelle knows how the calculation of four tons per man was reached.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe that we shall get further ahead with the reply if we hear Admiral v. Capelle on the point.

Witness v. CAPELLE: Ladies and gentlemen, during the course of the entire years during which the question of the U-boat war was a living issue, the view was most emphatically entertained by those in charge of the conduct of the war upon the sea, the Admiralty Staff, that the unrestricted U-boat war would bring about the termination of the war within five or six months. The course of this thought can be plainly traced throughout all the memorials presented and all the speeches made, and throughout the proceedings in the budget committee as well. My statements with regard to the United States had reference only to this limited period of time consisting of from five to six months; that is, reference to what the United States could do in a military way in the course of six months, but not to what America could do in the course of from one and a half to two years. So far as what could be done from a military standpoint during the first six months, the statements which I made at that time have not been shown to be incorrect. There was never any discussion in the budget committee as to what America could perform if the war were to last two years more. The possibility that,

in spite of the unrestricted U-boat war, the war could last two years more, was probably never seriously considered by anyone at that time.

Gentlemen, I had to rely upon the arguments in the well-known memorial of the Admiralty Staff for what I said with regard to the military importance of America. In this memorial it was declared impossible that an American Army could come over within five or six months. That idea was actually inbred in us. And, as a matter of fact, only a very few soldiers came over.

Now, with regard to the failure to sink the American transport ships, one of the gentlemen of the committee has already stated here that I said no ships would come over. Delegate Dr. Cohn has read what I said.

A possible embarkation within these six months would (and now I will make a small addition in order to make this clearer) be concentrated in the last six months, and then about 100 ships would be required. Where, in view of the existing shortage in cargo space, are they going to get these hundred ships? If they really could succeed in getting them together, we could not possibly imagine any game that would be better hunting for our U-boats on the high seas.

I naturally was of the opinion that we would be able to torpedo very many of these ships which were part of these hundred ships which were to bring the troops across. I believe that I shall have to admit that the Navy, including myself, and the Supreme High Command of the Army as well, made a mistake in this connection. I believe that we were all of the opinion that we would have said the same with regard to the transportation of American troops in large amounts, if it were actually undertaken—and I shall ask you not to forget that, as a matter of fact, nobody really believed that this would be possible, because we were calculating on a period of from five to six months, and that many ships would fall a prey to us—I believe that every one of us who may have been asked the question would have made the same statement. As to why American transport steamers were not torpedoed in great numbers, is a matter to be explained by those who conducted naval operations.

The CHAIRMAN: We will terminate the session at this point. We shall continue tomorrow morning punctually at 10:30 o'clock.

The session closed at 1:33 o'clock.

EIGHTH SESSION

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1919

The session was opened at 10:34 o'clock, by the Chairman, Delegate Warmuth.

The CHAIRMAN: The session is opened.

The name of Mr. Gothein is first upon the list of those who are to put questions. I shall ask Mr. Gothein, then, to proceed.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I should like, first, to put a question to Admiral Koch: He stated that, in compliance with the wish of General Ludendorff, he was successful in prevailing upon Count Reventlow and Editor in Chief Rippler not to publish articles about the unrestricted U-boat war; and, as a matter of fact, if I have understood him correctly, this occurred during the period running from Christmas up to the end of January, so that they did not publish articles during this period with regard to the unrestricted U-boat war. I should like to ask, first, whether this is the date of his intervention with regard to Reventlow and Rippler.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: It must have been during this period, certainly.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Now, was it not the object of this move of inducing them to keep silent with regard to the whole question of the U-boat war, to lull the enemy powers into a certain sense of security, based upon the belief that the unrestricted U-boat war would not come to pass; and was that more or less the task which your Excellency undertook, namely, to make it plain to both of these editors in chief that, if the U-boat question was made the subject of serious discussion at this time, the results might be disadvantageous?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: In the first place, this did not occur as the result of the suggestion of the Supreme High Command of the Army, but at the suggestion of his Excellency Zimmermann. And moreover, the intention which you have expressed here did not exist. His Excellency Zimmermann asked me merely to exert my influence upon Reventlow to the effect that he should not start an agitation on behalf of the U-boat war at this time by means of curt or acute methods; that he was to hold himself in leash, to a certain extent. That is what I did, and I was successful. I have never received the second gentleman. I am not in any way acquainted with him.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Then this point must be considered as covered.

Now, your Excellency stated that the censorship authority was not vested in the Admiralty Staff, but was exclusively here under the jurisdiction of the military authorities. But in the records we find a telegram of

former Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg, in which he states that the authority to censor in matters having to do with the Navy was transferred from the Secretary of State for the Navy Department over to the Admiralty Staff. This occurred shortly before v. Tirpitz retired as Secretary of State for the Navy Department. The complaint which had been made was that the censorship power as it had been administered by that office, actually thwarted the political move which the Imperial Chancellor was making. And that was the reason, according to the records, why the censorship authority was taken away from the Navy Department and transferred to the Admiralty Staff. I should like to ask what your Excellency knows about this incident, and how it can be brought into agreement with the statement which was made yesterday.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: The censorship jurisdiction, so far as I know, was vested here in the Supreme High Command of the Army or with the Supreme Command. A preliminary power of censorship in matters affecting the Navy was vested in the Admiralty Staff. Even if we wanted to issue an order, we had to confer with these authorities. It goes without saying that, if articles concerning the Navy, whether they had to do with submarine warfare or had reference to any other subject, came up to be censored, they were sent first to us and then we could submit them for further action. We had no power of direct censorship. For instance, upon the occasion of a request by the Imperial Chancellor, we asked the Supreme High Command of the Army to see to it that nothing was published concerning the U-boat war. That was carried out for months. I can tell you nothing more about it. With regard to the details, we would have to take the testimony of former representatives of the press.

Delegate GOTHEIN: As a matter of fact, the situation was this, was it not, that every article which touched upon these questions had first to be submitted to some particular individual for censorship by the Admiralty Staff?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes.

Delegate GOTHEIN: And that man was Captain of the Navy Boy-Ed, after his return from the United States?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Now, your Excellency stated in respect to the publication of the confidential memorials, that these memorials were kept strictly confidential. But we find in the records a complaint made by the then Imperial Chancellor Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, to the effect that at least the Tirpitz memorial of February, 1916, had been published in great numbers and sent to officials who had absolutely nothing to do with it and who in no manner guaranteed that it would be kept confidential. As a matter of fact, very many people became acquainted with the contents of this memorial. But the other memorial, too, the one which was worked up by Dr. Fuss, the memorial which formed the basis of the announcement of the

unrestricted U-boat war, the Fuss-Levy memorial, leaked through in pretty generous numbers. For instance, I knew what its contents were, in the main, before it came out. Is your Excellency in a position to state the names of all those who obtained a copy of this memorial? Possibly you may not be able to do so at this time, but it might perhaps be possible to give an indication of the authorities who received copies of the memorial.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I believe I answered that question yesterday in detail. The first memorial in question was sent to the Imperial Chancellor and to the other departments. Before this, it was sent to those gentlemen whom we have named here as experts, and then all the military authorities received a copy.

Delegate GOTHEIN: To what extent did the military authorities get them?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: All the higher authorities, down to the commanders of vessels.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Of the U-boats, too?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I do not believe that all the U-boat commanders got them, but in any event the U-boat flotilla chiefs did.

Delegate GOTHEIN: In any event, it was a pretty broad circle.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes, a circle of military authorities. When we thereupon came to know at that time, and as a matter of fact were so informed by the Imperial Chancellor, that some officials were handling the matter indiscreetly, the next time we issued the memorial, we numbered it, designated it as "strictly confidential," and limited the number given out to the narrowest field. The last memorial, as I have already stated, was, if I am not mistaken, published only to the extent of four copies, and was sent to the Imperial Chancellor and to General Field Marshal Hindenburg himself. I do not know whether the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs received any at the same time. In any case, subsequently, several copies were requested from respective sources.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Was the memorial printed?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes, it was printed, but was constantly kept in the possession of the person who had charge of it, and was also provided with numbers.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Secretary of State v. Capelle in an article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, attributed the heavy losses in U-boats to poor material and inferior crews, both of which constantly became worse with the course of time. After the armistice, it was discovered that there was a great supply of spare metals and various kinds of higher iron products in the then imperial shipyards. It is quite true that the U-boats were not built in the government shipyards, but in private shipyards. But it would certainly have been possible, if there was a lack of material, to have placed these finer materials which were in the government shipyards at the disposal of the builders. Is your Excellency aware of the fact that Delegate Dr. Struve

and I always insisted that the materials and, particularly, the spare metals and the higher grades of iron should be used precisely for U-boat construction, and that we took the ground that when it was determined to proceed no further in the construction of fighting craft of the larger kinds, it would be better to use that material for U-boat construction? Did the Admiralty Staff exert itself to the same end, and, if this was not done, why was it not done? Was the Admiralty Staff still hoping for a second naval battle?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: It is undoubtedly true that the Admiralty Staff cherished the hope that the fleet would be sent in once more. When this was to occur, I can not say.

With regard to the other question in respect to the spare metal, I do not know whether or not we took steps in that direction. To see that the material was distributed in the shipyards was the duty of the Secretary of the Navy Department.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Is Secretary of State v. Capelle in a position to inform us with regard to this point?

The CHAIRMAN: May we ask that we be given this information at once, if you please, your Excellency v. Capelle?

Witness v. CAPELLE: When a larger order for U-boats had been placed, it was preceded by complicated negotiations with the division of war raw material of the War Department, in order to provide the necessary material. Our instructions always were to the effect that we should take a certain portion of the material from our older battleships and, if necessary, from our supplies on hand. That always occurred. We were bound to comply, for, otherwise, we would have obtained nothing from the war raw material division. I did not know that a considerable amount of spare metal was found in the imperial shipyards at the end of the war; I have been retired from the service for some time; it is, however, possible. Our shipyards which had very much to do in the line of repairs, always had to keep a reserve of spare metal in order to make these repairs.

Delegate GOTHEIN: But a regulation had been issued at that time to the effect that it was most important to have that material used for the U-boats. I believe that this regulation was, however, not issued until the fall of 1917.

Witness v. CAPELLE: By far the greatest amount of the repair work which was done in our imperial shipyards was done on the U-boats. Besides the U-boats, there was a number of other and smaller craft in the service, such as mine seekers, torpedo boats, etc. Again, there was the entire fleet, which was in service and which had to be kept in condition. The material which was on hand was used wherever it was needed.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Were those authorities who had charge of the material in the imperial shipyards subject to the jurisdiction of the raw material division, or did they have nothing to do with it?

Witness v. CAPELLE: The raw material division had nothing to do with it.

It attempted to do so on many occasions, but it could not be carried through as a practical proposition.

Delegate GOTHEIN: So that it had no knowledge of the materials which were there?

Witness v. CAPELLE: I do not believe that it had a current knowledge of the material which was there.

Delegate GOTHEIN: As a matter of fact, a surprisingly great amount of supplies were found.

Witness v. CAPELLE: Where?

Delegate GOTHEIN: In Kiel, as well as in Wilhelmshaven.

This question is closed.

Now a few questions to Admiral Koch: Your Excellency stated that the British fleet continued, against expectation, to avoid the German coasts, refused to offer battle at sea, as well as to establish a close blockade. It remained in its harbors and closed the more distant approaches by means of its light sea-craft. The result was that all the estimates which were made and upon which our naval armament was based, were really false. Now, General Ludendorff states in his war memoirs:

Ever since the maneuvers of the fleet in the years 1910 and 1911, there have been indications that England has had in mind a blockade at a distance.

That is to say, a blockade which barred approaches at a distance. Therefore, we would not have been far from the mark at that time if we had assumed that the English fleet would not have allowed it to come to the point of a battle with our fleet which was, as Secretary of State Tirpitz has said, a fleet built on a gamble; there were indications which showed that the British were not proceeding along any such line as this, but had merely a war of commerce in mind, which was to result in our being shut off from imports. But only the U-boats, on the one hand, and the swift cruisers, on the other, could be used with success in opposition to this war of commerce. Is it a fact that the large cruisers which were authorized by the Reichstag were so constructed as to constitute battle-ships to all effects and purposes?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: The great cruisers were most certainly to take part in battle. We hoped to be able to delay the war for a few years in order to have the battle fleet of quite different dimensions, that is, different in the way of numbers, so that we should then have been in a position ourselves to seek a decision off the enemy's coasts. Unfortunately, the war overtook us. Had we—this is my personal opinion—had we gone over in the first days of the war or on the very first day, I believe that even then we would have been successful.

Delegate GOTHEIN: So far as delay is concerned, accompanied by a continued increase of armament, the fact remains that the English would have

continued to increase their fleet by twice the amount, plus 10 per cent, and the relative strength would have remained the same.

Secondly, was the rate of speed of our battle-ships, and also of the large cruisers, less than that of the British fleet?

Thirdly, was the range of our guns less than that of the English guns?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: So far as I know, answering the last question first, our guns were not inferior to the British in the matter of range, but merely in the method in which our center batteries were mounted, in so far as this affected elevation. But we made the requisite changes in a very short time.

Our battle cruisers were certainly inferior to the British battle cruisers in the matter of speed, but, on the other hand, undoubtedly superior to them in fighting capacity, as was proven by the battle, and particularly so with regard to the quality of all the material used. If the war had come a few years later my personal conviction is that we would have worked out the "gamble" idea with the most brilliant success. We would have been able to approach the English coast with our fleet completely equipped and to have given battle under favorable conditions.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Your Excellency stated that there was some difficulty with the mounting of the batteries, that is, that the angle of elevation of the pieces could not be made so great as to get the extreme limit of range.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I believe that it has been repeatedly manifested that, also in the Skagerrak fight, the range of our pieces was shorter by two kilometers than that of the British. Is that correct?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I can not give the exact figures.

Delegate GOTHEIN: At that time, when I took up this question in the budget committee, we were informed that the matter had less to do with the mounting of the batteries than with the fact that the ports in our armor were not such as to permit the higher angles of elevation to be reached, and that the armor-plate was too hard for the ports to be enlarged. I believe that at that time I was the first to call the attention of the Navy Department to the use of the oxyhydrogen torch for burning out the ports, so that the change that was made "in time" came about, above all, at the suggestion of the budget committee. But is it true that the matter had less to do with the mounting of the batteries than with the unfortunate construction of our ports?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: That is a construction matter concerning which his Excellency v. Capelle could inform us.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Information on this point was given the committee at that time. It was said that our battle cruisers were inferior in speed. This holds good, in all probability, for the other fighting craft, does it not? Under these conditions, would it not have been a great gamble on our part

to have undertaken a naval battle off the coast of England? For when our ships retired as the result of the English superiority in numbers, we would have been subject to the very greatest losses during the pursuit, on account of the slower speed of our ships.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: On the return trip, I do not believe so, for that would have taken place, doubtless, after the fight which would have lasted all day. Only smaller vessels would have been used, and I do not believe that the difference in speed of one knot or half a knot would have had any effect.

Delegate GOTHEIN: If the battle had been fought off the coast of England, the result would have been that the British would have been able to assemble their overwhelming numbers very quickly, and would have been in a position, after we had been obliged to withdraw, to pursue our fleet, in the course of which pursuit they could certainly have used their greater speed to good purpose.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: It is to be hoped that the fleet would not have been so entirely shot up as to be unable to return in some kind of formation. And besides, the others would have to assemble first.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Well, anyway, the statement that you made yesterday is to the effect that all of your estimates as to how the war on the sea was going to be carried on, have been shown to be groundless on account of the policy adopted by the British.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No, if we had been stronger, we would have carried the war to the English coast under any and all conditions, which plan we did not carry out under the existing conditions. That was the difference.

REAR ADMIRAL V. BÜLOW: I am in a position to make a statement with regard to the range of our guns in the Skagerrak fight.

The CHAIRMAN: If you please!

REAR ADMIRAL V. BÜLOW: I can state that, during the entire Skagerrak fight, our batteries were at all times able to get the enemy's range, so that the mounts and the range were sufficient for that purpose.

Delegate GOTHEIN: But this is certainly in conflict with the statements which Secretary of State v. Capelle made to the budget committee at that time, to the effect that the British squadron opened fire at a distance of two kilometers greater than the distance at which we opened fire, and that our batteries were not able to open the fight at this distance.

Witness v. CAPELLE: I believe that the connection in which this was said was different. According to my recollection, I made comparatively few statements concerning the Skagerrak battle; on the contrary, I had Captain Brüninghaus, who was in command of one of the first ships to take part in the Skagerrak fight, make these statements. The facts to which Privy Councilor Gothein refers relate, I believe, to a different incident. Before

the Skagerrak fight took place, there was a fight between cruisers—perhaps Admiral Koch may know the date—between large cruisers both on the English side and on our side, when the weather was abnormally clear, as clear as it is but seldom known to be in the North Sea. When this contact was made, there was an exchange of gunfire at distances of which we in the German Navy had scarcely ever dreamed, up to that time, and I believe that this is true so far as the British Navy is concerned. In any event, the result was that, partly on account of the ports in the armored turrets, and partly due to the mounting of our batteries, our range was less than that of the English. That is a fact which I admitted at that time.

The CHAIRMAN: This would seem to close these points of inquiry.

I shall now ask Admiral Koch to make a further connected statement and, in doing so, to continue your testimony given at the last session. Speaking generally, your remarks will, in the main, probably center about the reply to the question as to what it was that justified the view of the naval authorities that an unrestricted U-boat war launched on the 1st of February must result, after the expiration of some five months, in making England ready for peace. So that it will be, generally speaking, necessary to give us once more, to the extent that it has not yet been done, the number of the available U-boats, the amount of tonnage sunk, and, finally, quite a general statement with regard to the fighting capacity of the U-boats.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I must, then, begin by recapitulating the general trend of thought expressed by me in my former remarks. I had started by pointing out the situation in which Germany found herself as the result of the hunger blockade initiated by England, and how Germany had, in the U-boat weapon, the only means for striking perhaps an annihilating blow against the carrier of the whole economic life of England, to wit, its shipping tonnage. I then gave a description of the U-boat, setting out the manner in which it could be used, placing particular emphasis on the fact that it was not possible to differentiate in the treatment of enemies and neutrals. We could lay the axe to the root of British overlordship of the seas. The use of this instrument of warfare was, however, dependent upon the measure of military necessity and was to be, besides, determined by the importance placed upon the maintenance of the relations existing with neutral Powers. I then stated in detail the reasons which induced the Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Admiral v. Holtzendorff, to plan the launching of the U-boat war either in the fall of 1916 or the spring of 1917. I went into the matter of the investigations made with regard to the results to be expected both from the military point of view and in respect to the influence of these results upon the economic life of England. I further stated that Admiral v. Holtzendorff became convinced, as the result of these considerations, that it was in accordance with his duty to announce the fact that the U-boat war would force England to accept a peace within five or six months; but that,

hand in hand with these military and economic results which were to follow, we must bring about such a moral effect in England as to leave no doubt in the English mind as to the capacity of Germany to hold out, both from the military and the moral points of view.

The hoped-for result of the U-boat war did not come about. Speaking from a purely military standpoint, the expectations were more than met, and we have not been able to show that the memorial was wrong, since the bases for such demonstration were lacking. I had come up to this point in the course of my remarks. And by reading a statement made by Admiral Sims to the effect that England was in a dangerous situation as the result of only three months of U-boat war, I substantiated my statements. In the following months, the results of the U-boat war remained practically the same, over 600,000 tons, due in the main to the excellent leadership and spirit of self-sacrifice on the part of the personnel. It is true that the enemy had made advances in their methods of defense, and that the activities of the U-boats were greatly interfered with as the result; but, on the other hand, we did not suffer great losses during this period.

The CHAIRMAN: You mean during the five months, do you not? You are referring only to those five months subsequent to the 1st of February?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Certainly, to these five months. But over and beyond this period, the losses were not great either. The increase in losses did not set in until a later date. We can not establish the fact that there was a falling-short in the working program of the fleet, and we must seek for the cause and find it in other fields. It is possible that the British, by the employment of the powerful means at their disposal, forced neutral shipping into their service to a material extent and in this way filled in some of the gaps in their tonnage.

Gentlemen, I am here under oath and am to fail to reveal nothing which is material to the issue. It was not the purpose of the U-boat war to starve England, as many have erroneously assumed to be the case; the purpose of the war was to inflict such losses upon British tonnage that England would be brought to the point of saying: "It is better for us to make peace now, since time is now working against us." The term, to force England to her knees by means of the U-boat war, was not coined in the Admiralty Staff, as I have already stated. Rather was it the purpose to convince England, as a result of the U-boat war, that Germany was now in a position to hold out longer than she, and that Germany intended to do so.

As we have seen from Admiral Sims' statement, the U-boats were at that time in a very fair way of convincing England that she was no longer in a position to endure their pressure.

But to convince England that Germany was able to hold out for a long time and intended to do so, was not a matter which had to do with the Navy alone, but from the military standpoint was the Army's affair as

well, and was the task which devolved upon all Germans and faced us in all other ways. How the Supreme High Command of the Army met the obligations of this task in the spring and summer of 1917, we all know, and we look upon their performance with admiration. But it certainly was a fatality that, just at the time when the U-boat was striking hard at the nerves of the great sea Power, at the time when the shortage in England's cargo space had reached such a height that, as the Imperial Chancellor believed and stated here under oath, the possibilities of negotiation were actually in the process of development, at a time when, as our former Ambassador in Vienna, Count Wedel, states in his article published in the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, Lloyd George and Ribot were already planning to go to Rome in order to confer with their Italian colleague about the question of a peace of understanding—it was a fatality, I say, that an unhappy chance placed in the hands of the Entente that dispatch of Count Czernin's to the then Emperor of Austria, painted in absolutely gloomy colors, which caused the official circles of the Entente to raise their heads again in joyful anticipation. It was believed, as a result of this report, that Austria, and, perhaps, even Germany, were standing at the brink of a collapse. It was believed that victory was assured the Entente and, on this account, the idea of a peace of understanding was definitely discarded.

If, a short time after such a preparation of the Entente, a new peace move had been set in motion by that branch of the government which expresses the people's will, I can not imagine that, by means of such a peace announcement at a time when the military activities of the U-boat were still in full swing against the shipping tonnage of England, any other effect would have been brought about than that which followed the peace proposal of the allied monarchs in the preceding December. The power of resistance of our enemies was given a mighty impetus thereby and, in their eyes, we were already lying prostrate upon the ground. I would like to bring this to your attention, both because it expresses my firm conviction and because it is material to the point at issue here, namely, the rendering of a judgment as to the results of the U-boat war. The U-boat war justified all expectations, both in efficiency and in results. It was not a scatter-brained undertaking, it was no win-all lose-all game. If, at the end of the period at which the result was expected to take place, Germany gave her enemies reason to expect that our capacity for resistance was diminishing, then the inference which, in my opinion, should be drawn is that this instrument of warfare should have been brought into play at an earlier date; for, when faced with the ever-increasing methods of defense, and exerting their efforts to the utmost as they were, the U-boats were no longer in a position to inflict such wounds upon the enemy as to have him wonder whether, after all, he was more capable of continued resistance than Germany.

The CHAIRMAN: Colonel v. Mertz, the representative of the War Depart-

ment, asks to be given the opportunity of making a statement which is directly connected with the present point at issue.

COLONEL V. MERTZ: I have not been sworn, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: You will speak in your capacity as representative of the War Department and hence as representative of the government.

COLONEL V. MERTZ: Gentlemen, yesterday a statement of Admiral Sims contained in his journal was read here, dealing with the effect of the U-boats. Minister of State Dr. David raised a doubt as to whether Sims—I might almost say—stated the actual facts, or whether he colored these facts for political reasons. I can characterize this statement of Minister of State Dr. David's as unqualifiedly valid if, in so doing, I can call attention to the fact that Sims was not publishing the substance of a report, but the contents of a journal. That is essentially different.

And then a speech of Churchill's was read, and on this occasion, too, the doubt was raised as to whether Churchill merely spoke formally, or, shall we say, did not speak altogether as a patriot. Gentlemen, it was really the fact that, in the summer of 1917, we of the Supreme High Command of the Army had an absolutely definite and clear reason to believe that the U-boat war was having its effect. That this matter was not announced by the Navy is probably due to the fact that all these communications have disappeared in the records and are slumbering there. Whether these records have been as carefully examined as, in my opinion, it would be absolutely necessary in order to clear up this question, I very much doubt. In those days I took a certain part in this matter. One day, so far as I recollect, in June, 1917, I received a wireless message. This message was caught between Rome and St. Petersburg. Apparently the Foreign Office in Rome was proceeding on the theory, which was also adopted by other foreign offices, that we were not able to decipher ciphered dispatches. Gentlemen, ever since November of 1914, so far as I know—for at that time I was personally employed in this field—we were able to decipher all the British wireless messages. We had at all times a perfectly clear idea of what the British were sending by wireless. And so, little by little, we came to have a complete picture of the ciphers which were used between the enemy governments. Why they used wireless between Rome and St. Petersburg and did not telegraph by the perfectly safe cable method, I do not know. Well, this wireless was received by me, and the clear and positive statement contained therein was that the question of food supply in England had become so acute as the result of the devastating effect of the U-boat war that they would probably be obliged at least to limit the extent of the Saloniki project, if not to desist therefrom altogether. It was necessary to withdraw troops from there. But the significance of this, gentlemen, at once becomes clear to you. To give up the Saloniki project was to hand over Greece to us. If Greece were handed over to us, we would be able to

establish our U-boat points of support to the south of Greece and to make it impossible for England to engage in any traffic in the Mediterranean. By so doing, the British expedition to Syria would fall to the ground. Our military situation would in this way be relieved of a tremendous burden. How great this relief would have been, is made evident by Bulgaria's collapse in September, 1918. The further course of events on the Macedonian front was, so far as I recollect, as follows. Italy had lodged her objection against limiting the extent of the Saloniki undertaking, or against giving it up in any way. And she was right, naturally. For she was apprehensive about her position in Albania and worried about her situation in Valona. Italy knew perfectly well that, if the Saloniki undertaking were given up, Greece would simply fall into the hands of the Central Powers.

Now, it is interesting to follow along, step by step, I might say, and see how the bad situation improved. From the impressions which we have received by this time, the supplying of the Saloniki undertaking with the necessary foodstuffs appears to have been made possible by the fact that the British commandeered the entire wheat crop of the Greeks in Thessaly for their army, regardless of consequences. Whether Greece starved or not was a matter which gave England no concern; its army was fed. In this way, the first danger was avoided. Then it appears that, little by little, the English succeeded, by establishing communications by way of Brindisi and Santa Quaranta, to again put the Saloniki undertaking on a sound footing.

And further, gentlemen. I remember—and I do not believe that I am mistaken—that it was in these summer months that I got the information by listening in on the telephone wires at the Macedonian front, that the British batteries would have to be extraordinarily careful in the use of their ammunition. I believe that it was an order which was sent to an artillery observation point, an order which we picked up with our listening-in apparatus. This order stated that the requests for ammunition should be limited, for it was no longer possible to continue to furnish ammunition to the extent to which it had been done up to that time. So that the Supreme High Command of the Army got the impression at that time that the U-boat war was undoubtedly having a very decided effect; and it was at this juncture that I talked the matter over repeatedly with General Ludendorff, from every point of view. I remember that I personally drew up a telegram to General Scheckoff, in which it was stated that he should at once start reconnoitering in force, in order to find out whether troops were being withdrawn and whether or not the enemy ammunition was really giving out, little by little. The Supreme High Command of the Bulgarian Army did nothing in the matter, for reasons which I can not state here. At that time, we again deliberated as to whether it would not be possible to find out what the exact situation was by making an attack in force—whether, per-

haps, it might not even be possible to make the Entente give up the Saloniki undertaking by force of arms at this extremely ticklish moment. We were obliged, however, to refrain from doing this for reasons which are not at all essential for the purposes of this hearing.

That was the picture which was before the eyes of the Supreme High Command of the Army in June. I can not definitely state at the present moment where the telegrams in question are to be found. I should have to have the records in the government archives thoroughly searched. It is probable that they are there.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: So far as concerns what has been said with regard to Admiral Sims' journal, the representative of the Minister of War probably misunderstood me yesterday. I stated that it was probable that the British authorities, Jellicoe and those leaders who had talked with Sims, had every reason to paint the effect of the U-boat war in the darkest possible colors in order to make a great impression upon the United States, so that it would exert all its efforts toward coming to the help of the Entente with all its resources as speedily as possible. That was the meaning of my remarks.

And then, the representative of the War Department proceeded to show that, as a matter of fact, the U-boat war had been so very effective as to bring the Allies to the point of considering that they might have to give up the Saloniki project. I believe that, on the other hand, we can assert that it was not effective enough to make the Entente really give up the Saloniki project. And that was the decisive thing. The Entente stuck to this "check to the king" which it had announced at Saloniki, until the moment came when it was made possible, from the military standpoint, to cut the artery to Constantinople and to tumble our entire eastern policy into ruins.

And Admiral Koch, too, developed the point that, as a matter of fact, the U-boat war was so effective that its end and aim, which was to make England ready to accept a peace of understanding, would have been reached had it not been for the fact that, in July, 1917, the Entente became convinced that the Central Powers could go no further, and that, for this reason, they had forsaken their idea of a peace of understanding and had continued with the war. That for this, the resolution of the Reichstag was to blame. That, therefore, the Reichstag had, in a certain way, prevented the Entente from being brought to its knees by means of the U-boat war.

I can not understand this logic. And therefore I should like to have it explained by further questions addressed to the Admiral. If England actually came to the point of saying to herself: "The U-boats are tearing at my very existence to such an extent that I can no longer hold out, that I must come to the point of making peace, or else I am done for," would we not, as a matter of psychology, have to reach this conclusion: that the English would have used this golden bridge which we built for them in order

that they might escape from their dilemma rather than to go down in defeat? (Laughter and commotion.) I believe that that is not far from the mark.

But Admiral Koch, as we see, draws the opposite conclusion: that it was on account of the peace resolution that they did not use this golden bridge. But under these conditions, what was the fate of the British bound to be? According to Admiral Koch, they had been brought by the U-boats to the point of recognizing the fact that they could do no more. In this case, the next step must necessarily have been a collapse. For the peace of understanding did not materialize. That must be the real logic of the situation. The resolution with regard to the peace of understanding by no means stopped the U-boat war; on the contrary, it was stated in the resolution that we would continue the fight with all the means at our command until we brought about this peace of understanding. And the fact is that we continued to fight, and continued to do so with all the means at our command. So that the truth is that the British were not forced to their knees, in spite of the fact that we did continue to fight. Consequently, the conclusion which he draws must be wrong. As a matter of fact, we did not bring the British to the point where they were willing to make peace; we were not able to prevent the Entente from getting the ammunition which it required for its great offensives in the west; and we did not bring the British to the point of starvation, although we continued the U-boat war for more than a year; we did not bring about their collapse; and we did not prevent the United States, with its enormous resources, from finally entering the theater of war on the west. This being so, it seems to me that his conclusion that, as early as July, 1917, we had actually succeeded in bringing the British to the point where they themselves realized that they could do no more, that they were being smashed by the U-boat war—this being so, I say, it seems to me that his conclusion is absolutely erroneous.

The CHAIRMAN: The statements of Minister of State Dr. David all take it for granted that the Admiral, on his part, has said: "England—that was our end and aim—must be forced to her knees in five months." But, so far as I can sum up the statements of Admiral Koch, that is not the case. But I believe that you (to witness Admiral Koch) are correctly understood as having said that the only point was to have the British admit, after five months had passed, that it was a bad business for them and that they would not continue to carry it on.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: That is the important point, that is the end and aim which you had in mind, namely, that the British should, at the end, consider from a purely business standpoint the question, whether they were for peace or against it.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Certainly.

The CHAIRMAN: Therefore I believe that, by confirming my question, you

at the same time have given the reply which Minister of State Dr. David wished you to give.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Or would you care to make further statements in this connection?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No, that is my absolute conviction on this point.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: We, too, took the view that the British would, by the end of July, have been brought to the point of saying: "We shall not keep this business up, because we *can not* keep it up any longer." But they did keep it up, and they have given us ample proof that they *could* continue to keep it up for a much longer period. Does the Admiral admit this?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Certainly, but how did they come to do so? That is what I have just been talking about, how they happened to do so. If we had shown that we were strong and that we were willing to hold out with everything at our command—(Very true!)—then we, too, would have come through. (Very true!)

The CHAIRMAN: I shall again ask those present to refrain from any indications of approval or disapproval.

Secretary of State DR. DAVID: But the English did see that we were willing to hold out. We did hold out.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No, they did not see that. That is exactly the point. They learned that our allies were no longer able to hold out. How? In this way. By coming into possession of reports which were intended for others. They were bound to see that, as a matter of fact, if they held out, in the end they would finally come to the point of exhausting us, a thing which they finally succeeded in doing.

Minister of State DR. DAVID: Of course, it would have been possible for the British to have reached the false conclusion as the result of these reports, that we and our allies could hold out no longer. But the course of events was bound to result in a change of this point of view, for what they actually did see was that we were able to hold out for another whole year. And if they themselves had not been able to hold out, if the U-boats had actually been able to bring about this result, then they certainly must have been obliged to give in, in view of the fact that we actually did succeed in holding out for another year. So that I am not yet in a position to understand this logic.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Admiral Koch stated that the purely military results expected of the U-boat war, at least during the first five months, had been exceeded. And in this connection, no doubt on this point was ever entertained by those who opposed the unrestricted U-boat war. Does your Excellency know that I prophesied in the budget committee that the amount

of tonnage which would be sunk in the first month would be far greater than the 600,000 tons? But the question was, what permanent result would be reached and whether it would be sufficient to bring England to the point of calling a halt.

It would be very desirable if we could have before us the exact number of the sinkings by months during the entire course of the war from February, on. And the period preceding is of importance, too. According to my recollection, 435,000 tons were sunk in January, 1917, that is, in the last month of the war on commerce. These figures naturally increased materially with the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war, but probably because there were more U-boats sent to the front in February than was the case in January.

I should further like to have a statement as to whether the result was not bound to increase with the increasing hours of daylight during the following months. Attention has repeatedly been called to the fact that it was hardly possible to sink a ship at night, since the U-boats could not see sufficiently clearly under those conditions, although this was not necessarily so in all cases. But it was, of course, a matter of greater difficulty during the long winter nights than it was during the summer nights.

Now, it has been stated further that during the first five months, and beyond the termination of that period, we suffered no great losses in U-boats. I should request that in this case, too, we should be given the figures of the losses which occurred month by month, but that we should not terminate the list with July, but should carry it on into the succeeding months. So far as I recollect—I ask for information on the subject, however—the months of August and September were particularly unfavorable to us. I believe that in July or August we probably lost twelve U-boats. I should like to be informed as to whether this number is correct.

At the same time, I should like information as to what increases took place in the number of U-boats which were ready for the front at this time, a statement of these increases from month to month, and also to be informed as to how these figures compare with those of the new U-boats which, it was stated, were to form part of that increase. According to my recollection, the actual numbers were notably less than the increases which were promised. Is it true that this is mainly due to the fact that the shipyards were forced to make deliveries within periods of time which were altogether too short? It was at that time stated in the budget committee that it was quite impossible for the shipyards to deliver the boats within the time that they were forced to promise that deliveries would be made, because these delivery periods were so calculated that, if a series of boats had been contracted for and the last U-boat was completed in full accordance with specifications, and duly delivered—let us say in nine months time—then, I say, not only was a shorter time for delivery for every boat made a

condition of the contract for the next series, but, from the outset, shorter delivery periods were insisted upon for boats of later types and materially greater in size, so that this whole calculation must, from the outset, have been erroneous.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to ask whether Captain Bartenbach who, we were told, could give us detailed information with regard to all these questions, has already come. You were going to notify him, Admiral v. Bülow.

REAR ADMIRAL V. BÜLOW: Captain Bartenbach is here.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps we had better have you step over here at once, Captain Bartenbach, in order that you may take part in the hearing at a moment's notice.

(Witness Captain Bartenbach takes his seat at the witnesses' table.)

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: A complexity of questions has been put to me. It is impossible for me to answer these questions. Formerly, when I was acting Chief of the Admiralty Staff, I had all this material at my fingers' ends. It follows that the figures which I have been asked for will be found in the records. I do not know where the records are. I have already stated that the Admiralty Staff is broken up. They are somewhere, they must be in the Admiralty, and they can be brought from there; but I can not bring them.

I have, however, just been given this memorandum which contains a list of the U-boats. I can not answer under oath for the correctness of these figures. The memorandum, however, has been placed at my disposal by the Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Period	U-boats at the front	Sinkings (in tons)	U-boat losses
In February.....	103	781,500	2
In March.....	121	885,000	6
In April.....	124	1,091,000	2
In May.....	128	869,000	7
In June.....	131	1,016,000	3
In July.....	130	811,000	7
In August.....	123	808,000	4
In September.....	132	872,000	9
In October.....	134	874,000	9

I can say, generally speaking, that the efficiency of the U-boats certainly increased with increasing hours of daylight. For the rest, the increase in U-boats during the individual months is to be seen from the lists which have been read. Captain Bartenbach may, perhaps, be able to give individual details in the subject matter.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe that we can do that later, for at the present moment it is not, in my opinion, part of the matter before us. I would refrain from doing so at this time.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Captain Bartenbach will, perhaps, be able to make it clear that it was not so much a question of the number of U-boats as it was a question of the possibilities afforded for making the U-boat work effective. Captain Bartenbach has always had to do with U-boats; he himself has been a U-boat commander and was later Chief of Flotilla in Flanders and, consequently, is competent to give any kind of information on the subject.

The CHAIRMAN: With regard to their capacity for action? With regard to the question as to how often these boats can leave port, as to how often they can enter upon their field of effectiveness? That is a question which we shall have to have answered soon. I should therefore like to administer the oath to Corvette Captain Bartenbach as a witness in these matters.

(Witness Captain Bartenbach steps forward.)

May I ask your Christian name?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: Karl.

The CHAIRMAN: Your age?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: 38 years.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to take the oath with the religious formula, or without it?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: With the religious formula.

(Witness Captain Bartenbach is administered the witnesses' oath.)

The CHAIRMAN: I will, then, ask you to inform us with regard to the capacity of the U-boat for action, as the question just came up at the close of the preceding remarks.

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: The fighting capacity of the U-boat is, naturally, not entirely dependent upon the U-boats themselves, but upon the antagonist in the theater of war, that is, the enemy. The less the opposition, the greater the results obtained. Counter-measures were at their lowest ebb when the war commenced, and gradually began to develop, month by month and year by year, proportionally to the extent to which the opponent learned the U-boat game. Counter-measures were so insignificant in the year 1915 that a U-boat at sea could go to work exactly the way that a pike goes to work in a carp pond. There was hardly any element which could really seriously threaten the safety of the U-boat if it was only careful to submerge in time. No advance of a material kind was registered in the course of the year 1915. At the commencement of the year 1916, likewise, the situation at sea was comparatively simple and there was still comparatively little offered in the way of counter-measures. There was one feature which, in particular, had not yet come to light, but which later in the course of the war played a very devastating part, so far as the boats were concerned. That was the mine peril. In the years 1915 and 1916, English mine material was so scant that the U-boats were able to discover no serious danger so far as the British mines were concerned. Let me give an example. At ebb

tide, the British mines floated by the thousand on the surface, so that at any time the presence and extent of the mine field could be detected by a flier or by the U-boat itself at this stage of the tide. And the mines could be shot down with rifle fire by rows, a thing which occurred in hundreds and thousands of cases.

The second danger which, up to that time, had not been developed to any extent, was the danger from the enemy U-boats themselves. By a vigorous use of their U-boats against our U-boats, the British destroyed a great number of boats, in part *en route* and in part by cooperating against U-boat attacks. The English boats were, at the beginning of the war, naturally inexperienced in the matter of attacking enemy U-boats; and besides this, the number of the British U-boats was comparatively small, when compared with the tremendous amount of sea which they had to cover.

The third counter-measure was danger from fliers. This danger developed to a particularly marked extent in the course of the year 1918. And you could find enemy fliers away off at sea, and not only in proximity to the coast. As is generally known, the flier weapon was only developed in England during the course of the war, and in the year 1915 and 1916, the English fliers out at sea were very little to be feared. It is true that they were to be seen in the vicinity of the enemy coasts, but they had not as yet been trained in the attack of U-boats; they did not see the U-boats in time, and they were particularly poor in bomb-throwing.

The next counter-measure, which was the greatest detriment to the efficiency of the U-boat in action, was the arming of merchant ships. It was obvious that as long as the steamers had no guns, they were absolutely at the mercy of the smallest U-boat, which carried only a 5-centimeter gun. If the boat could only, in some way, come to the surface in the vicinity of the steamer, since not even a great steamer could afford to be permanently disabled and at the same time lose some of those on board, it had, as a matter of fact, to surrender right away. The arming of steamers was carried out systematically by the British. Even at the beginning of the war, there were armed steamers, since the British had already given some thought to this question before the war. This arming, however, could only be done little by little, according to the progress made in the way of mounting the pieces on the steamers and providing the guns themselves, and this was a comparatively slow piece of work. It so happened that the industries of England were at the same time under the necessity of turning out artillery sufficient for a very large army, and that, in particular, the kind of piece which was adapted for purposes of defense against U-boats, that is to say, light pieces of 10 centimeters caliber and less, were used to an enormous extent by the field army in the main conflict. This arming of steamers was carried out to such an extent that, finally, at the close of the year 1917 and in the year 1918, it was practically no longer possible to dispatch

steamers unsubmerged, because the steamer would open fire under all circumstances.

Then another counter-measure was adopted by our opponents which was developed only at a comparatively late period and which, to all intents and purposes, did not exist in 1916, since at that time it had not passed from the experimental stage. That was the listening apparatus. Our enemies—and we too have developed the listening apparatus—our enemies developed it to a great extent; as a matter of fact, towards the end of the war they could hear U-boats at practically every point in the English Channel. The enemy had scattered all over the coast listening stations which heard and discovered the presence of the U-boats even when they were submerged and, in so doing, sounded the alarm to the other agencies on guard. This particular mode of defense had positively not reached any practical point of development in the year 1915, and in 1916 was in such an elemental stage as not to constitute a defensive measure. These were the chief measures which were directed against the fighting capacity of the U-boats by those of our enemies facing us upon the sea.

The CHAIRMAN: Was it impossible to foresee the full result of the development of these measures of defense, so that they could be taken into consideration in the course of calculating the probable effect of the unrestricted U-boat war within a definite period of time?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: It goes without saying that we had to include in our calculations, and did include, the circumstance that the methods of defense which our opponents would employ would increase, and that they would perfect themselves in matters of defense to the same extent that we ourselves had done in our own case. The second point upon which the capacity of the U-boat in action depends, is the technical output efficiency of the repair docks. It is clear that a U-boat which with its comparatively delicate machinery has been working out at sea, let us say, for two weeks, needs at the end of this time what we in the Navy call an overhauling, an inspection of all its technical parts. A trained personnel is necessary for this purpose, and moreover, the crew which has, up to the present time, handled the boat, must cooperate with them; besides this, highly skilled workmen for making technical mechanical repairs must be called upon. The efficiency of these centers of technical repairs was, at least in 1915 and 1916, extraordinarily good so far as the work turned out by the mechanics was concerned. But it was quite evident that, in view of the shortage in materials, which was coming about little by little—raw materials could no longer be used to the extent that they had been, substitutes had to be introduced and repairs were less to be depended upon, and it was natural that the working efficiency of the workmen should diminish as the result of a decrease of nourishment—it resulted that we could, to be sure, still calculate upon comparatively brief periods allowed for repairs in the year

1916 just as in the year 1915; but as time went on, it became noticeable that the work which was done in repairing the boats dropped off very generally in efficiency, particularly in the shipyards at home. It was impossible for the performance in this regard to be what it had been in the years 1915 and 1916. It was, above all, necessary to economize, and night-shifts had to be done away with; a halt had to be called on working overtime, and the men had to lay off on Sundays.

All these features proved very plainly that the height of efficiency of the U-boat could be reached only by putting in the U-boats and using them to the greatest advantage at the earliest possible moment and before conditions, as a whole, had grown worse, so far as we were concerned, and that—and I consider it today much more important—this efficiency could be obtained by using a smaller number of U-boats, all of which could be used to complete advantage against an opponent who was not so used to the game and not so well prepared, rather than by using a greater number under less favorable circumstances.

The results to be obtained from a greater number opposed to more experienced opponents, were bound to be, in the long run, less than the results which we were able to obtain with a still smaller number in the preceding years.

The CHAIRMAN: Did any intention on the part of the workmen on the docks to slack up in their work, manifest itself in any way?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: No, I can not state that as a fact.

The CHAIRMAN: Did we have to deal with cases of treachery, or were there instances of treasonable dealings? Were U-boat secrets given away?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: No, we can not say that.

The CHAIRMAN: Then I shall ask you to proceed, or have you finished with your statements?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: I might answer definite questions put to me.

Delegate GOTHEIN: What is the situation with regard to the proof of sunken tonnage? This tonnage could scarcely be proven by the estimates which the commanders of the U-boats entered in their books. Did not imagination play a large part in this matter? The results which now appear to be the case, coming from British and other enemy sources, touching the amount of the tonnage which was sunk, are, after all, far behind the amounts which have been given us by the reports of the U-boat commanders.

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: Of course, we took into consideration from the outset the psychological factor resulting from the circumstance that the commander would be loath to return to his home port having accomplished too little. I will tell you how we went about it when a commander returned. When he reported to me, my first question was: "How many steamers; how many tons?" Thereupon, he would give me his

figures, and I would ask him: "How can you prove that? I mean, what was the length of the steamer, according to your estimate? What was her breadth? Did you see her head-on? Did you see the number of the boats? Did the steamer have superstructures? How many smokestacks did she have, and what was the number of the crew that you saw?" This last point, in particular, gives, as experience will show, a fairly good picture of the size of the steamer, if the steamer involved was a freighter. The commander had to answer these questions. Then we would say to him that we were willing to believe that he put such-and-such an estimate upon the steamer. The commanders were careful from the outset, because they knew that they had to go through this cross-examination. And in this connection, let me say something more. For several years, it was possible for us, by listening in on the enemy wireless, which we could hear perfectly clearly and which we could also decipher, before the U-boat commander ever reached home, to know exactly what steamer he had sunk, because either the steamer itself sent out this wireless call for help or enemy wireless from their stations on land made the announcement that "Here are people saved from the steamer so-and-so," or "Where is steamer so-and-so?" From these wireless messages, we knew pretty exactly what were the names of the steamers. In all the cases in which we could not get with sufficient clearness the details which I have mentioned, we made an arbitrary cut of 10 per cent on the estimates of the commander, and, in order to assure ourselves against excessive estimates, we listed each steamer which was unknown to us and whose name it was absolutely impossible for us to determine, especially all steamers which ran upon mines, at 1,000 tons. That is certainly a figure which was far smaller than that of the average steamer which ran against mines. And; besides this, it came to be thought advisable, in order to correct errors in the estimates of commanders, to observe a figure to represent the average tonnage of the steamers which we knew plied in a given theater of war. So that it was an extraordinary circumstance to have an unknown steamer of 10 or 15 thousand tons in the English Channel. Generally speaking, the steamers which plied there were smaller. And, on the other hand, we could not, as a rule, estimate a steamer traveling the courses of the Mediterranean as being under from 4 to 5 thousand tons. So that we deliberately endeavored to have our estimates as modest as possible; for it was quite clear to us that we would make laughing stocks of ourselves if we constantly announced the sinkings in large figures which the enemy would later fail to confirm.

Now, as to what the gentleman asking the question has just said, to the effect that the British are supposed to have made, and particularly are still making estimates materially different from ours, this does not quite represent the facts. At the beginning of the armistice, as I was told by one of my U-boat commanders a few days ago, English officers and the head of the

British commission of control with whom he had conferred in great detail with regard to this question, told him plainly and unqualifiedly that the exact figures of the British Admiralty had shown that the U-boat commanders had only erred in the matter of their estimates, on an average, to the extent of from 7 to 10 per cent. I should like to state that whoever knows anything about ships will admit that an error of only 10 per cent is most unusually good. Even an old and experienced seaman is likely to err to the extent of estimating a steamer of 3,000 tons at about 3,500 or 3,600.

I should like to add another point. We had on all our U-boats a very large number of people who had followed the sea and a great number of reserve officers who had spent their lives on steamers and, in many cases, were personally acquainted with the steamers. All the statements of these men were conscientiously made use of in efforts to identify steamers. The commanders deemed it of great importance to call such a man up on deck and to show him the steamer and to say to him, "Do you know that steamer?" And then he would say: "It is a steamer of such-and-such a line; I have already traveled on her, and she is of so-many tons." And then we were glad to get such information.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: These figures, reached in this way and sent to us in reports from Flanders and from all points, were compiled in a particular bureau of the Admiralty Staff. So that we were not only by no means satisfied to take these figures without further proof, but a fully equipped bureau handled reports of the enemy, whenever they were available, or reports which came in to us from our information service, from other foreign newspapers, or from any other source whatsoever, and conducted detailed investigations for the purpose of ascertaining whether steamers were properly identified and whether they could be listed as an enemy loss. The investigation was kept up until the steamers in question were identified; they were then entered, and it was then for the first time that we added all together and announced the figures.

Delegate GOTHEIN: At this point of time, over a year since hostilities have ceased and when the British and our other enemies have, therefore, no particular interest in misrepresenting figures, the figures of the losses sustained by torpedoes, that is, by means of U-boats, which the British, French and Italians have submitted are materially less than those of the tonnage sunk according to the reports which were furnished us. What is the explanation of that? There is no question here of any differences of from 7 to 10 per cent, which of course would be easily understood; but it is a question of very much greater differences going as high, according to my knowledge, as around 33½ per cent.

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: This is to be explained in this way, that, in calculating the tonnage of sunken merchant ships, the British have left out of the reckoning all those ships which were acting as auxiliary cruisers and

were in the service of the Admiralty. This is a very important point. For instance, all the coal transports which were in the service of the Admiralty and which we, naturally, would look upon from the outside as ordinary steamers and list as such, were not included. Moreover, the British naturally did not include in their list of sunken merchant ships any of those vessels which were salvaged in a damaged condition and with regard to which we were justified and bound, in certain instances, to assume that they would never reach their home port—and this in spite of the fact that they remained missing for months. Moreover, they deducted all the ships which they succeeded in raising and in salvaging, ships which had run ashore on the coast in a sinking condition, and there were a good many of these; as a matter of fact, the British simply included that tonnage which consisted of purely private merchant shipping and which went to the bottom and was not raised again.

Delegate GOTHEIN: May I ask whether this refers merely to war time, or applies to the figures which have been published at the present time in England? For, in my opinion, the British have absolutely no reason to underestimate their combined loss, and not to include the coal transports, etc., which were rated as auxiliary cruisers of the Navy. For they certainly have an interest at this time in establishing the damage inflicted in its entirety.

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: Naturally, I can make no statement under oath in answer to this question in my capacity as an expert. But I might possibly state my personal view.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps his Excellency Helfferich has something to say on this point, as I note that he is ready to speak.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I may, perhaps, call your attention to the fact that the English Government published an exact statement some time ago. If my memory is exact as to the figures, it is announced in this statement that nearly 8 million tons were sunk, and that over 8 million were salvaged, making a total of about 16 million.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Including ships which ran into mines?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Including those which ran into mines, just as losses by mines were calculated by us. The 15 or 16 million tons are notably more than the number of tons of English shipping which our people announced had been sunk, so that the figures which are given here would seem to be thoroughly plausible.

REAR ADMIRAL V. BÜLOW: I would be very grateful if I might be given the figures which Delegate Gothein mentions. I do not understand what he means. It would be of use to us if we could obtain these figures and compare them with our own.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I recently read these figures in the newspapers, and so probably did his Excellency Helfferich. It was announced as coming from an English source, and gave the source, and is, therefore, in all probability

free from bias. It occurred to me that the number of ships which were lost, which were lost by running upon mines, was greater than those which were stated to have been lost in the course of torpedo attacks by U-boats.

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: If I have understood you correctly, according to these reports, the number of steamers which were sunk by contact with mines was notably greater than those which were torpedoed. That, of course, is absolutely out of the question. It is quite impossible. It can not be brought into agreement with the number of mines that were laid. The number of ships which were torpedoed must be far higher.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: During the first months of the U-boat war, when these high figures of sinkings were sent in, we always said that we would take into computation the losses in steamers which were reported to us, and the remainder, if there was any, would have to be assumed to have been sunk by contact with mines—a fact, of course, of which we could not be certain. If I am not mistaken, calculating on an average, there were over 100,000 tons, and often a still greater number of which we could not dispose, and from this we again deducted a certain percentage, and when, in May, the announcements were still not made, as long as the efficiency of the mines remained the same, we put down by way of estimate 100,000 tons as a loss by mines. When thereafter some of the mine U-boats failed to return, and activities in mine methods became distinctly less, we made another deduction and went down to 80,000 tons. This method of computation was absolutely dependable and such as only the conscientious German would have made. The Englishman would not have done it.

Delegate DR. COHN: Captain, I understand you to have expressed yourself as follows: During the first years of the war it was possible for you, by virtue of the control which you exercised over the enemy wireless, to determine the loss of a steamer before you received your report from your U-boat captain. Am I correct in this?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: Yes.

Delegate DR. COHN: How long did this possibility continue?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: We were not deprived of this possibility during the full extent of the war. But it will have to be said that, in the course of the year 1918, it became so difficult to decipher messages that, to a great extent, we were able to decipher the wireless messages only after a while and after great delay, and sometimes we were not able to decipher them at all. As a matter of fact, we did decipher these wireless messages up to the last day of the war. But our work was no longer as dependable as it had been, because, naturally, in the course of time, the British developed a very intricate system of cipher. At the initial period of the war, they sent everything in plain language by wireless, so that we got the enemy wireless messages every day in great numbers, and were able to read them for our own information without any further difficulty.

Delegate DR. COHN: One more question. In connection with that point of time with which we have to deal, that is, the first nine months of the year 1917—and Admiral Koch, too, has mentioned this period—the following is of material interest to me: What were the steps which characterized a U-boat attack? At what distance was it made? What did the U-boat do after delivering fire? I mean, of course, in the average case.

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: In this connection, we must distinguish between a surface attack and an attack under water. Mainly with the idea of saving ammunition, and because an attack by gunfire is much more simple and much more easy and, in many cases, much more practicable than is the attack by the torpedo, every U-boat sought to make a surface attack. This was done more or less along the following lines.

Let me point out first that of course this depended invariably on the region in which the U-boat happened to be. Let us assume that we are at a certain point where we can eliminate from our calculations the existence of any enemy auxiliary craft in the neighborhood. The U-boat sights a wreath of smoke, gets it in line, that is, gauges it and attempts to determine whether the steamer, which is still below the horizon and whose smoke is the only thing to be seen, is in such proximity as to permit him to overtake her. It can quickly determine whether it is going to the right or the left, or is approaching or receding. He then selects the course by the holding of which he will approach the steamer. If he succeeds in approaching and if the weather permits the use of his gun, he will order his gun crew into action. For reasons of personal safety and from the greatest distance possible, he will fire a warning shot at the steamer. If the steamer is innocent, it will stop right away; if it is not innocent, it will apparently pay no attention to it and allow the U-boat to come nearer. From this moment on, everything will depend upon what the steamer does. If it acts as a real non-combatant craft should act upon meeting the representative of a belligerent, it will stop and hoist the proper signal. Then the U-boat signals "All hands leave ship at once." The crew gets into the boats, the U-boat approaches the steamer and sinks the steamer either by shell-fire if the weather and the situation permit it, or has one or two of the crew lay bombs in the hold, or, if the weather is bad, the bombs are attached outside. The steamer is sunk and the U-boat proceeds on its way.

But if the steamer, after a short time, opens fire herself; that is, if there is to be an artillery duel, the U-boat will wait for a while to find out how the enemy shoots. As soon as the enemy's shots land in the vicinity of the boat, it must submerge at all hazards. Commanders are under the strictest orders to submerge at all hazards and do no more shooting, for the loss of a valuable U-boat against an ordinary merchant steamer does not pay. If the U-boat is so successful, as happened in many cases, as to put the steamer out of commission by a lucky shot, then the steamer is handled in exactly

the same way, except, to be sure, that the U-boat takes the precaution of submerging again and then approaching the steamer and examining it carefully to see whether there is not a concealed gun on board, as has happened in many cases. Thereupon, the steamer is torpedoed.

The attack under water is done in this way: First of all, the U-boat determines whether or not it is in close enough proximity to the steamer to reach it with its torpedo. To fire the torpedo, it is necessary to be ahead of the steamer, because the torpedo needs a certain time in which to complete its course and the steamer must cross the track which the torpedo will take. If the officer in command of the submarine concludes that the steamer is within reach, he dives, approaches it, fires his torpedo and awaits the result. If the steamer sinks, the next thing depends upon whether help appears on the scene or not. In any event, after firing his torpedo, he first waits until the steamer has sunk, then comes to the surface and attempts, by inquiries addressed to the crew in the ship's boats, to find out what steamer it is, what her cargo was, and what her destination was; then he goes on.

Delegate DR. COHN: At what distance is the steamer hailed? In this case, you will probably have to differentiate between clear weather and thick.

The CHAIRMAN: Is this question material here?

Delegate DR. COHN: It is of interest in connection with how certain the estimates are. That is why I am putting the question.

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: The signal to stop, in the shape of a shot, results in stopping the steamer, let us say in the average case, at a distance of from 5 to 6 thousand meters. But if the ship is held up for the purpose of forming an estimate—this steamer which is held up and which stops—why, you afterwards come alongside, and then you know the name and everything else.

Delegate DR. COHN: In view of the continued arming of steamers and providing them with better methods of defense by gunfire, did the number of underwater attacks increase in comparison with the surface methods?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: With the exception of the seat of war on the Mediterranean and the seat of war on the open ocean, the surface methods became practically impossible in the year 1917. From the end of 1917 up to the end of 1918, the only work done was done by means of torpedo fired without warning, because every steamer answered warnings which were given, by opening fire.

Delegate DR. COHN: So that, so far as this period of time was concerned, every possibility of making an estimate disappeared.

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: But you could see the steamer by means of the telescope.

Delegate DR. COHN: Could you get a complete view of her?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: You could see her just as well with the telescope as you could with the naked eye.

Delegate DR. COHN: And when the steamer was torpedoed under water, was the U-boat always ordered to wait and observe the effect?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: Why certainly, that is a matter of personal interest to the officer in command. He can always hear a hit, anyway. In many cases, the U-boat, if there were protecting ships—for the steamers were, to a great extent, convoyed—had to submerge at once to a great depth, because the destroyers, which followed the steamers at 50 meters, attacked the U-boats at once with depth bombs.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Admiral, we have heard the statements giving the enormous figures of tonnage sunk. How do you explain the fact that, in spite of it all, England was able to stand her ground, that is, that she continued to exist in spite of this enormous amount of sunken tonnage?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: In the Admiralty Staff we always reckoned on the possibility of overestimating the tonnage sunk, and only placed the amount at 600,000 tons, in order to be able to guarantee this amount with absolute certainty. You must realize that we are not doing an example in mathematics. If I simply had to multiply and divide, that would have been very lovely, but it would not have been possible. We could estimate this effect for the first five or six months. As a matter of fact, I stick to my assertion that the effect which we intended to bring about was brought about. We wanted to wear them down.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: You said, your Excellency, "to wear them down." I may ask, why "wear them down"?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: To make them ready to accept peace.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Ready to accept peace? I should like to know what kind of a peace they were to be made ready to accept? Do you believe that England was at that time so far below par as to have been willing to sacrifice Belgium in favor of Germany?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Mr. Recording Secretary, I am under no obligation to answer that question.

The CHAIRMAN: Nor does it seem to me that this question is called for, because the sacrifice of Belgium, in the sense that Belgium was to be given up for annexation, was never made a point of the negotiations and was never made the subject of discussion in the course of serious debates as to the nature of the peace which Germany would accept.

Delegate DR. COHN: I would like to say a word on the order of business. If we stick to the word "annexation" in the sense of incorporation into our national territory, it is possible that the Chairman is right. But if we consider the veiled form of annexation together with political, military, financial and economic penetration, together with assimilation in the matter of the railway system and in the promulgation of laws—and that was a subject of general discussion both in the government departments and in

parliament—then it was, as a matter of fact, just this form of disguised annexation against which England announced herself at every turn.

The CHAIRMAN: However that may be, it is a question which calls for the expression of an opinion on the part of the witness, whereas the business of the committee is to take the testimony of witnesses for the purpose of getting from them information with regard to facts only.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I am of the opinion that the question, whether a country is inclined to make peace, involves an expression of opinion. I should like to know what view the witness entertained with regard to the kind of peace toward which England was to be inclined. That was the purpose of the question.

I should like to put another question to his Excellency. Your Excellency commented upon the fact—in itself, it falls into a later period—that England had reached the stage where she was inclined toward peace, but that the publication of Count Czernin's report had put an end to this inclination. Do you believe, your Excellency, that without this report the Entente, by means of her thousand agents which she had in Austria, was not perfectly well informed with regard to the situation actually existing in Austria-Hungary, and that it was only the publication of the Czernin report, resulting from "indiscretion," that suddenly brought about this turn of affairs? I am putting this question to you on the assumption that, as a matter of fact, a readiness to make peace existed at that time, and that this inclination was brought to an end, an assumption for which, up to the present time, there is no justification.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I know nothing about it but can easily imagine it to be the case. But when I receive an official report dealing with these conditions, addressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to his Emperor, then, so far as I am concerned, these thousand other agents do not mean to me as much as this single report.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Is the witness aware of the fact that in the spring, nay, even in the winter of 1916, and in January and February as well, General v. Falkenhayn, who was then Chief of the Admiralty Staff, was of the opinion that, at best, our allies would only be able to hold out for the year 1916?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I can not make a statement under oath on that point.

The CHAIRMAN: Nor is that possible.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: If I knew it, of course I would say so.

The CHAIRMAN: That suffices. The question has been put to you, whether you knew that matters had gone so far, and the question has been answered by you in the negative. I should like to ask your Excellency the question, whether the assumption that a ruthless U-boat war would attain its objects within a comparatively short space of time, in any way affected

building activities, experiments looking toward the improvement of U-boat efficiency, or the taking advantage of such experiments, if they were actually found to be feasible, that is, to the extent that full use was not ultimately made of them because of the belief that the U-boat war was bound to come to an end within a short period of time by attaining its purpose of bringing England to the point where she would be inclined to accept peace. In order to express myself more briefly, did the assumption that the U-boat war would attain the objects for which it was launched, result in restricting construction activities?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Did it result in not applying improvements which could have been taken advantage of for the U-boats, etc., because to do so would have required a certain amount of time?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No, so far as I know, that was not the case.

The CHAIRMAN: I find here an article in the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* of yesterday, which I would like to have considered in the course of this discussion for no other reason than that it might well call for speculation on this point. It is there stated that a German business concern had approached the Navy Department in September, 1917, in order to take up a matter involving an improvement in U-boat construction. The reply given reads as follows:

The . . . submitted by the firm has been given a careful examination by this office. . . . The further development which would be necessary in connection herewith . . . would likewise call for the expenditure of an amount of time running into months, so that the result of the experiments could not, in all probability, be taken advantage of during the present war.

Naturally I can not expect that your Excellency will be able to give me a reply which has a bearing on this particular case. It would only throw a light upon the policy which was possibly maintained in the Navy Department in connection with the submission of improvements in matters of U-boat construction, and, in this connection, your Excellency can tell me whether we are to take the view that this article was erroneous.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: So far as the Admiralty Staff is concerned, we know nothing about it. It is possible that his Excellency v. Capelle can give us some information about it.

Witness v. CAPELLE: I have not been informed of those matters referred to in the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* nor of the special case referred to by the Chairman. I can simply point to the fact that we in the Navy Department were swamped with inventions. On one occasion, and for the purposes of the budget commission, I had the figures bearing on these inventions compiled, and I believe that the number reached was from 600 to 800.

The CHAIRMAN: If I may interrupt you, the matter before us involves an

invention concerning which the reply states that it has been made the subject of detailed examination, but that the further development which would be essential in this connection would call for the expenditure of time reaching into months, so that the benefit of the experiments would not be able to be taken advantage of during this war. This means that it was taken for granted, at the outset, that the war must soon come to an end, and that there was no further purpose served by continuing to work along the particular lines at that time; that, for that reason, the experiments could not be put to any account.

Witness v. CAPELLE: I do not recollect that I ever signed any such letter; such documents were not submitted to me.

The CHAIRMAN: Then this means that it is not possible for you to give any information with regard to this particular case?

Witness v. CAPELLE: May I ask who signed that?

The CHAIRMAN: That does not appear. It will, perhaps, be well for me to hand the paper over to your Excellency in order that an investigation may be made for the purpose of finding out whether any opportunity was let slip to actually take advantage of really valuable inventions during the U-boat war, and whether inventors were not discouraged by the fact that it was assumed by the authorities of the Navy that the U-boat war was bound to come to an end within a short period of time.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Is your Excellency aware of the fact that your predecessor in office, v. Tirpitz, is stated to have himself announced in January, 1915, that every U-boat which was completed after May, 1915, was of no interest to him?

Witness v. CAPELLE: No, I do not know that.

Delegate GOTHEIN: But this statement went the rounds of the press.

I should like to ask Captain Bartenbach the following question. He stated that we ought to have sent the U-boats in early, even though we had a smaller number of them, because it was not so much a matter of the numbers, but of the time at which this was done, and when the defensive measures had not reached such a process of development.

According to a statement which General Ludendorff makes in his war memoirs, Admiral v. Tirpitz is said to have been opposed to the U-boat war in February, 1915, because he considered that this would have been premature. When in the witness's opinion was the proper time for launching the U-boat war?

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: In Tirpitz's memoirs it is stated that, on the 27th of January, 1915, v. Tirpitz had a long interview with v. Bethmann-Hollweg and, in the course of this interview, had explained that the U-boat war could not be commenced at this time because of the absence of a sufficient number of U-boats; and that in any event, when the war was launched, experimental attacks not in full force should be made at first, and that the best

thing would be to launch these attacks at the mouth of the Thames, but not in full force; and it is stated, in so many words, that v. Tirpitz was dumfounded when, on February 4, a few days later, the U-boat war was announced, and announced by v. Bethmann-Hollweg at that; he states that Pohl and Bethmann-Hollweg had submitted the matter to His Majesty and had obtained the decision that the U-boat war should be launched. You can read that in Tirpitz's memoirs.

I have not called attention to this up to the present time, and I believe that there was no occasion to have this contradiction cleared up. There are a great number of discrepancies also in the reports covering February and March. I now call attention to the fact that this contradiction exists, and that later, when the U-boat war was launched, Tirpitz always took the view that it should be rigorously prosecuted; and that Tirpitz took the stand in the *Lusitania* case that we should not give in, and, again, that he took a similar stand in the case of the *Ancona*. Austria-Hungary sent a curt answer at first, and only submitted a second note which contained concessions, because persuaded to do so by Germany.

The CHAIRMAN: Privy Councilor Schaefer, I believe that we shall come to hear of this from v. Tirpitz himself. It will, of course, be necessary to take his testimony.

Delegate DR. SPAHN: At what time do you assume that the U-boats were so developed technically as to acquire the radius of action which we developed in the year 1917? Progress in U-boat construction came about, as you know, by degrees. Originally, the sphere of action was, of course, not so great as in the year 1917. Will you inform us as to when that point of development in U-boat construction was reached at which we could have conducted the U-boat war with full effect? Will you tell us whether this point of time had been reached by 1915, or in 1916 or only in 1917?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I can state that the radius of action, generally speaking, did not increase, that the U-boats of the 20th class already had a sufficient radius of action, and, in part, as a matter of fact, a greater radius than those boats which were built later. And this, again, was the case partly because certain U-boats were built for use on near-by war areas. It was precisely those boats of the 20th class which, primarily, were sent to the Mediterranean. These had the most extensive radius of action of the boats which we had at that time.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I had put the question, when, in the Captain's opinion, we should have commenced the U-boat war.

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: I am familiar with v. Tirpitz's opinion that the U-boat war of February was undertaken in too much of a hurry and too early. And I know what the reasons were in this instance. They were all based on purely technical grounds. In February of 1915, the little boats which were constructed for Flanders were not ready; they were

not ready until April, 1915. And then, too, some of the boats which had already been in construction in peace times, U-31 up to U-41, and which, up to that time, were our best and latest boats, were still in the stage of being tried out, that is to say, the crews had not become entirely familiar with the boats. I myself was of the opinion that the announcement which was made in February was made too early.

I should feel quite confident in saying that the date should have been set for the 1st or the 15th of April, 1915.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Can you state how many U-boats we had at that time?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: I can not give the number under oath. I estimate that it was around 30 boats.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Up to the present time, we have been given different numbers for the boats which were actually at the front. Our figures began: February, 1917, 123, etc. And here, too, I seem to see a difference in the opinions as to how many boats were ready for the front and how many were not. I should like to ask that Dr. Struve be called as a witness on this point, since the numbers are at such great variance from those which were submitted to us from various sources at the time these questions were taken up by the budget committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, but at present, let us finish with this inquiry. Dr. Struve's examination can take place later.

I should like to have one question answered, which as yet remains unanswered, namely, the question whether it was physically possible or impossible, at the close of January, that is, by January 29, to revoke the unrestricted U-boat war which had been launched. It will involve the determination of the fact of how many U-boats left port at that time, as to whether they left port in great numbers or in small numbers. It will further involve the determination of the question whether all U-boats were provided with service instructions touching the receipt of wireless messages which made it possible at that time to desist from their activities to the extent that these activities involved them in taking part in the unrestricted U-boat war; and other questions of this kind. Of course, I do not need to set all these things out in detail.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: It was naturally physically possible to send off a wireless message, an order of recall. The boats were provided, according to their class, with a good receiving station. And all the means for decoding secret telegrams were at their command. All that needed to be done was to send the order out to the world by wireless from one of the large stations, Nauen, Eilvese, or Wusterhausen. Of course, no absolute guarantee could be given that the telegram was received and was understood, since the confirmation of its receipt was an impossibility, and this on account of the lack of range of the sending apparatus and on account of the danger which

would result to the boats by bringing enemy defensive elements to the scene. But there were other circumstances, too, which practically assured the absence of receipt. For days at a time, and particularly at the hours when messages could be sent, the boats were kept under water; they were in no position to receive a wireless message. The impossibility of exposing the antennæ for the purpose of receiving messages, or of replacing the antennæ if they were carried away, is another reason. Moreover, the receiving station might not be absolutely in tune. And, finally, a failure in efficiency on the part of the personnel, and meteorological conditions likewise were shown, as a matter of experience, only too often, to be responsible for a failure to receive wireless messages. On account of this uncertainty of communication, it was an accepted principle that connection was established with U-boats only if it was absolutely essential; and even then it occurred only if we were lucky.

Let me give an example of this. Before the beginning of the U-boat war, the Foreign Office approached us with the request to permit the Dutch to have a considerable number of Dutch steamships off the west coast of England pass unmolested through the restricted area by a certain course to the westward. At first, on account of the uncertainty of the transmission of orders, we flatly denied the request to permit the trip to be made before a period of six weeks had passed, since it was only in this way that it could be made in absolute security. It was only in this way that the boats at sea would be only those which were provided with the new orders in writing. On account of the insistence of the Dutch, and then, too, for political reasons, we finally reached the point of agreeing that the steamers might come through after a few days had passed. But I laid special stress upon the point, in my communication at that time, that the ships would sail at their own risk, since we could only offer them a qualified security as the result of transmitting the orders by wireless. The particular order was sent day in and day out at the sending hours of the morning and the afternoon, in order that we might do everything possible for us to do; for it was then a very essential matter for us to have the Dutch ships molested as little as possible. The result of our concession was this, that a certain number of boats—how many, I do not know—failed to receive the order, and that seven steamers were sent to the bottom by a single boat. The political consequences were very serious at this time; in fact, they were much more serious than the result of refusing to yield to the insistence of the Dutch would have been. And our action was not approved by the competent authorities in Germany.

I therefore repeat that it would have been a careless act if the Admiralty Staff had pledged itself unqualifiedly to transmit such an important order to the U-boats. Such action might very well have resulted in serious consequences. As I have already pointed out, we could not guarantee

absolute security, and, moreover, if the government had made any pledges of security to Wilson, the chances would have been altogether too much in favor of the fact that an American citizen would be sacrificed to the purposes of the U-boat war, as the example of Holland shows us, and that would certainly have been regarded in the United States as a real slap in the face. An offer of compensation would have done nothing to help the situation. But, to my knowledge, the thought of compensation was never in any way brought to the attention of the Chief of the Admiralty Staff. Even if this had been done, I do not hesitate to state that the Chief would have made the strongest kind of protest against it; for any favors shown to the Americans would, in short, have had to be extended to all the remaining neutrals; and when such favors were once extended, it would have been extremely difficult to revoke such a concession later. The scaring-off of neutral shipping from the trade routes to England—a very important factor, from the standpoint of the U-boat war—would have been sacrificed from the outset in favor of a peace move on the part of the President which, in view of those incidents which we had every reason to expect would occur, was hardly to be expected; nor could we expect any such action from the Entente, the prospects of which were far slighter still.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, when the incident with Holland occurred, how much time did you have in which to reach the U-boats by wireless?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I can not say exactly, but I believe that it was about six or seven days.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: According to the records of the Admiralty which I have before me, during the critical period running from the 29th of January up to the 7th of February, that is, the day on which neutral shipping could be attacked, there were 10 U-boats at sea and no more.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No more? 21 U-boats were at sea.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: In the period running from the 29th of January up to the 7th of February, there were 10 U-boats out of harbor.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Yes.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: On the 29th of January, these U-boats were at sea, but on the 7th of February they were back again in harbor. So that there were 11 U-boats to transmit orders to.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No, they were at sea from the 29th of January, on, and on the 7th of February they returned again to their various ports.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: That is correct; I understand that to be the case too.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: So that 21 U-boats were at sea.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Certainly, but of these 21 boats, 11 returned on the 7th of February, that is, on the date on which we were to proceed against neutral shipping. They cleared, and so they did not need to be

communicated with by wireless. But, even if you include the 11 boats, your Excellency, then only 21 of all the U-boats, which were estimated at 120, were outside. The time which was at your disposal for notifying these 21 U-boats was the time which extended from the 29th of January up to the 7th of February, in other words, 9 days. You said that you could not undertake any guarantee in the matter. Was this a fact, even when the period was nine days long?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Certainly.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Could it not be assumed that, during this 9-day period, at least a great majority of the U-boats could be reached by wireless?

The CHAIRMAN: Whether or not the attempt could have been made?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: I was absolutely in no position to know that. Moreover, I did not know how many boats failed to receive the message at the time of the Dutch incident. A single boat which happened by chance to be there might have sunk all those steamers, for the reason that it had failed to get the wireless message.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: But at least the possibility existed to reach a great number of the boats by a message sent by wireless during those nine days.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: That is true, but it can not really be stated as a fact that it could actually have been done.

The CHAIRMAN: The possibility must have existed because, otherwise, your Excellency would not just have made use of this expression.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Certainly. In the case already referred to, I happen to know that the receiving apparatus of the U-21 was never tuned up during the entire period, so that it was absolutely impossible for it to receive any wireless message.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: That was a mere chance. But look at it from the standpoint of the normal course of events.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: The normal course of events would have been that the boats would not have received the wireless message. Wilson's offer of peace mediation had been received; we were face to face with the tremendous question, whether we would issue the recall by wireless. It was not practicable; we could not leave the receipt of the message to chance.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The normal, average case?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Taking it from the standpoint of average, I must say that the U-boat would have received no communications and that it would have sunk every ship with which it came into contact.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: One U-boat, or a number of U-boats?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No, a number of U-boats.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Well, all could not have been with certainty gotten into touch with from land, so that, perhaps, it is an open question

whether the following communication could not have been sent to Wilson: "U-boat orders have been given but rescinded. It is possible that we can not reach them all; we send this communication at the outset." It is an open question as to whether such a possibility existed at that time.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: The risk remains always the same. As I have already pointed out, the same situation confronted us in the case of the Dutch. We stated to them that we could not give any guarantee whatsoever and, after doing this, we proceeded to sink seven of their steamers on the coast of England. Feeling was wrought up to such a pitch in Holland as a result of this incident that our Ambassador at that time sent an urgent telegram to the Foreign Office asking how it was possible that such a thing could have occurred.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: One more point, your Excellency. We had much bad luck in this war. Could not we possibly have hoped for a piece of good luck for once? (Prolonged laughter.) It is a fact that no American ships were torpedoed until quite a time subsequent to the 7th of February. That is a matter of fact. So that fortune would have smiled upon us.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe that I can sum up your remarks, your Excellency, in stating that the possibility that you could, perhaps, have succeeded in getting into touch with one or more U-boats that had started on their trips, can not be denied, but that this possibility was, as a matter of fact, so extremely remote as to justify its elimination from consideration as a possibility.

(Indication of assent from the witness.)

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Kindly tell me whether I am correct in the statement, that as a matter of fact, it was not until long after the 7th of February that any American ship was torpedoed.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: That, I can not say.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: But it is the fact. So that in this case fortune would have smiled upon us.

Delegate DR. COHN: Captain, one question. You received the reports made by the captains.

(Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: Yes.)

And kept informed of the British situation by means of the reports. Did you ever, by means of newspapers which were found on board the steamers, by means of other reports of the press, or by means of statements from the crews of the ships which were stopped, become acquainted with the economic situation in England, more particularly, the situation regarding England's food supply?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: It goes without saying that I read all the press reports which were accessible to me—and they were very numerous—and that I also read all the items dealing with economics. Besides this, I received the news which was compiled by the Admiralty Staff, as well as the statements of the prisoners who were brought in or the reports of the

U-boat commanders based on conferences with the crews of ships which were sunk, all of which were naturally submitted to me. The report was often made to me—of course, I can not remember the times, to the extent of giving the exact dates—that the ships were very poorly supplied with rations. That was quite noticeable.

In the years 1915 and 1916, when our U-boats, as goes without saying, replenished their supplies from those of ships which they sent to the bottom, they found very considerable amounts of bacon, good white bread, flour, sugar, coffee, and the like. But these supplies became constantly less and less. The fishing vessels which had previously been well stocked, had no potatoes and nothing but turnips, so that our people who desired to increase their own supply found nothing. They had no more bread and no more bacon, and the crews themselves complained about the shortage of provisions as well as the lack of variety with which they were furnished for sea voyages—

(Interruption: Englishmen or neutrals?)

—Englishmen and neutrals.

Delegate DR. COHN: Did you have the English newspapers themselves, or only extracts therefrom which were given out in the form of information from the Admiralty Staff?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: That varied. I have received entire newspapers and excerpts as well, and compilations drawn up by the Admiralty Staff; and naturally, since we were in a way subject to the Army, I saw the summaries of press reports of the Army.

Delegate DR. COHN: Did you examine all the newspapers thoroughly?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: Certainly.

Delegate DR. COHN: Did you take particular notice of certain columns, which were constantly in the English papers during the entire year of 1917 and continued to appear there until far into the year 1918, consisting of the official reports of the government auctions of raw material of all kinds and of many articles of food?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: No.

Delegate DR. COHN: Lard, tallow, hides, wool, and everything, were to be had in the open market in unlimited quantities. There were many reports to this effect. I even remember having read once or twice, in reports telling about public lard auctions, the statement that the supply on hand could not be disposed of owing to the scarcity of buyers. Did you ever see anything of that kind?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: I never read these compiled statements of auction sales.

Delegate DR. COHN: Well, did you examine the advertising columns of the newspapers, for instance, the dry goods store advertisements, for the purpose of getting an idea as to what could be bought in the country?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: I probably read them, but I can not say that I followed up these matters.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: One question. We were just speaking about the possibility of getting into touch by means of the wireless. I am not sure, but I should like to ask you whether the possibility of conveying information by direct contact existed. Were these U-boats at definite stations?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Or were they stationed at all?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: No.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: So that the news could not be delivered by means of U-boats which left port?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: That would have been a mere chance if they had met, because they were assigned to definite fields of operation within the limits of which they were free to move from place to place.

Witness REAR ADMIRAL V. BÜLOW: In reply to a remark made by the recording secretary in respect to the recall question, I should like to add that it was not the sinking of an American ship that was the point at issue, but that no American citizen should come to his death or should be injured. Think of the *Lusitania*. It was not a question of having this American citizen on an American ship. The result would have been just the same for an American citizen to be on an English ship.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: That is perfectly true. For after the *Sussex* was sunk, we got a note from the United States in which it was stated that "if the life of an American citizen is lost," this would be looked upon as an unfriendly act.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: When was the first neutral ship sunk after the 7th of February? You will find that this occurred at a much later date.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: We had heard originally that the defensive measures against the U-boats were of very little consequence. Was it not a great mistake, politically, that in a well-known interview, Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz made our intention to cut England off entirely by means of the U-boat war, public property to the extent that he did? Must that not have had the inevitable result of inducing England to provide herself with defensive measures? Was it advisable for us to announce the U-boat war in such impressive terms at a time when we were absolutely unable to carry it out?

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: From a military standpoint, I must say, yes, I would not have given this interview, but, on the other hand, I do not consider it so very harmful. I am convinced that Admiral v. Tirpitz probably gave this interview merely in the hope that the U-boat war would be launched very shortly. For, after all, he himself was of the opinion that the U-boat war would have to be fought through to a finish as soon as pos-

sible, although, to be sure, not at that precise point of time. He has made this perfectly clear in his memoirs. I have not talked this over with Admiral Tirpitz. But he had in view an approximate time in the future when he wanted to begin operations. So he told himself that measures of defense could not really increase in efficiency in the meanwhile.

The CHAIRMAN: The committee has determined to hear the statement of Dr. Struve on the subject which has already been mentioned by Mr. Gothein. I shall ask Dr. Struve to step forward.

What is your Christian name?

Witness DR. STRUVE: Wilhelm.

The CHAIRMAN: Your age?

Witness DR. STRUVE: 45.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to take the oath with the religious formula or without it?

Witness DR. STRUVE: With the religious formula.

(Witness Member of the Prussian National Assembly Dr. Struve is sworn as a witness.)

The CHAIRMAN: We are going to call here upon your knowledge, as the representative from Kiel, in which capacity you undoubtedly had the opportunity of discussing with the authorities questions regarding the number of the U-boats which were ready for the front during the various critical periods, and also questions involving U-boat construction.

So I will ask you to proceed to make a statement to us concerning the number of U-boats which were ready for the front.

Witness DR. STRUVE: The number of the U-boats ready for the front during the year 1915, 1916, or 1917?

The CHAIRMAN: We shall probably have to discuss all phases. So I shall ask you to begin with the year 1915. The most critical period is, of course, the period of January, 1917, and the spring of 1916, respectively. Really we can limit ourselves to those periods—

(Agreement.)

—We will begin with the spring of 1916.

Witness DR. STRUVE: In the spring of 1916, on the 28th and 29th of March, we received from Secretary of State v. Capelle, at a session of the budget committee, an official statement with regard to the condition of the actual strength of our U-boats at sea engaged in the conflict against England. Since a motion had been made in favor of the immediate commencement of the unrestricted U-boat war by the Conservatives—the Heydebrand and Count Westarp resolution—a closed session of the budget committee was held. On that occasion we were informed by the newly-appointed Secretary, v. Capelle, that if this U-boat war was to be successful, it would have to be carried on along the west coast of England, westward of Ireland, and that at least three stations would have to be established: the North Irish Sea,

the South Irish Sea, and the southwestern outlet of the Channel. That all three stations were occupied by one U-boat, that three U-boats were constantly stationed to the west of England, out at sea, covering a distance of 600 sea miles. Such was at that time the formal announcement made by Secretary of State v. Capelle.

The substance of the matter is, as Admiral v. Capelle stated yesterday, that the number of the U-boats of itself stands in such contrast with the number of the boats which are on the high seas—take, for instance, the terms “ready for use at the front,” “ready for the front,” “U-boat in transit”—that everything is so complicated that it is extraordinarily difficult to give a complete picture unless the U-boat figures are specially and carefully computed with reference to a particular point of time. On the 28th of March, 1916, this remark was made by Admiral v. Capelle; it is not to be found in the Reichstag protocol, but you can find it in the statements made by the party leaders. All parties then announced that we would not be able to carry on the U-boat war with U-boats which we did not have. At that time—according to my knowledge at Kiel in March, 1916—11 U-boats were outside in the North Sea, and at Kiel 22 large U-boats were stated to be ready for the front for all U-boat points of support.

Delegate DR. COHN: With the exception of the 11?

Witness DR. STRUVE: No, the 11 were a portion of the 22.

The CHAIRMAN: Where were the 11?

Witness DR. STRUVE: The 11 were in the North Sea. That would agree exactly with what Secretary of State v. Capelle explained to the government and to the Reichstag with regard to our actual forces. For if 11 were in the North Sea, then from 2 to 3, and that is what was said, 2 to 3—I always gave the larger figure, 3, afterwards—then from 2 to 3 could constantly remain outside to the west of England, the rest be on the outward trip and the others on the return trip.

Delegate DR. COHN: Were five always needed for the occupation of a station?

Witness DR. STRUVE: In those days it was said that, in order to occupy a station with safety and permanence, we would have to count upon five U-boats for each individual station. And this was not a political estimate, but was actually a correct estimate, and well estimated according to naval requirements, a fact which can be illustrated, for instance, by another set of figures.

In January, 1917—which was another critical period for our foreign policy—when we were deliberating as to whether the unrestricted U-boat war should be launched, Secretary of State Capelle came to Kiel, and he was told in Kiel—I can refer to the old records, it is all old material—that there were 20 U-boats at the front. That did not constitute 20 per cent, but only 12 per cent. So that the March estimate was no political estimate

made for the purpose of blocking the unrestricted U-boat war, but an actual estimate. At that time, 20 per cent was the number calculated.

Delegate DR. COHN: What does that 20 per cent mean?

Witness DR. STRUVE: Just what you said, Delegate Dr. Cohn. I must have 5 on the ground if I am going to promise that one U-boat is going to do certain and effective work. So that from 2 to 3 could be to the west of England during the year 1916, for 11 were in the North Sea. In January, 1917, there were in port 45 in the process of undergoing trials, for training purposes, for repairs, and for armament, 57 in the dockyards, leaving 30 obsolescent. So that we had 152 U-boats at that time—these were the figures which were given to us afterwards and I shall come to that point shortly—whereas there were only 20 at the front. Then of these 20, we had to deduct 20 per cent which were constantly pursuing their work of destruction outside at their station.

In 1916, we who were at that time in the old Reichstag, heard here in Berlin, if I am not mistaken, that Admiral v. Tirpitz had in the Bundesrat, through Mr. Löhlein, given 203 as the number of U-boats. This figure brought about disagreement in the Bundesrat, and this disagreement was not harmonized by the corrective statement subsequently made, that of these 203 U-boats, 54 were ready for the front. At that time, no more detailed information was given to the Bundesrat for the same reason that the Navy Department had privately and personally forbidden us in the budget committee to make any statements of any kind about the number of U-boats. Even the party leaders, who subsequently were given the figures on the occasion of personal interviews, never mentioned these figures, even to the budget committee. The number which at that time had been given to the Bundesrat was 203, and from 2 to 3 were at that very moment, in March, 1916, engaged in the war against England. What a difference between 203 and from 2 to 3! Perhaps this very compilation will make plain to the gentlemen of the investigating committee what complicated forms the question can take, and, on the other hand, how very simple it is if one is only willing to state the numbers engaged outside.

On January 15, 1917, Secretary of State v. Capelle was officially informed in Kiel that 20 U-boats were ready for the front. So that the surprise of the budget committee must have been all the greater when, on the 31st of January, 1917, the information reached the Reichstag that the unrestricted U-boat was already decided upon and would be carried into operation—I believe I am not mistaken; memoranda on the point are available; I could make a comparison of them right here in a moment—and when v. Capelle spoke of 160 U-boats.

It must have given the delegates the impression—and this was actually the fact—that our U-boat strength had increased since 1916 in an absolutely incomparable manner. It would have been just as easy to have said at

that time: there are 20 ready for the front, and, of these 20, 5 or 6—I do not know how many on that particular day—are to be sent into action west of England.

And moreover, the statement of Secretary of State v. Capelle, that only about half of the completed U-boats were capable of being used against the enemy, is in such extraordinary contrast with what the Secretary of State had learned only fourteen days before in Kiel, that I can not explain it.

These figures—20 U-boats; we spoke today of 21 U-boats, if I am not mistaken, for January and February of 1917—increased afterwards to a certain extent. Afterwards, they became 36, 43, 47 U-boats. I could give the figures exactly.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps it would be a good plan to give the exact figures.

Witness DR. STRUVE: In a letter which was sent by me to the then Imperial Chancellor Michaelis and by Delegate Gothein to General Ludendorff in 1917, we stated that, as a result of an investigation, there were in March, 41 U-boats, in April, 47, in May, 47, in June, 53, and that the average from June to October was about 45. The numbers of the boats at the front were given this morning by the Navy. I have no further remarks to make with regard to figures. This difference which existed between the U-boats which were actually outside, and the numbers which were given us in the budget committee was apparent, not only at that time, on the 31st of January, 1917, when it appeared to me to be particularly gross, but even at an earlier date.

Secretary of State v. Capelle, on the first opportunity that we had to go into the question of U-boat construction in detail—and that must have been during the period when Mr. v. Capelle was Secretary of State, for during the long tenure of office of Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz the Reichstag never had budget committee sessions dealing with the state of the Navy which involved discussion of these questions, so far as I know; for Admiral v. Tirpitz had formed a habit of having both leaders, the gentlemen from the Center Party and Social Democratic Party, talk the matter over with him beforehand—Secretary of State v. Capelle stated in a speech that a good many complaints were being made by the “Kielers.” Mr. v. Capelle knew that shortly after he had entered into office I had written to him and had told him that his promise which he had made to us in the spring of 1916, that U-boat construction would be different now and would be pushed along to a greater extent than it had been under Tirpitz, had not been kept. I have in mind those extraordinary proceedings in the course of which we listened to an unusually sharp criticism from the lips of Mr. v. Capelle with regard to the whole policy of naval construction followed by Secretary of State v. Tirpitz. To my surprise, I was forced to the conclusion that, in spite of all this, construction was not proceeding very rapidly, and it was for this reason that I wrote these letters early in the spring of 1916.

It was for the purpose of disarming these criticisms from the outset that the Secretary of State gave the number of U-boats which we had at about 400. I was subsequently able to point out that, even if he had included all the U-boats that were lost, we would not have reached this figure of 400; and that even if we included those U-boats which were not even in course of construction but which had only just been ordered, even then the number would only have amounted to 300, and not 400. And we were just as erroneously informed when we were officially told by the Secretary of State that, right at the beginning of the war (as really should have been the case), U-boats had been ordered by series and, among the various series, for instance, the series U-C 1 to 60; and in this case, too, it turned out that the Secretary of State did not base his statement upon orders which actually existed, but, on the contrary, perhaps upon orders which would have been just as pleasing to him at the moment, from the political standpoint, as they would have been to us.

In order to get a definite standard of measure whereby the number of U-boats ordered may be computed, I believe that the most accurate way of approaching the subject is to find out the U-boat tonnage ordered every month. The U-boat figure can not come into question here in any way, since, after the outbreak of the war, Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz ordered, simultaneously with orders placed according to a program which had already been prepared beforehand, a number of the small U-boats, of 127 tons, of 173 tons, the so-called Channel fleas, which subsequently rendered extraordinary service under the command of Captain Bartenbach in Flanders, so that no correct conception would be given if we were simply to count U-boat for U-boat, since, later on, we ordered U-boats of from 1900 to 2100 tons. Thus the number of U-boat tons must be depended upon as a factor of comparison in order to serve as a criterion to determine what was ordered. Now, if we were able to place orders over a period of twenty months—and v. Tirpitz was Secretary of State for the Navy for that length of time, from August 1914 up to March 1916—I believe that that period is sufficient in order to admit of a more or less definite estimate being made. In the course of these twenty months, 80,455 tons were ordered—I can not keep the tens and the units exactly in my head.

That makes 4,000 tons a month.

The orders placed by Secretary of State v. Capelle cover, again, about twenty months. I calculate that the incumbency of Secretary of State v. Capelle began with March, 1916, and I do not know the exact date of its termination. About 14,000 tons a month were ordered during the time that Mr. v. Capelle was Secretary of State. This contrast, of itself, shows that these periods of time were not sufficiently taken advantage of—and, in fact, the only periods of time in which (before the war, U-boat construction had not been pushed at all) a real purpose would have been served in

doing so. Our industries would have been able to complete far more than 4,000, even more than 14,000 tons per month. Before the war—and I am just taking the two figures—in the year 1913, only three U-boats were ordered, and in the year 1914, up to August 1, 1914, only one U-boat. But at the time when Secretary of State v. Capelle was ordering U-boats, on the 5th of July, 1917—I believe that I am giving the date correctly,—we were told by Secretary of State v. Capelle, and were told in a session of the budget committee of the Reichstag, that he had been given the political pointer by the Imperial Chancellor that the Imperial Chancellor was depending upon the U-boat war lasting a great deal longer than the five or six or seven or eight months which it had been assumed by the Admiralty Staff that it was going to last, and that Mr. v. Capelle should, then, temper his orders to meet this point of view of the political department. Then, in June, 1917, one order of over 60,000 tons went in on one day. The figures are here before us and even in greater detail. They give us 63,506 tons. The entire number of U-boat orders placed by v. Tirpitz during the entire year of 1915, amounted to about 50,000 tons. And this comparison, too, shows to what a poor extent our industries were utilized at the right time.

When this order was through and I was able to go into this matter with Under-Secretary of State Wahnschaffe, I could not assume that congratulations were due because we had succeeded so quickly in ordering new U-boats, for I was bound to say to Mr. Wahnschaffe that the times were such as to demand—since the war had certainly lasted long enough and the land forces could not terminate the war, and since it was for this very reason that we had launched the U-boat war,—it was obvious that, at present, our whole naval construction plant and our entire industry would have to be set to work. Mr. Wahnschaffe stated that the government was of the opinion that everything had been done; that to place more orders was impossible. Then I at once took pains to obtain the data to show that even in 1916 and 1917 sufficient orders had not been placed.

As early as the spring of 1916, at a time when, I believe, Mr. v. Capelle was already Secretary of State, the Vulkan Company, the Weser Company, the Germania Company, and the Blohm and Voss Company, came out with bids stating that they could build 102 medium-sized and 37 large U-boats. In May, 1916—and this means Mr. v. Capelle—24 medium-sized and 32 large U-boats were ordered. That gives a total of 56 U-boats as against 139 U-boats which the shipyards had declared that they were ready to build. In the middle of the year 1916, the Weser Company notified us that, in spite of the new orders, gaps would take place in the deliveries. I will come back to this question of gaps. The Weser Company asked for permission to construct still further medium-sized U-boats in accordance with plans which were at hand and which were to be delivered by December, 1916, or January, 1917. Rejected! The Vulkan Company

asked for orders for B-boats which, likewise, were to be delivered at the beginning of 1917. The Vulkan Company wrote: "In order to make quick and good deliveries, orders must be given in series." And then came a notice of July 17, 1916, from the Secretary of State: "For the time being, we will refrain from ordering any more U-boats; a cessation in orders is desirable in order to make it possible for the construction yards to be able to push Navy contracts which have been made up to this time, and to put them in shape to undertake emergency jobs." The U-boat inspection, too, repeatedly pushed the Navy Department to place orders. No results! At the end of September, 1916, Blohm and Voss got a contract for 5 B-boats, the Weser Company got a contract for 8 B-boats, but both shipyards were obliged to assure the Navy Department that the cruiser construction in the yards should in no way be interfered with. In October, 1916, the Weser shipyard wrote that it was having difficulties in getting material, and that it desired to be informed at once whether four additional boats were going to be ordered. It asked that permission be granted them to place orders for construction material at once. In February, 1917, Schichau and the Imperial yard at Danzig asked to be allowed to construct two more boats, and Howald-Kiel offered to take on three more boats. Rejected! In May, 1917, the Imperial shipyard at Danzig again urgently requested that U-boats be ordered. It is stated that too much time has been allowed to pass in doing nothing. In order to avoid having to let out workmen, the yard would have to be provided with new contracts by the middle of June at the latest.

At that time, we took it absolutely for granted that the time for launching the unrestricted U-boat war had been made the subject of mature consideration, that, by February 1, 1917, the Navy was actually prepared to meet all emergencies and that the monthly increase, which is of course necessary for the purpose of replacing losses, was safely provided for under any and all circumstances. They certainly had had time enough to prepare to meet the situation, so that we could now have a feeling of certainty that the shipyards had their affairs in order as well. But Blohm and Voss did not deliver a single U-boat in January, February, March, April, or May of 1917, when we were in such urgent need of increase; the Vulkan yard, no boat in the months of February, March, April, or May of 1917, the Germania yard, nothing in June, 1917, and the Imperial yard, nothing in July, 1917. In February, 1917, only three new U-boats were put in commission; in March, 4; in April, 4; in May, 6; in June, 8; and in July, 10 boats; that is, not much more than 1 per cent increase per month of those boats at the front.

As early as autumn, 1916—if I am not mistaken, at the close of September or at the beginning of October—we had been told by Secretary of State v. Capelle when, for the second time, the question of the unrestricted U-boat

war had been discussed in the Reichstag from A to Z for about a week, that, from a purely naval and technical standpoint, the Navy was prepared to meet all contingencies. As a matter of calculation—and at that time, as is the case today, we invariably went into the question on the basis of what the records contain—that was a fact. Forty-eight boats of about 32,900 tons were supposed to be ready. As a matter of fact, only 35 U-boats, amounting to about 22,860 tons, were made ready. That means 30 per cent less than was estimated. Now, I shall probably be told that we could only be guided by the budget, that our budget was such-and-such, and that the Navy could only base its statement according to the budget. But in the course of one of these speeches, in the speech of defense made in answer to my charges, we were told by Mr. v. Capelle that 116 boats would be ready by the end of 1917. This occurred at the close of April, 1917, perhaps on the 30th of April. It can be read in the reports. As early as the first day of Easter, I was able to write the Imperial Chancellor—when we had received the Easter proclamation of the Emperor, and I had taken advantage of the opportunity of making new political coinage of the Easter proclamation—that, at best, 80 boats would be finished by the end of the year. Nor could I make this number a matter of mere estimate, because I had to study the question from the ground up in order to make no error in figures or in lists submitted. As a matter of fact, 78 boats were finished, whereas at that time I had written the Imperial Chancellor that there would be 80. So I am inclined to believe that other experts not belonging to the Navy must have been engaged in the yards, who were in a position to get such a clear idea of the entire U-boat construction as to result in their conclusions being, as a matter of fact, nearly without error. And all the more did we deplore the fact that all the boats of which we constantly heard in the budget committee were never put in commission because, unfortunately, they were never delivered.

A few hours ago, Delegate Gothein, as a member of the investigating committee, referred to the fact—I heard the remark in my capacity as a spectator and not quite distinctly; it has not been answered as yet, or made the subject of comment in any other way—that the shipyards which were engaged in U-boat construction—that is, if I am not mistaken, and I ask to be corrected if I am wrong—that, in the case of the new contracts, in spite of the fact that the boats were so much bigger, and had increased from 800 tons to 1400 and 1600 tons, the time for construction was, nevertheless, so cut down as to make it, from the outset, physically impossible to keep within the limits of this construction period. In any event, both Delegates Gothein and Struve made this matter perfectly plain to General Ludendorff at that time, and supported their representation by technical reasons. It is true that I have not this letter with me. Mr. Gothein probably has it. Let me call attention to another statement. On July 1, 1917, the Imperial

Chancellor, v. Bethmann-Hollweg, held his last session with the party leaders, and at that time Mr. v. Capelle gave the assurance that 158 U-boats would be finished and that 240 U-boats were building; that all complaints, therefore, that U-boats had not been ordered in sufficient numbers, were groundless. But, as a matter of fact, only 150 U-boats were being built, and the other 90 had only been ordered. And we may point out, moreover, the fact that it was only perhaps at the close of 1917 that the construction of these boats began. We had to go through the same performance all over again, of finally succeeding, after many delays, and after the committee chairman assembled in conference had refused to submit Gothein's resolution in full session, in having the Reichstag itself call for a report on the situation of the U-boat construction and have a committee wait upon the Imperial Chancellor. It was thought that we could not venture to have the question made a matter of debate in the Reichstag, on account of the political effect both external and domestic. When this committee met finally with the Imperial Chancellor, the statements made by Captain Brüninghaus bearing upon the contracts made at that time were not in consonance with the facts, to wit: "All the shipyards are full up to the neck and, in all, 479 boats are in process of construction." I was able to point out, on the 3d, 10th, 15th, and 16th of July, 1918, in the sessions of this committee, that in this number 479, not less than 190 boats were included which had only been ordered, and that not even all the remaining 289 were actually in process of construction. The U-boats which were in process of construction at that time were as follows: with Schichau-Elbing, 2; with Vulkan, 7; with Blohm and Voss, 10; with the Germania, 19; with the Weser yard people, 15; with the Kaiser yard at Danzig, 5; and with the Bremer Vulkan Company, 23.

These figures are far from making a total of 289, and even in these figures the number of U-B boats and U-C boats which were also in construction at these yards, is lacking. I gave these numbers also at that time.

So it is, that from the first statements of Secretary of State v. Capelle down to this last official communication, there has always been a great discrepancy between the actual conditions and that which we were authoritatively told represented those facts. The first words which Secretary of State v. Capelle said to us on the 28th of March, 1916, were these: "All the shipyards except two are building U-boats—on the 27th of March, 1916—and I will try and see"—these were Capelle's words—"whether we will not be able to include these yards likewise." Unfortunately, all the shipyards were not employed in U-boat construction even in 1918; there were 5 in 1916, and later there were 11. We can see from that fact alone how little Mr. v. Capelle's statements are in agreement with the facts. I have no intention of making the charge, in saying what I do, that we are dealing with anything except a deplorable mistake; for I have been forced to reach the conclusion

that Secretary of State v. Capelle was far less informed with regard to the facts, even than we came to believe him to be, as far back as 1916 and 1917. But it is certainly deplorable; for it necessarily was bound to create the impression that, as a matter of fact, everything was being done that could be done in the way of U-boat construction, and so the most favorable period was allowed to go to waste. I do not doubt for a moment that, if Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg and the Supreme High Command of the Army had been informed about this state of affairs earlier, U-boat construction, too, would have been given an energetic start at an earlier period and would have been pushed ahead with judgment.

The CHAIRMAN: I naturally assume that Delegate Struve's statements are bound to call for a reply on the part of the Admiralty Staff. But at the present moment there is not time to do so, and, consequently, we will adjourn.

Witness ADMIRAL v. CAPELLE: I ask, please, to be permitted to make a short reply.

The CHAIRMAN: If the reply is to be brief, kindly proceed.

Witness ADMIRAL v. CAPELLE: Gentlemen, Delegate Struve has made two charges against me in the course of his remarks: In the first place, the charge that I failed to give the budget committee sufficient information and even failed to give it exact information, and the second charge is that I did not build as many U-boats as were we in a position to build at that time.

I will now proceed to answer the first charge. In this connection, I consider it necessary to read at least the outstanding passages from the speech which I first made in the budget committee in connection with the fact that those conducting naval operations rejected the idea of the unrestricted U-boat war at that time. I said, on the 28th of March:

I shall endeavor, by setting out the military situation, to state clearly the possibilities of the U-boat war in order that you may be able to form a picture of it for yourselves and reach your own judgment about it.

The decisive war area for the U-boat war is the west coast of England, the northern and southern approaches to the Irish Sea, and the westerly entrance of the Channel. These are the highroads of the commerce of the world. The Admiralty Staff has divided up these areas into three stations, and has issued instructions that these three fields be constantly occupied by one U-boat. It assumes, on the basis of past experience, that each U-boat will have a daily average of one hostile ship of an average tonnage of 4,000. The three U-boats which are permanently on their stations will, therefore, sink three ships a day, or 90 ships a month. This will mean that, in this area, there will be a diminution in tonnage of 360,000 tons a month. One who has had occasion to observe the traffic over this area in times of peace, or one who has only seen the traffic on the Elbe, will be perfectly able to understand that it will be impossible for the U-boats, whose activities bring about the above results, to limit imports bound for England to

the extent of hanging an iron curtain, so to speak, about England's west coast.

The next question is, how many U-boats will be necessary in order to occupy permanently the west coast of England by three U-boats. In order to occupy one station permanently with one U-boat, five U-boats are required. Taken on the average, the U-boats spend four weeks en route, a third of the time on the outward trip, one-third of their time at the station, and one-third on the return trip. That means three U-boats. Two more U-boats will be under repair at the yards. So that, all in all, 15 U-boats are required to cover the three stations on the west coast of England. In view of the weather conditions which predominate at that locality, and in view of the demands of a military nature which they are called upon to meet, only U-boats of a quite modern type can be used. Of these U-boats, 20 are available at the present time; in other words, a number sufficient in itself to bring about a permanent occupation of the three stations.

In order to save time, I will be brief. So that the above agrees with—

The CHAIRMAN: It will not be possible to hear this question through to its close. I believe that you yourself, your Excellency, will want to make a detailed answer. I simply wanted to give you an opportunity of making a few remarks at the present time, in order that Dr. Struve's statements might not be left without any answer on your part, from your point of view. But we shall have to close at present with this matter. We shall have to take it up at the next session. We shall meet again Tuesday at 10 o'clock, and I shall ask that all those gentlemen who have testified up to this time, and above all, Dr. Struve and also his Excellency Helfferich, be present.

The session closed at 1:34 o'clock.

NINTH SESSION

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1919

The session was opened at 10:22 o'clock by the Chairman, Delegate Warmuth.

The CHAIRMAN: The session is opened.

There are a few preliminary remarks which I have to make at this time. I have received a telegram from Professor Harms (Kiel) the contents of which are as follows:

I declare that the statement made by Privy Councilor of the Admiralty Koch as reported by the newspapers, is erroneous, provided he did make it. Before the unrestricted U-boat war was proclaimed, my opinion was neither requested by official circles nor did I express it unsolicited. In reply to questions put to me in a private capacity, the attitude which I took was to refuse definitely to answer them, basing my policy on the ground that the rendering of a judgment as to whether the conviction could be entertained that the U-boat war would be successful was a matter which concerned the military authorities alone. It was not until March 5, 1917, after the U-boat war had been in progress for one month, that I announced my views in a speech made in my capacity as President of the University, as to the economic results which would follow a successful blockade of England, but in so doing, I laid stress upon the fact that it was not incumbent upon me to render a judgment even concerning non-military questions. I leave it to your discretion to call me for examination concerning the U-boat war and its accompanying phenomena, since I believe that I might be helpful in clearing up these points.

We concluded, from the stenographic reports, that Admiral Koch appears to have been actually of the opinion that Mr. Harms was heard in the matter before the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war, or, in any event, that Mr. Harms' opinion was taken into consideration in this connection. Therefore, in any event, this idea is shown to be erroneous. And since Mr. Harms' speech concerning particular features of the economic developments attendant upon a successful blockade of England, which he made as university president and to which reference is given, was not delivered until March, 1917, a point of time, therefore, subsequent to the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war, the committee does not feel called upon to examine Professor Harms on this point. We have, therefore, decided to refrain from taking his testimony.

I now come to a second point, which calls for definite comment. Admiral Koch's statements with regard to the political effect of the unrestricted U-boat war in the summer of 1917, that is to say, his remarks with regard

to England's preparedness for peace, and the fact that this desire for peace was brought to an end as the result of an indiscretion, have been accepted, in part, by the press as being final, and as closing this phase of the question. In this connection, it must be stated that we are dealing, primarily, with a personal opinion. To what extent this personal opinion corresponds with the fact is a matter for determination by the committee which, in accordance with its order of business, still has to make this question the subject of special investigation.

So far as concerns the economic results, Admiral Koch laid great stress upon two reports, namely, the reports of Sims and Churchill. But neither can these two reports lay claim to have fully cleared up the situation, and, again, along this line, the committee, as I take occasion to state emphatically, will carefully investigate all that abundant material which is before it, and this, too, will serve as a basis for the hearings concerning the possibilities of peace in the summer of 1917. For these reasons, the question of the political results of the unrestricted U-boat war, as they manifested themselves in the summer of 1917, will be, for the present, entirely eliminated from consideration during these proceedings. So the subject matter with which we have to concern ourselves consists, in the main, of the technical question which has come into particular prominence as the result of the last statements made by Dr. Struve.

I shall now give Admiral v. Capelle an opportunity to answer in detail the statements made by Dr. Struve.

Witness ADMIRAL V. CAPELLE: Gentlemen, Dr. Struve made two serious charges against me in the course of the testimony given by him in the last hearing. The first charge was that, in the course of my incumbency, I had not built a sufficient number of U-boats, and the second charge was to the effect that I deceived the Reichstag in the speeches made by me in the budget committee.

I shall take up the first charge, for the present, and should like to give you here the figures of the U-boats ordered built. After the last hearing of the investigating committee, I had the Admiralty give me the latest compilation of the U-boats which were ordered built during the war and immediately before the war. This statement of the Admiralty, which bears the date of May, 1919, shows that the total number of U-boats contracted for before the war and during the war was 810. Of these 810 U-boats, 45 were contracted for before the war. Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz contracted for 186 U-boats, and during my incumbency of about two years and a half, I contracted for 579 U-boats. Gentlemen, I should think that these numbers would really speak for themselves. The number of U-boats contracted for by me may be subdivided according to years, as follows: In the nine months of the year 1916, when I was Secretary of State for the Navy, I contracted for 90 U-boats; for the year 1917, 269, and in the nine

months of 1918—I left the service in September, 1918—I contracted for 220 more U-boats. As you gentlemen will see from this compilation, the year 1916, the year which was of most decisive significance, is poorly represented. I will now go into details on that point.

The reason for the paucity of construction in the year 1916 was, above all, attributable to the political situation. In the first place, we had the year 1915 behind us. In February, 1915, as we all know, the U-boat war was declared for the first time. In the course of the year, as the result of the exchange of notes with the United States, the war was practically throttled. In the autumn of 1915, the Admiralty Staff issued a secret order, to the effect that the U-boat war on commerce should for the time being be entirely abandoned on the west coast of England and that the U-boat war on commerce should continue to be kept up, under the law of prize, in the North Sea. At the beginning of 1916, a great push was made by the then Supreme High Command of the Army under General v. Falkenhayn, and by those conducting naval operations under Admiral v. Holtzendorff, to put through the resumption of the unrestricted U-boat war. The negotiations on this point were submitted to the decision of the Emperor on March 4, 1916, by a joint representation in which the military branch and the political branch took part. The decision reached was, in the main, to the effect that the unrestricted U-boat war should be postponed. As the result, Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz submitted his resignation. On March 15, I was appointed Secretary of State for the Navy.

The postponement of the U-boat war, in other words, the decision of March 4, together with the resignation of Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz, caused great excitement among the German people. This excitement found expression in resolutions taken by all the political parties with the exception, I believe, of the Social Democratic Party, all of which expressed themselves as more or less in favor of the U-boat war. These resolutions were referred to the budget committee of the Reichstag. Toward the close of March, long-drawn-out proceedings took place in the budget committee, in the course of which the whole question was discussed very much in detail. The result of these conferences was the unanimous joint resolution of the Reichstag from Heydebrand to Scheidemann, that the just interests of neutral States were to be observed in the conduct of the U-boat war.

Gentlemen, this joint resolution of the Reichstag meant a unanimous rejection of the unrestricted U-boat warfare in the interests of the neutral Powers—well, that was exactly the point to be kept in mind in connection with the unrestricted U-boat war.

Closely connected in point of time with these proceedings came the *Sussex* case. On May 4 we sent out the celebrated—I believe I may use the term—*Sussex* note to the United States. The principal passage in this *Sussex* note, I shall proceed to read in brief. It reads as follows:

Guided by these considerations (namely, to maintain the good relations existing between Germany and the United States) the German Government informs the Government of the United States that instructions have been issued to the German war-craft to observe the general principles of international law covering the question of visit, search, and destruction of merchant ships, and not to sink merchant ships, even inside the restricted war zone, without warning, unless they take to flight or offer resistance, and to observe the care necessary for the preservation of human lives.

Gentlemen, with this *Sussex* note, the U-boat war up to the year 1916 was—

The CHAIRMAN: Your Excellency will allow me to interrupt you for a moment. You see, we are now speaking of the technical side, and I shall ask you to devote your statements, in the main, to this issue; otherwise, we shall involve ourselves again in political matters, which is neither our duty nor our intention at the present time.

Witness ADMIRAL V. CAPELLE: Mr. Chairman, the technical side! I am to explain why, during the year 1916, I did not set up a U-boat construction program on a great scale—

(Very true.)

—And the reason why I did not father a U-boat program on a great scale is due precisely to political reasons: to the fact that the attitude of the government and the attitude of the Reichstag was that the unrestricted U-boat war should be relegated to the background. That was my main reason.

The CHAIRMAN: Then I shall ask you to proceed.

Witness V. CAPELLE: I repeat: With the *Sussex* note, the unrestricted U-boat war was condemned to death for the year 1916, too. It was only in the autumn, and after Hindenburg and Ludendorff went to the head of military affairs, that it was revived in the form of a war on commerce. Now, as the result of the political developments of the U-boat war in the year 1915 and 1916, can anybody expect of me that, in my capacity as Secretary of State for the Navy, I could, in the face of this situation, initiate a U-boat construction program on a great scale? In standing for such a U-boat construction program on such a great scale, I would have put myself in flat conflict with the governmental policy which, of course, was binding so far as I was concerned, quite aside from the fact that, as Secretary of State, I should never have been able to succeed in putting through such a program.

But there was another reason for my reaching my conclusions, a reason of a more technical nature, or, rather, there were a number of marine questions of a technical nature, the effect of which resulted in a slowing up in the construction of U-boats.

The first reason was that, on the occasion of my entrance into the service—and let me inject at this point the fact that I had been out of service

for a year and had had, formerly, nothing to do with U-boat construction or with the entire technical side—that when I entered the service, all the U-boat types were undergoing a process of new construction. Our main U-boat type used in the war against England, the medium UB-boat, had been entirely reconstructed and had just about doubled. Large U-boats of 1200 tons had been taken under construction, whereas the largest U-boats up to that time had been only from 800 to 900 tons. I will not go further into these technical details at this point.

The second reason was that, in the course of the year—on the 1st of July—the Skagerrak battle had taken place. The Skagerrak battle netted us a great number of cripples which, necessarily—which most urgently, not necessarily! most urgently—required repairs. It was natural that these repairs pressed down hard upon U-boat construction. We had to take away a number of the workmen from the U-boats in order to put our ships in shape again after the Skagerrak battle.

And now comes the main reason, the technical reason. In 1916, the British had begun to sow the North Sea area confronting the mouths of our river, “the so-called wet triangle,” with mines on a gigantic scale. Gentlemen, hereby we were confronted with a new danger; the danger consisted in this, that not only would our battle fleet be bottled up and no longer able to come out, but, above all, the U-boats would be bottled up and no longer able to come out. For that was the object of those tremendous measures taken by the British. This sowing with mines resulted in having the cry come up from all sides for more mine-seekers. And I should like to give the gentlemen a rough idea of the statements made by me at that time to the budget committee, showing how matters stood. I shall quote briefly from the stenographic report of my remarks made to the budget committee.

Gentlemen (of the budget committee) are constantly making the mistake of believing that the whole question now is one of U-boats. We are faced with a great number of other necessities which we must also meet, and, above all, small mine-seekers, small torpedo-boats, patrol-boats, etc. For the purpose of showing you to what extent this necessity exists, I may say that you can assume that, if not every day, at least every week, I am sent most urgent messages from the front to contract for more and more mine-seekers, small torpedo-boats, patrol-boats, motor-boats, and everything else in the nature of small craft, whereas I am not urged from the front to contract for more U-boats. Generally speaking, the Navy has now adopted the view that it is, above all, necessary for us to finish first with the U-boats which are now under construction and not to constantly give out contracts for new U-boats which, perhaps, can only be finished early in 1919 or at the end of 1918 at the earliest.

Gentlemen, it is, of course, easily understood that very different representations are made to you constantly, views either expressed by

gentlemen who can not form a correct opinion of the circumstances or who are either directly or indirectly influenced by the yards. All the yards are, in these days, at each others' throats in order to get U-boat contracts. All the yards promise to perform the impossible, and are setting proportionally short building periods. They impose only three conditions: that of obtaining the necessary expert workmen, no strikes, and the supply of the necessary material and coal.

That was what I said in those days to the budget committee. I wanted to give the gentlemen here a picture of how things looked at the front and how they looked to us.

Now, in 1917, after the unrestricted U-boat war had actually been launched, I had to provide for the utmost demands made by the U-boat war, in spite of the "6-months" prophecy. Let me restate the figures briefly. In 1917 I had contracted for 269 U-boats and in 1918—which meant only nine months to me—I had contracted for 220.

And now I must show up another fairy tale, which is to the effect that I did absolutely nothing on my own initiative, but that I was always forced to the point of ordering U-boats only by the exertions of the Imperial Chancellor and the Supreme High Command of the Army. Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg had three opportunities—the first time was really no opportunity, as I will explain shortly—to talk with me concerning U-boat orders. First, a memorial was sent to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg by the then Delegate Dr. Struve, which announced the writer's anxiety in warm patriotic terms because we were not building enough U-boats, and supported this with an exhaustive amount of material. I had absolutely no knowledge of this memorial. This memorial was first brought to my attention later by Imperial Chancellor Michaelis as a supplement to the Michaelis memorial. That was the first time when I was absolutely not informed of the question.

The second time, the Imperial Chancellor, about the summer of 1917, when the unrestricted U-boat war had reached its highest pitch of efficiency, sent me a written statement in which he expressed the view that I could not afford to overlook the making of preparations for the construction of new U-boats for the year 1918, since he, the Imperial Chancellor, looked forward to a long war and to long-drawn-out armistice negotiations. So far as I was concerned, this document did no more than break down open doors, as very heavy U-boat orders had either been placed at that time or were actually about to be placed. However, I filed this document at once with my budget documents, because I then intended to read this letter to the budget committee at the proper moment, in order to protect the Imperial Chancellor against the never-ending charges which were made against him, as if he, the Imperial Chancellor, were not showing sufficient interest in the U-boat war or were not taking proper steps to meet it. Later on, I did put this document to this very purpose. And, it is probable that, because I

did so, gentlemen erroneously got the impression that I had been pressed very hard by the Imperial Chancellor.

The third time occurred under the following circumstances. The Imperial Chancellor telephoned me one morning that Delegates Fischbeck and Wiemer had been to see him and had expressed themselves as extremely apprehensive on the point that we were not building enough U-boats. I thereupon went immediately to the Imperial Chancellor in order to make a statement to him concerning the situation. After I had made this statement, the Imperial Chancellor spoke to me more or less to the effect that his mind was easy on the point and that he could see clearly that everything was all right. That is the pressure which the Imperial Chancellor is supposed to have exercised upon me in order to have me issue contracts for more U-boats. Imperial Chancellor Michaelis and Imperial Chancellor Count Hertling never spoke a word to me about U-boats.

Delegate Dr. Struve had also sent a detailed memorial to the same effect, to Imperial Chancellor Michaelis, which the latter handed over to me one day in the budget committee, without a word. That represents the steps taken by the three Imperial Chancellors with regard to whom it has been asserted that they constantly had to force me to take steps towards U-boat construction.

Now, for the Supreme High Command of the Army! Gentlemen, so far as I can remember—and I am certain that I am not wrong—the Supreme High Command of the Army never said one single word to me with regard to U-boat construction during all these years. Nor did the Supreme High Command of the Army need to do so in any way, for the Supreme High Command of the Army was in constant communication with those who were conducting naval operations, who were, of course, completely informed on all points. But I believe that I can offer you here an interesting additional feature in connection with this question. Delegate Dr. Struve had sent to General Ludendorff also a very detailed memorial, technically well-grounded and prompted by patriotic motives, asking him to exert his influence to have more U-boats built; and Delegate Gothein had also, at that time, sent a letter to Ludendorff, in which, according to my recollection, he said that he supported the statements made by Dr. Struve in every detail. I will now read briefly the reply which General Ludendorff sent to Dr. Struve. This reply is dated at the end of 1917, and reads as follows:

To the Honorable Mr. Struve, M.D., Member of the Reichstag: You assume, in your memorial of the 4th of November of 1917, that the U-boat is one of the most effective weapons and that, for this reason, its construction should be carried on to the greatest extent. This view is shared by the Supreme High Command of the Army, the Navy Department, and the Admiralty Staff. The only difference between you and the aforesaid military branches of the service lies in this, that you consider that U-boat construction is capable of being increased.

In this connection, I (Ludendorff) must, on the contrary, adhere to the view expressed in my answer to Mr. Gothein, that at present an increase of output is no longer possible in matters pertaining to general armament industries and other commercial pursuits adapted to meet the needs of war. An investigation recently made by the Navy Department with regard to the yards, and at which a representative of the Supreme High Command of the Army took part, has resulted in again furnishing proof of a nature which was sufficient to show me (Ludendorff) that it was unbiased, and that my opinion is still correct. (That is to say, that further construction was impossible.) It is not affected by the fact that individual shipyards appear to have stated to you that, by increasing their number of workmen, by building in series, etc., still more U-boats could be laid upon the ways. In face of the obvious fact that workmen are hard to find, and that coal is hard to get, etc., this view will hardly hold water. The question of construction in series was also discussed with the shipyard people. Of course, contracts in series, so far as they go, would, from the outset, bring good results. The continued changes and improvements in types have undoubtedly had an unfavorable effect so far as the number of boats which can be turned out completed is concerned. But these improvements and these changes were absolutely essential, and the results have shown that the way which was taken was, generally speaking, correct. The decision as to the extent to which, in the future, certain types are to be constructed in series, is a matter which must be left to the discretion of the competent and expert authorities in Berlin. I should like to state once more, in closing, that the economic plan of all our industries must be conceived as a unit, and that the effective establishment of lines of demarcation for individual fields of interest can only come about by the closest cooperation on the part of the various arms of the military and naval service participating in the effort. This cooperation exists. That questions of labor, substitute material, raw stuffs and coal, play an important part in reaching decisions, goes without saying. That individual representatives of industries wish to be still more efficient, and believe that they can be still more efficient in their particular branch, is an encouraging sign of German efficiency. And we would ask no more than to have them announce their intentions in order that we may put them to the test, and that abuses may be recognized and avoided. But with regard to U-boat construction, the question is, in my opinion, absolutely settled for the present.

The CHAIRMAN: Your statements, your Excellency, make it necessary for me to obtain various explanations from his Excellency v. Bethmann at this point. May I ask your Excellency v. Bethmann to take up the following matter. We have been talking here of a memorial of Delegate Dr. Struve directed to your Excellency in the year 1916. According to what has been stated here, this document went no further, and, in any event, did not reach the hands of Secretary of State v. Capelle. Why did this happen?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: It is impossible for me to make a statement on this point today. I assume that this will be found in the

records. But I believe that at this time I can reconstruct the reason for it. I was never of the opinion that Secretary of State v. Capelle failed to push sufficiently the U-boat construction. Secretary of State v. Capelle has stated how it was that I came into touch with him in connection with the question of U-boat construction. I can simply add to Secretary of State v. Capelle's statement that in the letter—I do not know the date—which I addressed to him as the result of representations made to me by Delegate Dr. Struve, it was unnecessary to take up the question of attempting to overcome arguments submitted by the Secretary of State for the reason that, on the contrary, he agreed with me in the question of U-boat construction.

I desire to add one thing. Secretary of State v. Capelle had reference to an oral report which he made to me as the result of representations made to me by Delegates Fischbeck and Wiemer. In this interview with me Secretary v. Capelle analyzed those reasons which influenced him in the matter of his policy with regard to U-boat construction and which he has restated here today. At that time I obtained the impression that this U-boat construction policy of Secretary of State v. Capelle's was well founded. If the memorial of the year 1917 was not forwarded by me to the Secretary of State, that may have been due, so far as I am able at the present time to recall the situation by thinking back step by step, to no other than the excellent reason that I was of the opinion that Secretary of State v. Capelle was doing what was necessary in the way of U-boat construction.

The CHAIRMAN: It was stated in the remarks made by Secretary of State v. Capelle, that the concessions of the government in matters pertaining to the U-boat war of 1916 had resulted in materially holding back the Navy from building any more U-boats. Would your Excellency, perhaps, be able to make this a matter of comment at the present time?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I do not know that I have any comments to make with regard to the matter. My general attitude toward the U-boat war was thoroughly known to Secretary of State v. Capelle, with whom I held frequent conferences on the subject. The view which I took undoubtedly found expression also in the *Sussex* note, and if Secretary of State v. Capelle reached the conclusion therefrom that it was my earnest desire to avoid the unrestricted U-boat war, he drew the correct conclusion.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to ask the question once more, since it does not seem to me that it has been answered by the reply your Excellency has given. Concessions made by the Imperial Government in matters pertaining to the U-boat war of 1916, deterred the Navy from building more U-boats. Is that correct? Did the concessions of the Imperial Government have a definite effect; that is, did it result in bringing about a pause in U-boat construction?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: No, absolutely not. At that time, I had no dealings whatsoever with Secretary of State v. Capelle with regard to the U-boat question. So that the conclusions which he has drawn with regard to U-boat construction, and with regard to which I just stated that a reference to the question of the U-boat war and my attitude toward the U-boat war were absolutely correct, are his own affair.

The CHAIRMAN: Then I should like to have a definite answer from Mr. v. Capelle once more on this point, in order to avoid any misunderstanding.

Witness ADMIRAL v. CAPELLE: Gentlemen, I exerted myself to point out that it was a combination of circumstances which sufficed to convince me, who, after the resignation of Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz, had entered the office completely unfamiliar with it, that, if I did not intend to go against the Imperial Government, the Emperor, the Imperial Chancellor, the *Sussex* note, and the Reichstag, it would be wholly out of the way and, as a matter of fact, impossible of accomplishment, to initiate plans for a U-boat construction program on a great scale in connection with this wholly, so to speak, negative complex of circumstances. In my opinion at that time, which I maintain today, that would have amounted to greeting the course of events with a slap in the face; for, on the one hand, the retreat had been generally sounded by the political branch and, on the other hand, along would have come the newly-appointed Secretary of State with a U-boat construction program on a grand scale. The reproaches which were generally voiced against Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz were centered on exactly the one point, which was that he had carried on his own individual policies. Would that not have been carrying on an individual policy? Would it not have constituted a repetition of the same mistake, if, in view of these events, I had undertaken a U-boat construction program on a grand scale?

Delegate GOTHEIN: I would like to put a brief question which goes back somewhat further. Your Excellency stated that Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz, at the time of his incumbency before the war, had placed contracts for 45 U-boats in all, including the 28 which were probably finished, and, in the course of the 20 months in which he still remained Secretary of the Navy, 186. I should really like to know how these separate constructions can be divided up and applied to each individual year. Was your Excellency aware of the fact that, according to the mobilization plan which already existed in time of peace, for instance, our greatest U-boat yard, the Germania yard, had to build 12 U-boats and, in fact, had to undertake to carry out the contract at once upon mobilization, but that, immediately after war was declared, half of this order was cancelled?

Witness ADMIRAL v. CAPELLE: No, I did not know that. But in the time preceding the war, I had nothing to do with U-boat construction and was not even informed upon the point. During my entire time of service in

the Navy Department, I never had anything to do in this line; but the recorder is sitting close by, who can, perhaps, explain the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: If you please, Captain Bartenbach!

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: In answer to the question which Delegate Gothein has touched upon, regarding the withdrawal of the order to build six boats according to mobilization plans, which order was given to the Germania shipyard, I am in a position to give definite information; for it was I myself who carried on the correspondence with the Germania shipyard at that time. The situation with the Germania shipyard was that it was absolutely full to the top with what still remained of the boats which had not been delivered in accordance with peace orders, so that it was impossible for the Germania yards to take over more than six boats, because it had not yet finished with the series U-31 to 41 which was to have been delivered, complete, during the past year, and because, aside from this, there were still five Austrian boats which likewise were not in a state of completion and which we naturally took over right away, and, in addition, one Norwegian boat. But it happened at that moment that the six boats were not given up altogether, but that they were handed over to the Weser yard, so that the number of the 12 boats provided by the mobilization order should be kept intact, and, in addition to this, we obtained the further advantage of setting to work another U-boat construction yard which, up to that time, had not been building. Another point was that, at that moment these boats, for which a construction period of 20 months in the middle of the entire series had been provided, did not seem to be so essential to us on the 1st of August, 1914, as the completion of those boats belonging to series U-31 to U-41 which were approaching completion, for the reason that we—and I include myself—felt that, in all human probability, viewing the matter in August, 1914, these boats which might in 24 months come into action against the enemy, would hardly come to the point of being put in commission. That was the reason why the 6 boats of the Germania yard were transferred to the Weser yard.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Let me put a question in this connection. So far as I know, the yard never stated that it could not deliver these boats. Is it not true that the delays which took place in the delivery of the boats may have been due to the fact that the building program was too extensive in the number of different types required? At that time, I pointed out in the budget committee that the Germania yard had either 9 or 12 different types to construct—I do not now know which of the two it was—and that, since a yard can turn out great amounts only if it has to deal with standard types, an extraordinary delay took place in construction. Everyone who is acquainted with industrial methods knows that a large output can only be obtained if construction is limited to the most uniform types possible. It might be desirable to take the testimony of some representative of the

yards on this point. Is the Captain able to testify as to whether the Germania yard was engaged in building different types at that time?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: No, at that time we only had one single boat type, that of the ordinary large-sized U-boat, at that moment represented in the Germania yard by the series U-31 to U-41. At that moment, there were absolutely no new boat types in Germany.

Delegate GOTHEIN: May I add another question? Is it true that, on October 1, 1914, the contract for the 6 boats which had been taken away from the Germania yard was transferred to the Weser yard?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: At that particular moment, I was no longer in the Navy Department. I do not know whether it was exactly in October. I do know, however, that there was at least a delay of some weeks.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Well, then, to proceed: It was not until November that other yards were called in, that is, the Vulkan yard representing the only one in November, 1914—

(Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: Certainly.)

—The next new yard to be included was that of Blohm and Voss, in April of 1915. Is that correct?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: Certainly.

Delegate GOTHEIN: So that it was not until April, 1915, that is, three-quarters of a year later, that another shipyard was included. Is it true that at that time bids to build U-boats made by Reiherstieg and Schichau were turned down by the Navy Department?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: I can not in my capacity as an expert inform you exactly on this point. I would call attention, however, to the fact that we are now taking up the question of his Excellency v. Tirpitz's construction policy.

Delegate GOTHEIN: But emphasis has been laid upon the point that Admiral v. Tirpitz gave out contracts for such an extraordinary number of U-boats to be built,

(Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: That is true, too.)

and I have just expressed the wish to have it definitely settled as to when the orders for this amount of construction were actually given, and, if these yards were not taken over until so late a date, that would explain why, up to April, 1915, no further notable orders had been placed. I took up the matter in due course in the budget committee; and no contrary view was expressed. Then it is true, is it, that later on no new yards were taken over until the spring of 1917, and that the one to be taken over at that time was only the Bremer Vulkan?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: Certainly.

Delegate GOTHEIN: So that, altogether, at that time, the Germania yard, the Weser yard and, from the outset, the Imperial yard at Danzig, the deliveries from which were, however, quite insignificant, and, in addition

to these, the Blohm and Voss yard, but lately included, were all which were taken over at that time. Up to the spring of 1917, other yards had not been taken over, and it was only then that the Bremer Vulkan was added to the list. It was only at the close of 1917 that the Schichau and Elbing yards were taken over. Is that correct?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: Certainly.

Delegate GOTHEIN: The Tecklenburg, not until the beginning of 1918?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: Certainly.

Delegate GOTHEIN: The Seebeck, the Atlas works and the Neptune-Rostock yards, not until the spring of 1918?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: That is true.

Delegate GOTHEIN: All the others, such as the Stettiner-Vulkan, the Oder yard, the Lübeck yards, etc., received, as a matter of fact, no orders at all?

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: True.

Delegate GOTHEIN: At that time—and perhaps Admiral Capelle will remember this—when the Secretary of State for the Navy announced that it was impossible to give out any further orders for U-boats, I gave him the names of 16 different yards which, up to that time, had received no orders. That was on May 5, 1917. So that this would all agree.

Witness ADMIRAL V. CAPELLE: So far as Privy Councilor Gothein's statements applied to my term of office, I should like to state the following: In the year 1916, the first year of my incumbency, U-boat construction was limited to comparatively few yards. In 1917, after the U-boat department was created, the number of docks was increased. I have already pointed out that, in the year 1916, we were under heavy pressure to provide, above all, mine-seekers and small torpedo-boats. Those yards which were included for the U-boat construction program only in the year 1917-18 were at that time mainly busy with the construction of these mine-seekers, and my expert adviser at that time fought with all the power at his command against these yards receiving any further U-boat orders, stating that otherwise everything would simply collapse. He stated also that we would have to divide up and have some of the yards handle U-boats and the rest, mine-seekers. This seemed so comprehensible to me that I could do no more than confirm and approve.

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: I should like to make one point clear in respect to the question of taking over additional yards. To have to take over a further yard is always disadvantageous. For it was in the matter of this very U-boat construction that we came to learn that all those elementary preliminary questions which had been traversed up to that time with success in the case of the other yards would have to be worked through a certain stage in the case of every single yard, and that, in this way, by not taking over any more yards than we did, it is absolutely impossible to

show to what extent U-boat construction was actually increased. The only point is this: How many boats were actually made the subject of orders, and how many boats were delivered? As to which yards had a hand in the matter, is a question of absolutely secondary significance and, as I have stated, to obtain the greatest number of yards possible constituted no advantage for the U-boat construction program, but an actual disadvantage.

Delegate GOTHEIN: To this I should like to remark that, of course, the production capacity of the yard rests on the matter of U-boat construction and that Secretary of State v. Capelle definitely stated at that time that no new contracts could be given to the old yards because they were already overburdened with U-boat construction to such an extent that it would have been quite impossible for them to take over the new contracts and to delay carrying out their old contracts as a result. Is not this true? So that, at that time—and the Secretary of State will probably remember this too—I explained that the delays in U-boat construction in the old yards, particularly in the Germania yard and the Blohm and Voss plant, were to be traced back to the unfortunate construction program which had been heaped upon these yards, since the Germania yard was called upon to build 12 different types, and the Blohm and Voss yard, 8 or 9.

Witness v. CAPELLE: Gentlemen, Privy Councilor Gothein has stated a number of times, in the course of his remarks, that the yards—he has just specified the Germania yard and the Blohm and Voss yard—were forced to take over the construction of different types. The situation is just the reverse; the yards fought tooth and nail for the different contracts. Each time, when new orders were placed and new types were demanded, the yards did all that was humanly possible to obtain as many contracts as they could, even those involving the building of these new types. The main theory which Privy Councilor Gothein has constantly supported, namely, that it is a practical proposition in U-boat construction to allocate the same type to the same yard, as a part of a definite series, is naturally correct. We carried out this theory in the last period of the war, when the situation had become clear. But we were unable to do that at first, and the yards fought for contracts tooth and nail. It was not we who insisted upon this; it was the others, the yards, who did the insisting.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Does the Admiral know that this division of work and the distribution of types of a single kind to the individual yards only took place in 1918, and that we had already insisted upon this as early as 1916?

Witness v. CAPELLE: I am very familiar with the fact that a more practicable distribution of the types to the individual yards only became possible during the last part of my incumbency. I should have been very glad to do that earlier. I constantly held that the contentions of the gentlemen

were, technically, absolutely justified, and I constantly recognized them as such. The only point was that it was not possible for me to do so.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Let me now take up the question of the 5th of May. Your Excellency gave us to understand that, when you took over the post of Secretary of State for the Navy, it was impossible for you to initiate a U-boat construction program on a big scale, since this would have been running counter to the whole political situation of that time. Further, you announced that on this occasion, resolutions were adopted by all political parties in favor of the unrestricted U-boat war. I did not know that any organization worthy of the name belonging to the Progressive National Party ever did anything of the kind. Do you know anything about this subject?

Witness v. CAPELLE: Gentlemen, I carefully refrained from stating that all the parties had demanded the ruthless U-boat war. I no longer have in mind at present what the individual parties demanded. At that time, the public in general, public opinion, had not at all the right idea of the ruthless U-boat war. I merely stated that all parties had introduced resolutions in favor of the U-boat war—quite generally stated. But these resolutions are to be found, of course, in the records of the Reichstag and can be obtained very promptly.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I do not believe that you will be successful in finding that such a resolution was made by the Progressive National Party.

Witness v. CAPELLE: But a resolution was introduced, was it not?

Delegate GOTHEIN: No. At that time, at the spring session of 1916, your Excellency stated that it was impossible to carry on the unrestricted U-boat warfare to a successful issue, because we did not have the necessary number of U-boats for that purpose.

Witness v. CAPELLE: Gentlemen, at that first session at which I took part and at which I made that long speech which has been so often quoted, I did not express that meaning; as a matter of fact, I repeatedly expressed myself to the opposite effect during my incumbency. Of course, I had naturally gone over very carefully in my own mind what I wanted to say and what I did not want to say. With regard to the question, whether the unrestricted U-boat war was or was not the proper step to be taken at that time, whether it was possible or impossible, I took absolutely no position, or at least an extraordinarily cautious one. I limited myself to explaining to the members of the budget committee the facts as they actually existed at that time, and in as full detail as possible. There was only one thing against which I expressed myself very definitely and to which I objected. I repeated twice, and both read and announced, that I could not bring myself to the conviction that a U-boat war carried on for six months, with forces which might perhaps be just sufficient but which were by no means abundant, would succeed in forcing England to be ready for peace, a peace

which, by accepting, England would have declared that she had lost the war as well as the dominion of the seas. According to my conscientious conviction, we needed more than we had for this purpose. Gentlemen, this announcement answers Privy Councilor Gothein's question. I stated: "With forces which might perhaps be just sufficient," and so I could not have said: "Our forces are insufficient."

Delegate GOTHEIN: I should like to call attention to the fact that, in the first place, a literal reproduction of Admiral v. Capelle's statements was not to be found in the report of that session in the records of the Reichstag and that they were long sought for in vain. It is a very interesting thing that the Secretary of State is now able to read us this report word for word, when it is not to be found in the records of the Reichstag. In the second place, I should like to ask him whether he remembers that the impression made by his statements, particularly the impression that still more boats were necessary, caused so well known an advocate of the unrestricted U-boat war as Delegate Groeber was at that time to give up the idea of launching the war under existing conditions, and that he closed his speech with the words: "We simply haven't them! The Nurembergers do not hang a man until they get him."

Witness v. CAPELLE: Gentlemen, it was only two days ago that I was informed by Captain v. Gohren, my adviser of the budget division, that the speech that I made at that time was not taken down by the official stenographers—as I had imagined to be the case until two or three days ago—but that Captain v. Gohren took it down in shorthand. So that, up to a few days ago, I believed that my speech was a part of the records of the Reichstag. It was for this reason that I was never exactly able to understand various remarks which were made by Delegate Dr. Struve, because I was firmly convinced that this speech was available in the records of the Reichstag. It was not until now, as the result of great pains taken by me to put my hands on this speech, that I was informed by Captain v. Gohren: "Why, I was the one who took the speech down in shorthand. Here it is." So I have obtained it thus for the first time.

Delegate GOTHEIN: I should like to call attention to the fact that the Reichstag bureau repeatedly requested the Navy Department to make this speech a part of the records and that the speech was, as a matter of fact, never delivered for this purpose.

Witness v. CAPELLE: I should like to state, in reply to the last remarks made by Privy Councilor Gothein that this request of the Reichstag was never brought to my attention; that it was handled by my subordinates, the budget division, etc. I myself was extremely anxious for the speech to be embodied in the records of the Reichstag. If this had come to my knowledge, I should have insisted that it be made a part of the records of the Reichstag. As a personal matter, I consider it of great importance

that this speech be included in the Reichstag records. Now for the second point. Delegate Gothein has asked me whether I remember Delegate Groeber's speech. I remember that speech very plainly. I know very well how Delegate Groeber, who was the leader of the Center party, began his speech. I can even give his words. He spoke in a humorous way about cooking, saying that we take what we please, but that it is essential, after all, and we have to have it. I was extraordinarily surprised at this speech of Delegate Groeber's, since it was to the effect that I had said that we had not enough U-boats to begin the ruthless U-boat war.

Delegate GOTHEIN: He did not state that.

Witness v. CAPELLE: I know that very definitely, even at this time; I can swear to it.

Delegate GOTHEIN: There is nothing to be found in the records upon the point.

Witness v. CAPELLE: I should like to make an additional brief and very general statement with regard to this matter. Gentlemen, the situation of the ruthless U-boat war was quite different from that of the war on land. If I determine to make an offensive when conducting a campaign on land, I need to have a definite number of forces. Without this amount of forces, I can not undertake to make any offensive at all. But, if I desire to commence a ruthless U-boat war, it is not necessary that I should have any particular amount of forces at my command, for I can begin with just a few U-boats or I can start with many. As a matter of fact, among the marine experts themselves, there was a surprisingly large number, the most active leader of which was Admiral v. Tirpitz, who felt that the number of U-boats that we had would be absolutely sufficient. And it was my view, too, that our number would have fully sufficed to begin the ruthless U-boat war. The only thing to be really considered is the result, the effect. (Laughter.) And I may make the following statement here: Gentlemen, it is well known that there was published in England before the war a pamphlet which described U-boat warfare in an absolutely masterly manner and which attracted a great deal of attention. This was a pamphlet written by Conan Doyle. According to this pamphlet, a successful U-boat war was carried on against England, by eight U-boats.

The CHAIRMAN: The U-boat question seems to me to have been fairly well covered from the technical side by the statements which have been made. I have before me a number of requests to be heard, and of course the gentlemen making these requests will be given an opportunity to speak, but I believe that, in view of all that has been stated, the remarks should be brief.

Witness DR. STRUVE: Secretary of State v. Capelle complained at the beginning of his remarks, that I reproached him with not having developed U-boat construction to a sufficient extent. Admiral v. Capelle has not

answered the other charge which I made against him, which was that he gave the Reichstag figures which were different from those which we had expected.

Witness v. CAPELLE: I had not yet arrived at that point.

Witness DR. STRUVE: I have, however, to substantiate the other charge which I made when terminating my statement of the 7th of November, that the Secretary of State, even as early as 1916, seemed to us to be very scantily informed with regard to U-boat construction. Secretary of State v. Capelle has gone into these matters today in the same affable manner which he has observed all through the years and has manifested even with regard to those delegates who opposed him. He has stated, as the facts show, that he took over the office of Secretary of State, entering it from another department and without any prior opportunity to become informed concerning U-boats and U-boat construction, and that this occurred after he had been retired from office for a year, and that he did so, of course, from patriotic motives and a love of country.

Even at that time, this situation seemed to us to call for concern in the case of Secretary of State v. Capelle. We did not know how the leading authority of the Navy Department would get his experience, and this at a time when every day of the war was so valuable.

Last week, Secretary of State v. Capelle heard from my lips the long list of statements of a technical nature affecting U-boat construction. We learn today for the first time that the Secretary of State knew of my earlier memorials which were transmitted to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg and, afterwards, to Ludendorff by Gothein and to Michaelis by myself. We have heard Capelle's judgment of these memorials, which was to the effect that they contained a large number of technical proposals, proposals which, at that time, even, were submitted to criticism, but which are not contradicted today—proposals which, according to Capelle's statements, emanated from patriotic motives alone.

So that I can show by this that the views which we entertained as early as 1916 and 1917 have stood their ground in the face of all earlier criticism as well as the criticism of today. So that they were not such as to be laid aside as the private opinions of a mere delegate but were views which have not been overthrown as the result of any criticism to which they have been subjected up to the present time.

Secretary of State v. Capelle has, furthermore, been good enough to state that even he had to admit that he held our views always to have been technically correct, but that the only thing was that it was impossible for him to act in accordance with these propositions and representations. He further admits that our charges involving the questions of why so many different types had been assigned to the individual yards, and why there were no orders in series, were of themselves sound, and that, towards the

end of his incumbency, he was able, to his great personal satisfaction, to proceed in accordance with both these propositions. That it was not until the last period of his incumbency that he succeeded in doing what we had desired to be done from the first. We could furnish him with propositions and with ideas, but not with the power to put them through.

Of 11 yards which were taken over for U-boat construction, only 5 found it possible to deliver the U-boats. Six of these U-boat yards delivered not one single U-boat. It was not until that date that the Navy Department found it "possible" to place orders—and I am speaking from an entirely impersonal standpoint. So that the proven fact is that all these beautiful big figures which we have heard Admiral v. Capelle give today exist only in the records of the Navy Department. As a matter of fact, only 5 yards out of 11 made deliveries.

The difference which, as a technical matter, exists between us, and which must be explained today, since I have already made my statements in writing about these matters, is the following: Admiral v. Capelle, I have not calculated the year 1918 as belonging to your incumbency in connection with the U-boat matter. In January, 1918, I came very near receiving a reproof in the budget committee because I stated that you were Secretary of State in name only. In the autumn of 1917, our wish that a U-boat department be established was finally fulfilled at the insistence of the Supreme High Command of the Army, as was said at that time—as was said at that time! And at the same time—and I will ask the other gentlemen who are experts in these matters to check this—in the autumn of 1917, the big orders began to come, which, however, were unfortunately never delivered. But it was only then that the desire to build sufficient U-boats took form—the desire which my political friends, ever since 1900, and I, ever since 1907, when I entered the Reichstag, urged upon the Navy year in and year out. I venture to call to Admiral v. Capelle's attention that, although he did so against my advice, he made the following announcement to the budget committee in 1916:

I must admit to the gentlemen of the Progressive National Party, Messrs. Leonhart, Struve, and Gothein, that they were correct in the attitude which they already expressed with regard to the great necessity of U-boats, correct in opposition to all expert experiences up to that time. I am glad to admit that this is and can be a matter of great satisfaction to those gentlemen, this great confidence in the U-boat weapon was undoubtedly at least founded upon the fact that the gentlemen had greater confidence in the unlimited possibilities of our development along technical lines than we did; but perhaps, and I should like to think that this is the case, it was only instinctive after all.

In order to assist your memory on this point, Admiral, I will recall to your attention the fact that you personally stated to me at that time: "In your case, Doctor, it certainly was your unerring instinct which led you to

take this view." This was the friendly remark with which you closed the explanation which you had just made to me.

I will now revert to the fact that, in the autumn of 1917, the new spirit was carried through to manifestation, and finally orders came in sufficient numbers.

Our letters to Ludendorff are before you; if they are to be read, we are at any time ready to do so. And since they also were before the Navy Department, this fact shows that, up to the present day, their contents were such as to maintain their full power and effect in the face of the criticism of the Navy Department. Then we have the excellent and diplomatic reply of General Ludendorff, to the effect that "cooperation" at present exists. The phrase "cooperation exists" was enough for anybody who had been enabled to go through as many experiences, year after year, as I had on account of the "diplomacy" of the Navy Department; I did not allow myself to become in any way irritated by the spirit of rejection which characterized other phrases. I learned later that immediately, in spite of the fact that General Ludendorff wrote us that new yards could not be taken over, or something to that effect, an order of 132 U-boats, which came to 93,996 U-boat tons, followed. I regret it extremely that I have remained even at this time so very technical as to always talk in U-boat tons, because, as a matter of fact, U-boat tons make computations for the purpose of comparison much better criterions than the numbers of the U-boats themselves. So that General Ludendorff was only doing what we wanted. Afterward came the great program which was called the Scheer program. Mr. Secretary of State v. Capelle, we do not credit this to your incumbency—the so-called Scheer program of 361,720 tons, consisting of 124,170 tons placed in June, 1918, and 237,550 tons a few months later. We do not credit your incumbency with this amount. It is to be credited to the account of the U-boat division, of Ritter v. Mann. There we have U-boat orders of 40,000 tons in a month. And you admitted, too, that Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg took up the matter of an increased U-boat construction in the spring—of course, this too in the most amiable way, just as these things are handled between two friendly ministers. Remember that you said this morning that you were just at the point of starting preparations yourself, so that the suggestion made by the Imperial Chancellor was nothing but a pleasant incident. But I did not understand your remark when you said that it was only day before yesterday that you were informed that your speech of March 28, 1916, was not in the Reichstag report. Not once, many times, over and over again, did I make a point of this in the Reichstag. "Mr. Secretary of State, you are mistaken. I have not found your speech." And then when you continued to stick by your assertion, I said: "The speech is no longer in the Reichstag records; it may have been in the records, but it is no longer there." And we were

bound to consider this all the more extraordinary when, in the year 1918, Count Westarp asked you what you meant and asked you in your capacity as a responsible Secretary of State, in these words:

Then all the naval authorities (and it is for this purpose that I ask, not for the purpose of getting the historical truth—for that has been established long since—but in order that finally, and once and for all, we may have a truce to this political mintage such as we are used to in these matters) all responsible authorities of the Navy were, then, as far back as March, 1916, in favor of the unrestricted U-boat war?

to which you answered along these lines: "Yes, that is what I stated in my speech, and it is in my speeches of the 28th and 29th of March, 1916.

It was this confirmation of yours which Count Westarp then made use of in his speech against me, and it was extraordinary—

The CHAIRMAN: Dr. Struve, I should like to call to your attention that it is your duty as a witness to take up matters here which are in any way material in shedding light upon the U-boat war, but that everything must be omitted which smacks of criticism. All the statements which you have just finished making appear to me to go quite definitely beyond the limits of what is necessary here and of what can be considered proper remarks from a witness. I shall ask you to govern yourself in your further statements, accordingly.

Witness DR. STRUVE: With great pleasure. My purpose simply was—and I believe it to be my duty, unless I am mistaken—to call to the attention of the cowitness, to call to Secretary v. Capelle's attention the fact that he is mistaken. In Count Westarp's speech of March 29, 1916, it is stated that the Imperial Chancellor, as well as Secretary of State v. Capelle, had on the previous day expressed a contrary opinion—contrary to the opinion of Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz—to the effect that this U-boat war would not bring about these results within six months. Count Westarp's speech is literally as follows:

It is said that Admiral v. Capelle took an opposing view yesterday. It was known, however, that Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz had expressed the opinion that success was to be expected. He (Count Westarp) must admit that Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz's opinion had conclusive weight so far as he was concerned.

I consider it my duty, because it is an extraordinary and a material difference, and because Secretary of State v. Capelle had made many references to motives of patriotism which have inspired me throughout the war, because we have all been in the same trenches and are all now a suffering, hungry people and, for this reason, should not emphasize differences unnecessarily but should attempt to get them out of the way—for these reasons, I consider that it is my duty to make these remarks at this time.

I need to add nothing of a technical nature, since it is now a matter of

judicial notice that not only my statements of Friday morning, but also the views which I expressed with regard to U-boat construction during the course of the years which the war lasted, have held up against all criticism to this day.

The CHAIRMAN: If the committee has considered it its duty up to this time to go into the conditions of the U-boat war to such an extent as to get beyond touch or else to maintain very slight touch with the question which is really before us, namely, the question of Wilson's peace move, I will at least ask you all to bear in mind that that is the material point by which we hold our course and that other features are bound to be only of more or less secondary importance. I shall ask the gentlemen to bear this in mind in the course of these examinations.

Does your Excellency desire to make a special answer to these remarks?

Witness ADMIRAL V. CAPELLE: Gentlemen, I should like to make a general statement which I hope will somewhat clarify our outlook concerning the question which is at issue and which will also, in part, constitute an answer to the remarks of the last witness. In March, 1916, against my express protest, I was appointed Secretary of State. This protest was based mainly upon the fact that it was 20 years since I had served in the line and had practically nothing to do with the technical side. I was, consequently, dependent upon my departmental director, whom, on account of his wealth of experience, I held in very great esteem. He had been director in chief of shipyards and enjoyed my entire confidence. This departmental director constantly expressed the view to me, with great energy, that the entire construction should be under the control of a single hand—new construction, repair construction of large and small craft, of the war-craft, and of the vessels requisitioned from the merchant marine. Only one person would be able to oversee everything and to make the proper distributions at the yards. This point of view seemed to me so clearly correct that I agreed with it from every standpoint. In the meantime, matters came more and more to a head, and I was informed by the Chief of the Admiralty Staff that very definite opposition was being made to the departmental director whom I have mentioned. He was generally looked upon, so to speak, as the person who put all the obstacles in the way of a reckless prosecution of U-boat construction. I therefore came to the conclusion that I would have to make a fundamental change in Navy Department conditions—and this was my own opinion and not the result of outside pressure—and that I would have to segregate U-boat construction from all the rest of the naval construction. In this way, it came about, as the result of my initiative, that the U-boat department was born. This U-boat department had nothing to do except to further U-boat construction. The inevitable happened. It was not long before the U-boat division was at odds with all other departments, which were then being pressed to the wall. I was constantly making

decisions in order to reach a peaceful solution, and I invariably decided in favor of the U-boat division. I consciously pushed all the other construction interests into the background—the creation of the U-boat division occurred about the autumn of 1917—when I saw that the six months would not be sufficient to end the war. From that time on, the U-boat division—it was directly under my orders and I was responsible—set out upon a much more energetic construction policy with my assistance and support, as appears from the figures which I have already given. Those are the facts, and that is the course of progress in the development of the policy of U-boat construction during my term of service.

The CHAIRMAN: If you please, your Excellency Spahn!

Delegate DR. SPAHN: Your Excellency, we have been, time and again, obliged to assume as the result of what you have said, that decisions with regard to the U-boat war and, particularly, with regard to the postponement of the unrestricted U-boat war, took place with your knowledge and consent. May I ask you to state your own idea as to the effect of the U-boat war in its various stages, starting with the time that you were put at the head of the Navy Department?

The CHAIRMAN: If you please, your Excellency!

Witness v. CAPELLE: Gentlemen, this question of the U-boat war did not come under my control as Secretary of State for the Navy. As Secretary of State for the Navy, I had absolutely nothing to do with the unrestricted U-boat war. The question if and when concerned me not at all as Secretary of State for the Navy. I had no influence upon it and no inquiries were made of me when the great decisions were made, either by the Imperial Chancellor, or by the Emperor, or by the Supreme High Command of the Army, or by the Navy. Now, his Excellency Spahn has asked me for my personal view. My personal view is as follows: When I was appointed Secretary of State, in 1916, I had been in the service about a year. At that time, I considered that our war situation was still comparatively favorable, and I could well afford to agree with the decision taken by the Emperor that the ruthless U-boat war should be postponed. I was never doubtful about the existence of the great danger which the ruthless U-boat war might mean in the political field, from the point of view of the neutral Powers. Therefore, it was an easy matter for me to champion the cause of the decision which had been rendered in the Reichstag. In the meantime, my insight into the war situation became more and more clear. About the end of the year 1916, I shared the opinion of the Supreme High Command of the Army, the Imperial Chancellor, and of those conducting naval operations, that our situation was at least very serious. It was my opinion that there was really nothing more left for us to do except to make use of our last instrument of war for the purpose of rescuing us from defeat or from an unfavorable peace. And I was all the more inclined to this

view, since the ruthless U-boat war, in my estimation as in the representations made by the Admiralty Staff in the course of its well-known memorial, offered us at least a very great chance to bring the war to a favorable termination, so far as we were concerned.

And at this point I may venture to make a small digression. Dr. Sinzheimer read to us from the well-known memorial of the Admiralty Staff that the Chief of the Admiralty Staff spoke of "forcing [England] to accept peace." That is true. But that is probably to be attributed to a somewhat careless preparation. For, in the really important part—I believe that Dr. Sinzheimer has the memorial in his hand and will, perhaps, turn to page 26¹—

(Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Yes.)

—we shall find the view of the Chief of the Admiralty set out in spread type, and which reads at the close of this article in spread type, as follows:

I confidently expect this success within a period of five months at the longest. The success obtained will be such as to incline England to accept a useful peace.

To incline England to accept a useful peace! Gentlemen, I have been asked for my opinion; I have always been of the opinion—and I have expressed it in a small circle—that the unrestricted U-boat war will incline England to accept a useful peace.

The CHAIRMAN: Dr. Sinzheimer's statement, with special reference to this memorial.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I should like, Admiral, to make the following statement with regard to this memorial. Above all it is the conclusion of this memorial which calls for our attention. It was stated, and by Admiral Koch, too, that the intention was to incline England to accept peace, and that there was no question of bringing England to her knees. Now, this is what that conclusion says:

If England is once brought to her knees, then an understanding will have to be brought about with the United States as well, by virtue of which alone she will be able to recover her commercial prosperity, and which will not necessarily result in political sacrifices on her part. The deciding factor which remains unchanged is the following: We must not lose sight of the American peril, because we must fight our way to victory, and an early victory too, in order to preserve our national existence. And all the more so after the answer to the German peace proposal has made it plain, both by the terms and spirit of the document, that our enemies are still bent upon the political destruction of Germany. I guarantee that for its part the U-boat war will lead to victory.

The accompanying memorial of the 22d of December, 1916, expresses exactly the same idea.

¹Page 1259 of this print.

So that there is no mention of having England brought to the point of a peace by negotiation through agreements entered into at the conference table, but it is said that England is to be conquered by means of the submarine war. And in addition to the above, I desire to make another assertion which, it seems to me, is of importance, in view of the fact that you have made reference to the memorial. I am now speaking of the session of the main committee of the 31st of January. On that occasion, Count Westarp spoke as follows:

After the step has once been taken, we must be perfectly clear on the point that no recession of any kind will occur in this matter, or can occur, before a complete victory over England is won.

He then continues as follows:

When England feels the results of the new war by personal contact, then England will probably or possibly be willing to enter into such negotiations, and then the great danger will consist in the fact that attempts at mediation on the part of President Wilson and on the part of our enemies will be employed for the purpose of persuading us to a premature cessation of the U-boat war.

He proceeds:

For this reason, I should like to emphasize the point at this time, that, in my opinion and in the opinion of my political friends, no halt in the conduct of the U-boat war should occur, even when such attempts at negotiation are actually taking place.

All the representatives of the government were present at this session, and I state as a fact that nobody contradicted this view of Count Westarp concerning the complete victory and the warning issued in connection therewith, not to meet any willingness on the part of England to negotiate. (Laughter and commotion.)

The CHAIRMAN: Does your Excellency wish to say something?

Witness ADMIRAL V. CAPELLE: Gentlemen, but all these questions have nothing to do with my office. As Secretary of State for the Navy, I took no part in these great political questions. I have just been asked here by the investigating committee for my personal view-point and I gave my personal view under oath, stating it to be that I had always believed that the U-boat war would bring us to a useful peace—and in this connection the term “useful” is, of course, vague; that is naturally clear to me—would bring us to a useful peace or to a peace of understanding. That has always been my personal opinion. I could take no stand with regard to what the other gentlemen said. That was not my duty. I was a spokesman for those in charge of the conduct of the war. My duty was to represent and defend the interests of the military branch in the Reichstag as their spokesman.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister of State Dr. David!

Minister of State DR. DAVID: It is a matter of great importance to be perfectly clear on the point of what the Supreme High Command of the Army and those in command of the affairs of the Navy expected from the U-boat war. According to the statements of Secretary of State v. Capelle and the recent statements of Admiral Koch, it would seem that the Supreme High Command of the Army and the Navy authorities were simply looking forward to a certain psychological softening on the part of England, and had held this idea in contemplation. I do not believe that this view is in accord with the facts and that, if it remains uncontradicted, it will lead the judgment astray which attempts to estimate the situation as it then existed.

If the phrase is contained in the memorial of the Admiralty Staff "to incline England to accept a useful peace," we are bound primarily to conclude that, judging from all the remarks which at that time came from the Right, a "useful peace" meant nothing else than the so-called German peace of the sword, a peace which we could saddle upon England after winning the victory. What those on the Right rejected even in connection with Wilson's mediation move, was a peace without victory. We do not want that, they said, but we must have a peace after having won a victory—a peace which we shall dictate to our opponents. That is probably the meaning of a "useful peace." But if we wanted to get that kind of a peace from England, it was not sufficient to bring about a softness on England's part, psychologically speaking; on the contrary, we would have had to make it impossible for England to carry on the war any further. And it was toward this end that all those indications which were given us during those days in the Reichstag, pointed, namely, that the U-boat war was going to result in the destruction of the necessities of life for the Entente and, particularly, in the destruction of any further ability on the Entente's part to proceed with the conduct of the war. It is to this effect that the documents which were officially published by the Admiralty Staff expressed themselves.

I have in my hand a bit of writing from official sources: *The Effects of the U-boat War Officially Represented*, completed in August, 1917. The purpose is there set out in more or less the following terms: That it was essential to deprive the Entente of its cargo space. That in this way "the keystone of England's national economy would be undermined." That, by so doing, the supplying of the English people with foodstuffs and raw material would be paralysed and, in the third place, the enemy would be deprived of the possibility of providing his army and his fleet with rations and war material. To what a degree the shortage in shipping space, the impossibility of providing themselves with necessities of life or with war material to a sufficient extent would actually take place, could be left in abeyance. The actual wording is this:

At what particular point the shipping space would begin to break down, whether at first in the matter of supplying the English civilian

population with food, or whether it would fail to meet the needs of conducting the war or to meet the needs of England's allies, in any event, at this point the foundation on which the capacity for continuing the war on the part of the Allies is based would become unsteady; we all see the limit of endurance approaching.

So that what we are dealing with here is not a question of reaching a psychological stage, but it is a question of actually reaching a radical aim, the aim of making it impossible for England to continue with the war. And what is more, it reflected in every way the entire mental attitude manifested from this side, which was not that we were to obtain a peace of understanding as the result of negotiations with our enemies, but that we were only to obtain peace by making it impossible for the enemy to continue the conduct of the war.

That was the radical aim.

I have here an article which was also published officially by Captain Brüninghaus, the departmental director in the Navy Department, who is here present. This article was given in the form of an address in various cities, and was published officially and printed in the Admiralty Staff of the Navy. Put briefly, it is there stated:

The economic and military difficulties of our opponents will be increased by the U-boat war and become sharper than ever; in the battle between ship construction against U-boat construction, the latter is bound to win. Piracy can put off the collapse of our enemies, but can not prevent it.

So it is the military and economic collapse which is the end in view, and not a mere psychological yielding.

And it is further stated in this document: "The high material and personal efficiency of the U-boat weapon, which is established for a long time to come and is already in a state of permanent development, the inability of our enemies, in spite of all their efforts to master the U-boat situation, constitute our certain guarantees that we shall reach our aims by means of the U-boat war."

Bearing these facts in mind, I should like to put the following question to Secretary of State v. Capelle: Did you not also know at that time that the real purpose of those conducting naval operations was to make it impossible for the Allies to provide themselves with foodstuffs and to make the further conduct of the war impossible by preventing the importation of ammunition to the western theater of war, and that this was recognized by them to be the real end and aim of the U-boat war?

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, I did not interrupt you, although the comments which you have made are far afield from the issue which concerns us at present, namely, the task of clearing up technical questions concerning the U-boats. So that I ask that if, in spite of this, I permit a reply to be

made to the Minister's question, it be expressed in the briefest possible terms. I shall, thereupon, and in any event, close this line of discussion and leave our investigation open at this point to the sole consideration of the technical questions involving U-boats. Otherwise, we shall make no progress whatsoever.

Witness ADMIRAL V. CAPELLE: Gentlemen, the thought was never entertained by the Navy, or at least by the authorities of the Navy, to cut England off by the use of, so to speak, radical methods, from the importation of food supplies, or that we could prevent the importation of ammunition across the Channel. I repeatedly expressed the thought in the budget committee and, particularly, in the course of a debate with Minister of State David, that we should drop these radical views. I remember very well having answered Minister of State David on one occasion, more or less in the following sense: That we should keep quiet, so far as the question of reducing England to starvation was concerned, for, as a matter of fact, nobody had that in mind. This was before the last period when the situation became so uncommonly difficult so far as the world crops were concerned. I constantly pointed to the fact that the only question was one of solving the problem of shipping space as a whole. And then I made various statements of considerable length with regard to the importation of ammunition by way of the Channel. I read yesterday in the *Berliner Tageblatt* that Delegate Dr. Struve had reproduced these remarks of mine which certainly expressed a very pessimistic attitude with regard thereto.

But now I should like to ask the Chairman to let me make a reply which will cover the point of view of the Navy.

The CHAIRMAN: If you please, your Excellency!

Witness ADMIRAL V. CAPELLE: This certainly appears to me to be of a very definite significance. I have before me a speech that I made in 1916, and I should like to be allowed to read it:

Delegate Stresemann put the question yesterday—and these words were quite to my liking—

(The CHAIRMAN: What was the date of this speech?)

March 29, 1916.

and I hope that I shall reproduce its meaning correctly: Where does this term "to bring England to her knees" actually come from? That is an unfortunate phrase.

That is what Delegate Stresemann says.

Nobody wanted to be the one first to have made use of this term, and here it was suddenly with us. Gentlemen, the term "to bring England to her knees" can be interpreted in different ways. In connection therewith, one can imagine England prostrate upon the ground, pleading for peace, admitting that she lost the war and once and for all renouncing

her dominion of the seas. That is what the term would mean from the radical point of view. But, again, one could think of it in the connection of England having become exhausted and tired of war as the result of U-boat struggles which had lasted for six months, to the extent of becoming more inclined to the idea of peace negotiations. And, gentlemen, on account of the close relations which, for many years, have brought me into close personal contact with Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz, I frequently discussed the question of the U-boat war—not during the very latest period, because I was sick and, consequently, not in the service, but formerly—and as a matter of fact, I was never conscious of the circumstance that my view-point differed in any way from that of Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz. Of course, we probably both used in our conversation the expression “bringing England to her knees.” I can go as far as to state that, on these occasions and in many cases, I thought that the chances of the U-boat war were better than the very cautious Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz considered them to be. And now, recently, the question of “bringing England to her knees” has become acute. The question of what this means has, to a certain extent, become the regular point at issue. In the course of the few days which have passed since I have again stepped into office, I have had the opportunity of talking over this matter with various officers. Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz was not among the number, but the Chief of the Admiralty Staff was. And whenever I asked the gentlemen: “What do you understand to be the meaning of the term ‘to force England to her knees?’” and whenever I spoke of the radical interpretation, these gentlemen answered me to this effect: “I did not understand that in that way; that was never my meaning.” So that was the experience which I had with these various gentlemen, and I believe that if we were able to call together the senior naval officers and ask them about this in conference, we would find that this view was shared by the vast majority. I asked myself yesterday whether, anyway, I would go into this question in the course of my remarks, but I said to myself that, in view of the fact that this question has really come up as clear-cut as is the case, I can not very well avoid taking it up. But, by way of caution, I scrutinized very carefully what I said yesterday and have read it word for word. I shall ask you to allow me to read this to you once again. I stated: “I can not force myself to the conviction that a U-boat war lasting six months with perhaps just enough, but by no means abundant forces, would be sufficient to force England to the point of peace, that is, to a peace by which England would recognize that she had lost the war and the dominion of the seas. According to my conscientious conviction, more would be needed to bring about this result.” And, on the other hand, I stated that I was fully of the opinion that a U-boat war which lasted six months would strike the economic existence of England a staggering blow. And I said yesterday, too, and I can venture to repeat it again, that I do not consider this blow of any less importance than does the recorder, Delegate Bassermann. I am convinced that England will become exhausted, as the result, and tired of war. When I made these remarks yesterday, I thought at that time, although I did not express the thought, that England would, as the result, be obliged to become more inclined toward the idea of the general peace.

Gentlemen, I have read this in order to make perfectly plain my personal view, which I was asked to give, and also to make plain the attitude of the Navy as it existed at that time, so far as the higher naval authorities were concerned.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Admiral, that was in March, 1916, when you opposed the idea of the unrestricted U-boat war. But the point at issue is as to what the Admiralty had in mind on the 22d of December, when the memorial came out and was published. You have stated: The Navy never took the ground that England should be, as it were, reduced to starvation. I beg that you take up the memorial of the 22d of December, the short accompanying memorial. It is stated herein:

The suggestion that England may already have in the country a sufficient amount of foodstuffs to tide over the crisis until the next harvest, is shown in the enclosure to be absolutely without merit.

And it is stated in so many words, in the same document:

If we can succeed in breaking the backbone of England's resistance, the war will immediately be terminated in our favor.

That was the point of view of the Navy on the 22d of December, just as it was set down. There is nothing here to the effect that England was to be psychologically prepared to enter into peace negotiations. But I must call attention to still another matter at this point: What was the opinion of the political branch? And in this connection, it is perhaps of importance to point out that on the 25th of June Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann, who had complete knowledge of the situation, expressed himself in the following terms:

Representations made concerning the rapid and conclusive effect of the U-boat war have come to be realized as exaggerations. And thus the certain expectation that the war would come to an end even before autumn, which was announced broadcast and was kept in existence by means of interchange of information between the front and home, has collapsed.

That was in June, 1917. On June 1, 1917, England was to lie prostrate upon the ground. And in addition to this, I call to your attention the fact that, when the U-boat war commenced, the point of view of the Foreign Office was certainly approximately that expressed by the memorial. For, in the well-known Mexican dispatch of Mr. Secretary of State Zimmermann, it is stated that:

The prospects were good that England would be forced to accept peace within two or three months.

Such was the point of view. Those are the facts.

The CHAIRMAN: Does your Excellency wish to answer? If not, we will drop this phase of the question.

Witness SECRETARY OF STATE V. CAPELLE: I would only like to make one more explanation. Gentlemen, so far as the question of starving England is concerned, that term is not to be taken literally, but as only meaning that England was to be placed in difficulties so far as food supply was concerned. So that the situation in the spring of 1916 and that of the spring of 1917 were fundamentally different, as, perhaps, Secretary of State Helfferich will take occasion to point out further on. In the spring of 1917, as is stated herein in detail, we had behind us the most wretched world crop which had ever occurred. For this reason, the chances in the year 1917 that England would meet difficulties, so far as the food supply was concerned, and as the result of the U-boat war, were greater than they were in 1916. I simply wanted to call attention to this feature.

Then, besides, I would like to defend myself against another charge, to the effect that I have deceived the Reichstag.

Expert DR. BONN: (On the order of business.) It is impossible for the experts here to cooperate, as their duty requires, in covering the subject matter, if certain separate fields of inquiry are entered upon in opposition to the instructions of the Chairman and which go beyond the limits of the actual issues before us. For if we are to participate, then we, too, must go beyond these limits and then the result will be that, in opposition to the wishes of the Chairman, the whole discussion will be launched upon an endless sea; either this, or it must be made possible for a question to be dropped if this question is taken up, even if it is partially answered, and to lead the discussion back to the original inquiry. This, of course, would not mean that a witness would be kept from answering questions to be put later. For this reason, I asked leave to speak before his Excellency v. Capelle can reply to the further questions put to him, because I should like to put a few questions which, perhaps might assist in clearing up matters to which he has already referred.

The CHAIRMAN: Well, then, we shall finish with this question, although it has actually nothing to do with the real technical question which concerns us. There is nothing else for us to do, since it appears that it is the definite desire of the experts to take part in the field of inquiry which has just been opened.

Expert DR. BONN: I believe that the Chairman has failed to understand me. It is not at all my purpose to enter into questions of this kind. I should prefer to stick to the technical questions. I should simply like to ask that, in the future, we be given the opportunity to speak in connection with the questions which are the subject of discussion, so that we be not forced to the alternative of either keeping silent or of referring back to the particular matter later in the hearing.

The CHAIRMAN: In the future, we will proceed in this way. And do you now desire to go into this question?

Expert DR. BONN: In connection with these matters, I should like to ask the Admiral a question or two.

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly. But for the moment, his Excellency would like to take up a special matter having to do with the Reichstag. If you are willing to give way on this point, I shall at once go into these technical matters and, for this purpose, give Dr. Bonn the floor.

Witness ADMIRAL V. CAPELLE: I should like to have Professor Bonn take up the technical questions at once.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall, then, drop this line of inquiry and revert exclusively to the technical questions which I would like to have answered systematically as they come up. I shall no longer permit questions which tend to wander from the domain of these purely technical questions, to retard the course of the hearing.

Expert DR. BONN: Your Excellency stated that, for political reasons, it did not seem possible to you to make any notable increase in the number of U-boats in the summer of 1916, since you were of the opinion that the unrestricted U-boat war could not be carried on because of political reasons. I believe that I have understood you correctly. And, in this connection, I should like to put just one question. The political decision which was reached certainly did not mean that we were to refrain from any and every U-boat war, but it simply meant that the U-boat war was to be carried on in the form of a war on commerce. Now, I am almost forced to assume, as the result of your statements, that the U-boat war, conducted as a war upon commerce, was absolutely ineffective. Is this correct?

Witness V. CAPELLE: At that time, in March, 1916, the general view of the naval authorities was, in all probability—this is more a matter for the Admiralty Staff than it is for me, but I may venture to say this, too—that the war on commerce would bring about no results of any kind. The chief authority in the matter of conducting a war of commerce against England was the chief of the high sea fleet, and the chief of the high sea fleet always took in the most energetic manner the standpoint that a war on commerce would not justify sending the U-boats in; that more U-boats would be lost than, in short, would be counter-balanced by the results obtained. He was a very strong opponent of the war on commerce, and did not conduct a war on commerce with the fighting craft under his command. At the close of the year, in October or November, the chief of the high sea fleet was forced by the Emperor to desist from this attitude and to launch the war on commerce.

Expert DR. BONN: Does this not contradict in a certain sense the statistics which were published and from which it would always seem that the U-boat war had great results? And, if I recollect correctly, it was determined by calculation, moreover, that the diminution of the British fleet by means of the unrestricted U-boat war carried on for a 5-months

period would, I believe, amount to 39 per cent, and, on the other hand, by means of a war on commerce, to 18 per cent.

Witness v. CAPELLE: Gentlemen, the war on commerce was carried on in the Mediterranean outside of the restricted area, and notable results were constantly obtained in the Mediterranean for the simple reason that the counter-measures adopted there either amounted to absolutely nothing at all or, at any rate, were very slight, whereas effective counter-measures were put into operation around and about England, and it was for this reason that we did not count upon any success at all. When, therefore, the war was carried on around and about England, I, I believe—of course, I am speaking of myself personally—was very much astonished at the general results obtained. I believe that Professor Bonn was in error when he stated that statistics pointed to greater results. That was only following the close of 1916. Prior to that time, it was really not the case—

(Expert Dr. Hoetzsch: Since October.)

—when, at the command of the Emperor, the war on commerce was taken up by the fleet as well. The passage from the memorial of the Admiralty Staff in which it is said that the war on commerce would diminish the British tonnage by 18 per cent only, whereas the unrestricted U-boat war would diminish tonnage by 38 per cent, is due to the fact that, in the war on commerce, neutrals were spared and as long as the neutrals were spared, the intimidation feature diminished, because the British had the opportunity of flying neutral flags in bad faith. Hence the view of the Admiralty Staff, that the war on commerce would bring no results whatsoever. But this is really a matter which entirely concerns those conducting naval operations. I am constantly being asked questions which do not concern me.

Delegate DR. SCHÜCKING: A statement that you made some time ago is not clear to me. You said that you believed that you were obliged to work in unison with the purposes of the political branch of the government, and that it was due to this conception that you held off from carrying out a U-boat construction program on a broad scale, primarily in the spring of 1916. But the Imperial Government had, by no manner of means, unconditionally given up the U-boat war; even in the answers which had been sent to the United States, the definite reservation had been expressed of the right to return to U-boat war methods. Did it, then, not devolve upon us to prepare for the possibility of the U-boat war, and was it not necessary to place orders immediately for a considerable number of ships? How much time was consumed at that stage in the construction of a U-boat?

Witness v. CAPELLE: I believe, gentlemen, that in one respect I have not been correctly understood. I did not intend to state that the political situation had been such as to induce me to proceed in opposition to existing policies. For I did build 90 U-boats, and I did at once place orders for

50 U-boats. It was not my desire to drop below prior standards. I am still of the opinion today that, politically speaking, the impression which would have been created would have been more than peculiar, after we had sent the *Sussex* note to the United States, if the Secretary of State for the Navy had entered upon an excessive and magnificent program of U-boat construction with a great blowing of trumpets. What I wanted to say was that each quarter I continued to carry on the system which had existed up to that time—let me call it the small packet system. Even today I can not possibly imagine how I could have done otherwise. In all probability, I should not have remained Secretary of State for the Navy for two weeks if I had acted otherwise.

The period required for the construction of the U-boats differed greatly, according to size, and even for boats of the same size; construction periods differed according to different stages of the war. I can state, however, that the construction of a large U-boat took two years or longer, whereas the construction of a small or medium-sized U-boat took about a year.

The CHAIRMAN: Is Rear Admiral Brüninghaus still in the hall?

(Voice from the audience: Here!)

Admiral, you expressed the desire to reply to certain statements made by Dr. Struve, and to have your testimony as a witness taken.

Witness v. CAPELLE: Before this is done, may I ask to say a word in connection with Admiral Brüninghaus?

The CHAIRMAN: I shall administer the oath to Admiral Brüninghaus first. The committee has decided to hear you as a witness. Please give your Christian name.

REAR ADMIRAL BRÜNINGHAUS: Franz Willi.

The CHAIRMAN: Your age?

Witness BRÜNINGHAUS: 49 years.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to take the oath with the religious formula?

Witness BRÜNINGHAUS: With the religious formula.

(Witness Rear Admiral Brüninghaus takes the oath as a witness.)

The CHAIRMAN: In what way do you desire to be heard, particularly in answer to what Dr. Struve has said? I shall ask you to limit your remarks in all respects to this field.

Witness v. CAPELLE: I should like, first, to make a statement.

The CHAIRMAN (to Witness Admiral v. Capelle): Your Excellency desires, for special reasons of which I have no knowledge, to address us first. I shall accede to this wish and ask you, your Excellency, to tell us what you have to say. We shall thereafter take Rear Admiral Brüninghaus's testimony.

Witness v. CAPELLE: Dr. Struve has made this charge against me, that I have deceived the Reichstag or, perhaps, to put it in somewhat more gentle form, that I had caused erroneous views to be entertained or had taken part

in bringing this about, and this is probably based upon the speech which I made one day before the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat war. The purport of Dr. Struve's remarks was that I had given, as the figure of the completed U-boats, the number 160, but that, in doing so, I had failed to disclose the fact that, of these 160 U-boats, there was and could be but a comparatively small number in sea service. Now, I did not give the number 160. That is, however, irrelevant. I stated—I have the speech before me,—that we had twice as many U-boats as the year before, and that made about 160.

The other question, how many U-boats could be and were actually in the water, has one general aspect, and one which is applicable to this special case. I should like, first of all, to say a few words about the fundamental aspect of the matter.

In the case of Dr. Struve and of other gentlemen who adhere to the same point of view, it is obvious that the ideas which they have formed are false and erroneous; they assume that a constant relationship always existed between the number of U-boats which were in sea service and the number of completed U-boats, as if the number of U-boats in sea service increased with the increase in the number of U-boats, as if, to put the matter graphically, it constituted, to a certain extent, a constantly increasing curve. This point of view is fundamentally wrong. The number of the U-boats actually in sea service differs very greatly from time to time, even when the U-boat force remains the same. If I were to represent this graphically, I should draw a strongly marked zig-zag curve and not a constantly increasing curve. I have before me a record memorandum, with the help of which I should like to show this by a few examples. I will give the maximum figure and the minimum figure of the U-boats which were actually in the water during the first five months of the unrestricted U-boat war. In February, the minimum number of the U-boats in the water was 25, two weeks later, 44; in the month of March, the minimum figure was 32, and a week before that, 57; in the month of April, 39 and 58; in the month of May, 36 and 58; in the month of June, 49 and 66. So that the numbers of the U-boats which were in sea service differ very greatly within a short period of time. The idea that the U-boat efficiency is dependent upon the number of the U-boats actually in sea service is not even theoretically correct. It can be imagined that where a small number of U-boats are on sea duty, all of these U-boats are in the actual theaters of war and that, consequently, a very great efficiency will be reached. But one can also imagine the reverse, that where the majority of a great number of U-boats which are on sea duty are actually on the outward trip or on the return trip and where a few only are in the theater of war, the efficiency must be very small. So that the claim that the number of U-boats which are on sea duty at a definite point of time is of conclusive significance, is incorrect.

Now, I have discussed these conditions frequently in the committee. On the occasion of my first address, I explained that, in order to occupy a war station with but one boat, five U-boats had to be at the front: one U-boat at the station, one U-boat on the outward trip, one U-boat on the return trip, and two U-boats undergoing repair. Moreover, in my first statement, I pointed out that a very considerable number of U-boats which were completed were constantly engaged in making trial trips. At that time I gave figures. Then, thirdly, I pointed out that the U-boat school needed for its purposes a considerable number of U-boats, which are to be deducted from the number used in the war on commerce. What more was I to say? If certain gentlemen have failed to understand me, and this unfamiliar material failed at once to be infused into their flesh and blood so far as they were concerned—well, that is certainly not my fault. (Laughter.) I pointed these things out in the greatest detail. How can we then talk about having deceived the Reichstag?

Now I shall come to the special case. Delegate Struve says that, in the middle of January, 1917, during the U-boat inspection, a conference had been held on the occasion of which I had been informed that we only had 20 U-boats at sea; that, according to Dr. Struve's idea, I should have mentioned this fact in my speech in order to avoid deceiving the Reichstag. The conference took place. The purpose of the conference was quite different. It was my desire, as Secretary of State for the Navy, to make the acquaintance of the gentlemen of the U-boat inspection force, and the gentlemen were to make my acquaintance. That was the purpose of the conference. It is possible that the fact was mentioned that there were so-and-so many U-boats on sea service. Since I considered this circumstance of no importance, it did not imprint itself on my memory. But, if you will excuse the expression, it is a piece of stupidity to suppose that, on the 15th of January, I should cause myself to be informed as to how many U-boats were to be on the water on the 1st of February. You gentlemen have already seen, from the figures which I have just read to you, the extraordinary extent to which these figures vary. If I had desired to get information on this point, I would only have had to cross the corridor to the Admiralty Staff. That was the office which had jurisdiction—not the U-boat inspection department. I do not know whether the latter knew anything about it; it certainly was none of its business. Gentlemen, when the unrestricted U-boat war was to be announced, it was a fact which had to be communicated to the budget committee. If I had considered as an unfavorable circumstance the fact that for the moment there were only 20 U-boats on the water, then I am free to state that I would certainly not have made that announcement to the Reichstag committee. But it was nothing but an wholly transitory incident, even if I were bound to assume that the Reichstag might perhaps not estimate it at its true value. I will ask you

gentlemen to put it to yourselves: Immediately before a great military move, say, like the breaking through at Gorlice or a great offensive on the western front, or an advance into Italy or into Roumania, or any other similar event, the Minister of War communicates the fact to the budget committee. Can anyone believe that the Minister of War pursues the policy of making this announcement and then continues with the statement: "Gentlemen, I have no choice but to tell you that we are faced also with a number of unfortunate incidents. A number of our divisions are not up to their full strength because they have fought to a standstill or have suffered with diseases; our artillery has not been thoroughly supplied with new guns, for part of them have been destroyed by the enemy; we are in great difficulties so far as our ammunition supply is concerned; an air attack had been made upon a railroad concentration point." Gentlemen, do you really believe that a Minister of War would make such a statement as that to the Reichstag? Would somebody thereupon have stood up and stated that the Minister of War had deceived the Reichstag because he had not given them this information? For my part, I can not conceive how people can think such things.

But the fact as to how many U-boats were at the front had absolutely nothing to do with it; the only question was, what results had we obtained in the way of sinkings? That was the point, and, in this connection, the Admiralty Staff and I personally reached definite conclusions in the form of definite sinking estimates. These sinking estimates were 600,000 tons. In the month of February, when conditions were still unfavorable—the month had only 28 days instead of 30, and contained, moreover, periods of grace for the neutral Powers. Here we more than fulfilled our promise which we had given to the Reichstag and which was to form the basis of its own judgment: we sank 750,000 tons, and in the next four or five months we sank, on an average, 900,000 tons. How can I be reproached for having deceived the Reichstag? I am simply at a loss to understand it, and I express the hope that Dr. Struve will withdraw this severe charge.

The CHAIRMAN Delegate Warmuth: Does Dr. Struve desire to answer at once? But, please, the Rear Admiral first!

Witness REAR ADMIRAL BRÜNINGHAUS: Dr. Struve, in the session which was held here on Friday, has not only not hesitated to reproach Secretary of State v. Capelle with having deceived the Reichstag, but he has scored me likewise, to the extent that he said—I have only been able to get my information from the papers—that in a session held on July 3, 1918, I had given false information with regard to the U-boats actually in construction, to the committee which was to pass upon contracts involving war deliveries. Dr. Struve did not content himself with doing this, but at the same time went still further with the matter and in contributions to the *Demokratische Parteikorrespondenz* has anticipated any decision which the investigating

committee may make, stating that it has now been established here that I deceived one of the committees of the Reichstag and, in fact, as appears in the article of the *Demokratische Parteikorrespondenz*, that this was not done unintentionally, but that, on the contrary, I intentionally deceived the committee as to the number of the U-boats actually in construction. The facts are as follows:

On July 3, at the session of the committee in question, I made a short statement concerning the general condition of U-boat construction. At that time, and because the chief of the U-boat division was not present, I called particular attention—

The CHAIRMAN: What year was that?

Witness BRÜNINGHAUS: 1918. I called particular attention to the fact, on account of the absence of the chief of the U-boat division, that I was not in a position to give absolutely definite information with regard to all the figures, but would simply submit a short *résumé* which had been given to me by the U-boat division as the document on which I was to base my remarks. I took pains to add that I thought it was essential for the chief of the U-boat division to be present at these sessions but that, unfortunately, he was on leave. I requested, however, through the Secretary of State, that this gentleman be present at the next session in order that he might address them and answer such questions as they might have to put. It is stated here in so many words:

CAPTAIN BRÜNINGHAUS: I should like to call attention to the fact that the Chief of the U-boat division, whose presence at the session is greatly to be desired, is absent from Berlin at this time and will not return until the 18th of June. I can, of course, represent him in person, but I am, naturally, not as well informed on these matters as he.

Then, taking as a basis the written notes which had been compiled for me by the U-boat division, not as Captain Brüninghaus, as Dr. Struve likes to represent it, but as the official representative of the Secretary of State for the Navy, I made the statements in question. However, in connection with passing upon this entire question, I would ask that an additional feature be kept in mind, and that is the following: The committee met at the request of the Progressive National Party. It was intended that this committee should examine into the point, going into the minutest details, as to whether it was possible to improve the situation in the yards in the way of labor arrangements, etc., so as to hasten and increase U-boat construction.

It was intended to call a large number of experts from the yards, which actually occurred later. The situation was the following: The committee had to determine, on the basis of information which the chief of the U-boat division was to give, to what extent U-boat construction could be increased. At that time, according to my recollection, I read as follows: There are in construction—and it is to this that Delegate Dr. Struve takes exception—

there are placed in construction 479 boats. I should like to refer to one point briefly. "Placed in construction" (*in Bau gegeben*) is a technical term which has the same significance as "place an order." Delegate Dr. Struve showed in the course of his answer made in the following session, that he entertained the layman's view that it was necessary for a boat to actually lie upon the ways in order to be characterized as in construction. That is a conception which is quite untenable from a technical point of view. Technically speaking, the situation is this: if an order for the construction of a U-boat is given to a yard by the Navy Department, it is not simply theoretically, but practically, in construction on the following day, to speak of the most extreme case imaginable. Under these conditions, one is not in a situation where the keel-plates, the ribs, and the other many thousand parts which are used in putting the boat together on the ways, rain down from heaven in order to be put together, but all these things must, in the first place, be provided from all different kinds of workshops. Even in southern Germany we had some thousand contractors for U-boat construction. The practical end of the business is this: the Navy Department gives the order for the U-boats. This order goes to the yards, and in well-organized yards—and our yards were all very well organized—matters move so that you press a button and inside of 24 hours the sub-contracts for machinery, etc., have been awarded to the various firms. The boat, therefore, is now "in construction." That is the technical expression. I will not quarrel as to whether I said that the boats were "in construction" or whether they were "placed for construction." At that time, it was not put down in the record. The only point is that my statement that 479 boats had been placed for construction is in complete accord with the facts. Delegate Dr. Struve states that that amounted to misleading the then committee. I maintain that I neither intended a deceit nor perpetrated one. The boats were, as a matter of fact, placed for construction. And the fact is not altered by the circumstance that a small portion of the boats had been placed for construction only a short time before. I might say that I would have been downright stupid to have made false or misleading reports purposely or unintentionally to a committee whose very task it was to determine whether, in view of all the circumstances existing in the yards, it would not be possible to construct more boats. I would really have believed that Dr. Struve himself, the former delegate to the Reichstag, would have known me better and would have attributed a greater amount of intelligence to me.

If Delegate Dr. Struve voiced his objection during the next session to my statement that the 479 U-boats had been placed for construction, the chief of the U-boat division, who had been brought back at my request, said:

I will state in reply that all that the Navy Department meant by giving this number, was to show how many U-boats had been placed.

For you can not put all the U-boats which have been ordered on the stocks at one and the same time.

If the then Delegate Dr. Struve could possibly have believed, on the occasion of the second session in July, 1917, that I intentionally desired to deceive the committee by stating that 479 U-boats had been placed for construction—I will concede that for a moment, although it is false—he could have had no further doubt whatsoever as to what was meant after the chief of the U-boat division said to him in so many words: "You have misunderstood Captain Brüninghaus. Captain Brüninghaus, as the representative of the Secretary of State and as my representative, merely desired to state, and did state, that these 479 U-boats were placed for construction." This being the case, Dr. Struve has no ground for the excuse now that he did not know what I meant by that. I assert in so many words that, if Delegate Dr. Struve accuses me in all publicity and through the press of having given false information to the then committee, or, in good German, of having lied, that is a wholly untenable stand for Delegate Dr. Struve to take.

Witness Captain BARTENBACH: Touching Dr. Struve's remarks, first, with regard to the statements made to the many propositions which turned out to be practical in the course of time, I would like to state that, of course, these many propositions were absolutely material, had been long recognized as such by the Navy Department and by naval experts at that time and had been proposed as such, and simply could not be adopted by the Navy Department at this moment because of many conceivable reasons which opposed their adoption.

Secondly, with regard to Dr. Struve's statement that the number of U-boats which Secretary of State v. Capelle gave in the session held prior to the commencement of the U-boat war, was inexact, I desire to make the following statement.

Secretary of State v. Capelle gave the number as double as many as we had at our disposal for the purpose of conducting a U-boat war at the point of time in the year 1916 when we sought to conduct it. As a matter of fact, the Navy had 154 U-boats at the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat war. That was very nearly double what we had at that period of the year 1916. Dr. Struve subdivided the total number of the U-boats in all conceivable ways, and the public was very much in the dark as to the actual number of U-boats in usable condition which were at our disposal. I should like to state that the total number of the U-boats can be subdivided only according to the following classifications: First, U-boats at the front, and that means boats which are with the front divisions, and, secondly, boats which are in the reserve. At the commencement of the U-boat war, there were 109 boats at the front.

Second point. Dr. Struve said that the Secretary of State had made

misleading statements, in that he placed the number of those boats which were ready for use at too high a figure. Secretary of State v. Capelle stated at that time that we could depend upon from 40 to 50 per cent of the boats being engaged in work with the enemy. If we add the 40 per cent which represented an estimate which referred to the future, 50 boats on the average would have had to be steadily at work—50 per cent of the average number of boats which we had—and I may add that there were, on the average, 127 boats at the German U-boat front during the whole U-boat war. As a matter of fact, during the 19 months of the U-boat war, there were, on the average, 47 boats engaged in the work. So that the estimate placed by the Secretary of State was extraordinarily exact.

Now to come to the third point. This deals with the charge that, at the beginning of the unrestricted U-boat war and on the 1st of February, 1917, we had but 20 boats capable of going to the front. The following was the situation: People are inclined to the view that the 1st of February, 1917, is to be looked upon as if it represented a moment which, to a certain extent, characterized a new phase of war for the Navy, and marked the beginning of a new operation. That was not the case. Ever since February, 1915, neither our U-boats nor the Navy Department desisted from the plan of undertaking every month to deliver a vigorous cut at the arteries of England's economic existence in order to disgust England with its operations at long range against Germany and with the war that lasted year after year, and to show England that, just as the throttling process worked against us, the constant gnawing at the source of England's economic life worked against her—I say that, in spite of all obstacles which had developed in the course of years, the Navy had never desisted from this plan. The U-boat war was actually in existence and was only being carried on under different rules, and the U-boats which left port on the 1st of February only differed from the U-boats which had gone out four weeks before by virtue of the instructions under which they operated. The number which, on the 1st of February, was outside, can normally not have been greater than 40 per cent. That was probably about 40 boats. That, as a matter of fact, only 20 boats were outside, is strange. That is due to the fact, however, that during those days, in the days of January and February, if the gentlemen will remember, the situation in the North Sea as well as on the coast of Flanders was extraordinarily difficult on account of ice conditions. The North Sea was so covered with ice that the plan was contemplated of having all the boats from the North Sea come over to Flanders. The boats had received injuries from the ice, and it was in this way that the small number of 20 boats is accounted for.

The CHAIRMAN: You speak of certain instructions which the U-boat commanders received after the opening of the unrestricted U-boat war. I should like to ask whether, after the unrestricted U-boat war was launched,

instructions agreed upon with regard to the course to be followed by the U-boat commanders underwent any change, for instance, such as sparing certain types of vessels which were plying between England and the United States. Perhaps Admiral Koch can give us information on this subject.

Witness ADMIRAL KOCH: Aside from the periods of grace, there was not a word changed in all the orders given.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Ladies and gentlemen, I can freely concede to Admiral v. Capelle that, in his first speech regarding the possibility of the uses to which our U-boats could be put, he gave full information, and that the number of the existing U-boats, expressed in terms of percentage, which could actually take an active part in operations, that is, in undertakings against the enemy, was clearly stated. But, as I have said, his speech had disappeared; it was not to be found and the efforts of the Reichstag bureau at the Navy Department to get it—they went to the Secretary of State himself—were finally discontinued; and I must state that a more than peculiar light is thrown upon conditions which existed in the Navy Department when we find that the repeated attempts of the Reichstag bureau to have the Secretary of State furnish his speech for the purpose of the records was altogether a case of love's labor lost and that these matters did not even get to the ear of the Secretary of State himself; for, as a general thing, the Secretary of State, as we all know from other stenographic reports of his speeches, exercised the very greatest care in the course of making corrections in such stenographic reports. I assume that, like myself, Dr. Struve has always been fully cognizant of the difference between those U-boats which are at the front, as we used to say at that time, or, as we say now, were engaged in undertakings—a distinction which was brought out by the Secretary of State as the result of a recent question of mine—and those U-boats which are on the return trip, which certainly are not to be considered as being at the front, but in the later remarks of the Secretary of State these distinctions were by no means so clearly brought out.

Now, Rear Admiral Brüninghaus has stated that the misunderstanding was to be explained in the following way: That he had stated that the 479 boats had been placed for construction. Well, so far as the technician is concerned, there is, after all, a great difference between that which is placed for construction, which means something that has been ordered, and that which is actually in construction; for he was perfectly right in pointing out that it is a matter of months before an order gets as far as to enable the actual construction to be undertaken, because the order must be placed with the foundries and subcontractors.

As a matter of fact, we might perhaps get the impression from all the statements which have been made, that it was really wholly immaterial how many boats were actually needed for the unrestricted U-boat war. The Secretary of State has said: "The number is quite immaterial if one

desires to declare a ruthless U-boat war; it is simply a matter of the effect produced." But for the others, the effect was certainly decisive; for the effect was a vital matter with us, and, so far as the effect was concerned, the number of the U-boats which were actually in existence and could be brought into contact with the enemy played an absolutely leading part. And in this connection I should like to call attention to the following. The Secretary of State will doubtless admit to me that he himself, on the 1st of February, 1917, stated in the budget committee:

When I became Secretary of State, all the yards and all machinery and motor factories were filled to the brim. Therefore, it was at first impossible for me to place further contracts. For the rest, it was my duty to order as many U-boats as the domestic yards could possibly furnish.

That was what the Secretary of State declared at that time. In doing this, he admitted that when he entered upon the duties of his office, he was not in the position—according to his own conviction—to give out more contracts for U-boats than already existed, and I should now like to add that he stated at that time that there were twice as many U-boats in existence as when he entered upon his office, and not only that, but that they were also superior in quality, material and personnel.

But now the question to be considered was whether more U-boats could be delivered. It has already been pointed out that, as a matter of fact, only five yards got to the point of delivering U-boats, because others were not given work in time. And still more extraordinary is the question of the taking over of the motor factories, for the U-boats could do us no good if they had no motors. I will now ask the Secretary of State whether he remembers that, on the 5th of May, 1917, he stated to us that he could build no more U-boats because there was no yard which could take over additional contracts and that I designated to him at that time 16 yards by name which had received no U-boat contracts. Whereupon the reply was made by his departmental director, Rear Admiral Krafft, that it might well be possible to keep other yards busy, but that it was impossible to obtain motors, that the motors could not be delivered. We at once informed him that that was not the case, because the leading motor factory, the München-Augsburg-Nürnberg Motor Manufacturing Company, was able to deliver him twice the amount and, in a few months, three times the amount, and that various great factories had tried in vain to get contracts for motors. Among these, I mentioned the machinery plant at Breslau, which had done extraordinarily good work in manufacturing and turning out motors for aircraft and was preeminent in the automobile industry—Daimler, etc.—but that they had received no answer at all in response to their bids. Now, I should like to ask what were the rules which were adopted, as a matter of fact, in connection with the placing of orders for motors? One of the few

motor factories which had taken over contracts in peace times for the motors for U-boats was the Germania yard, which itself built a number. Did the Secretary of State know that, directly after the mobilization order, the 24 motors which the Germania yard had under contract were cancelled—

The CHAIRMAN: I ask that private conversations be carried on outside.

Delegate GOTHEIN:—so that for over a year it lay absolutely idle and merely continued with the further construction of U-boats which were already in course of construction for Austria and Norway? I can well imagine how this question will be answered. I shall be told that this factory, just as was the case with the München-Augsburg-Nürnberg Motor Manufacturing Company, was building the two-cylinder motor at this time and that the Navy had suddenly come to the conviction that this two-cylinder motor was not as good as the four-cylinder motor, and that, for this reason, this factory was prohibited from building the two-cylinder motor which it was only allowed to continue to build for the Austrian U-boats. Why, did people never pause to consider at that time that, as a matter of fact, by doing this, they were bringing about an extraordinary fall in the industry of motor construction, in causing the most important center for motor construction to come to an absolute standstill? It was only later that we came back again to the construction of the two-cylinder motor, which, as a matter of fact, is just exactly as efficient as the four-cylinder motor. In any event, the München-Augsburg-Nürnberg Motor Manufacturing Company was made to lie idle. What were the reasons for this, for making these motor factories lie idle and throttling U-boat construction in this way, a policy which was bound to be dangerous in the extreme, if the purpose of taking up a great U-boat war on commerce was entertained? It was only at a very late date that the Navy came to the point of supplying additional U-boat motor factories with work, and it became apparent then that their versatility of production was great.

The Secretary of State announced at that time that the increased losses which we would have to face had been fully provided for. He stated once, in a session in the autumn of 1916, that we were not to expect a material increase of losses of over two a month, since England had accomplished all that could be accomplished in the way of counter-measures, and that nothing, either in the way of armament or anything material to further developments in the line of defense, was to be expected. On January 1, 1917, he said: "We are prepared to meet notable increases in counter-measures." This is in contradiction to what he said on the 7th of October, when the actual words he used were as follows: "Speaking generally, the present measures of defense have now reached their height and can not be increased to any further material extent. And, moreover, we have already made our concessions to this increase. I have estimated the number of from

2 to 3 U-boats as the future monthly loss, in contrast to the present loss of $1\frac{1}{2}$ U-boats a month."

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, I will repeat my request; please carry on your private conversations outside. The noise is extremely disturbing to our present proceedings.

Delegate GOTHEIN: In spite of his announcement that we were prepared to meet notable improvements in counter-measures, he announced a monthly loss which at that time amounted to two U-boats but which might increase to three. Perhaps the Secretary of State will remember this. As a matter of fact, it amounted to seven already in May. In the face of this, the Secretary of State still announced on May 17 that the U-boat yards could deliver no more boats, since any increase was out of the question.

Now the Secretary of State has said that our memorials had absolutely no effect upon the increase of orders. The peculiar part of this is that, on the 5th of May, 1917, the Secretary of State announced in the budget committee that it was impossible to place a single contract for more U-boats because the yards were overcrowded to such an extent; and his departmental director stated that the U-boat motor factories, too, could turn out no more—that this was quite impossible. At our representation, and upon our demand that experts be heard and that a conference of experts be called—as the result of this demand made by Delegate Dr. Struve jointly with myself in the memorial directed to Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg at that time, a conference of experts was thereupon called. This led to a further contract for 92 U-boats being placed on the 27th of June. So we find this difference coming within seven weeks, that, in the first place, it was announced on the 5th of May that no more contracts could be placed for a single U-boat, and that seven weeks later, 92 U-boats were contracted for.

In the memorial which I, not Dr. Struve, transmitted to General Ludendorff and to which I received the stereotyped answer that all was being done that could be done, it was also stated that, in view of this answer, nothing could be done. And after that, at the close of December, when Dr. Struve received that answer from General Ludendorff in which he, too, was told that everything was being done and that, as a matter of fact, new contracts could be placed, the second memorial is followed—I believe in the course of ten or twelve days—with a new order of 117 boats. I ask that these extraordinary contradictions be cleared up and that it be made plain how it is possible, when an answer of this kind is given in complete agreement with the Secretary of State for the Navy, that a few weeks or days afterwards these great mass orders suddenly follow, after it has been unqualifiedly stated before that it was absolutely impossible to place orders of any size.

The CHAIRMAN: Will your Excellency be good enough to answer and to

clear up this mass of contradictions which has just been characterized with particular emphasis?

Witness V. CAPELLE: With regard to the measures of defense of our opponents, I have always stated on those various occasions what the attitude of those who were conducting naval operations was, as well as what reflected my personal views. I could not say anything else. It is a fact that these measures of defense finally succeeded in bringing about greater losses than we had anticipated.

So far as our losses are concerned, I made the following statement in the session which preceded the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war:

The loss in the past year, that is, the year 1916, amounted to only 25 per cent of the monthly increase. Of course, losses are dependent upon a large number of external circumstances, and can not be distributed evenly over the individual months. But the fact is that the increase in U-boats, according to the experience of the past, has been four times as great as the decrease; it is possible that, during the present year, the figures may be less favorable to us as the result of the increased efficiency of the measures of defense taken by our enemies. On this point, we shall be obliged to wait and see.

Now as to the question that I have said on numerous occasions that the U-boat yards could carry no more traffic, and that, in spite of this, more and more U-boats were placed for construction. Gentlemen, there are two reasons for this. One reason was, naturally, that a number of U-boats were constantly reaching completion, as the result of which, to a certain extent, place was made for more. I have already explained the other reason: that I changed the system. During the first year, I operated under the system of having the entire construction kept in the hand of one man, and in the second year I adopted the system of creating a separate U-boat division which crowded all others to the wall. That is the reason, pure and simple.

So far as the question of motors is concerned, I have no information whatsoever in respect to the period preceding my incumbency. But Captain Bartenbach, who at that time was in charge, will be able to go into that matter thoroughly. During my incumbency, Admiral Krafft was in charge of the motor question. I personally was not very well informed on the subject. Admiral Krafft who, I am convinced, was unusually skilled in these matters, had to do this.

Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: What we now have to consider is the point that it is alleged that the Germania yard was forced to get four-cylinder engines from Augsburg and to install them instead of the two-cylinder engines which had always been built here in connection with the six mine-sweeping boats which were contracted for. This was the reason why the two-cylinder motors which the Germania yard had been delivering up to that time were not, as a matter of fact, absolutely ready for the front. The two-cylinders had not only brought about a delay of a year and a half in the

construction of a series of 15 boats in all, for the simple reason that the engines were not completed, but up to that time they had been shown to be extraordinarily undependable when used upon the boats in which they had finally been installed for work at the front. So the fact was that this risk would simply not be taken—the risk of installing these six boats with six more of these engines. And I should like to add that the Germania yard itself, even before the war, stated that it was perfectly ready to take over and install the four-cylinder engines at Augsburg instead of the uncertain two-cylinder engines. There can be no question at all of bringing the motor manufacture of the Germania yard to a standstill. If the Germania yard wanted to do so, it was at liberty to go ahead and build four-cylinder engines; it could also continue with the construction of its two-cylinder engines. As a matter of fact, it continued to construct them and to deliver them as well. So that there was no standing still on the part of the Nürnberg works or the Augsburg machinery factory or the Germania yard, in the way of motor construction.

The CHAIRMAN: Dr. Struve has expressed the desire to be again heard as a witness. The committee has passed upon the question, and I shall ask Dr. Struve to testify once more. But I shall ask him to consider the lateness of the hour and be as brief as possible. It is my desire to terminate with the technical side of the U-boat question, in order that we shall not be forced to revert to it at later hearings.

Witness DR. STRUVE: It is my duty, first of all, to answer the remarks which Captain Bartenbach has made. He has probably forgotten that the remarks which I made against Secretary of State v. Capelle were based literally upon statements of his which Secretary of State v. Capelle himself gave in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. On October 12, 1919, under the title "U-boat figures," he stated as follows: "Today we have at our disposal more than double the number of completed U-boats: 160 instead of 80."

Your first misstatement with regard to the number 160—

(Secretary of State v. CAPELLE: In parentheses.)

—well, if it is in parentheses, the number is and remains 160.

The second misstatement: Secretary of State v. Capelle stated in the same article—and this, Captain Bartenbach, you certainly did not know:

In order that the gentlemen may get a correct idea (that means the gentlemen of the Reichstag), I must point to the fact that, of the . . . completed U-boats, only about one half can be used against the enemy.

(Secretary of State v. CAPELLE: Can.)

As a matter of fact, half of our U-boats were never used against the enemy. And then the figures: "20 in February, 1917" are verified, so far as I am concerned, by Captain Bartenbach's statement that, at that time, the movement of the ice and the weather kept the number down to quite an extraor-

dinary extent. But with all this, the statement itself is in no way affected, namely, that, as a matter of fact, there were only so few U-boats outside at that time. Captain Bartenbach himself certainly did not contradict the number given, and simply gave as the reason therefor the ice and climatic conditions. I believe that he is probably convinced that I was obliged to answer the author v. Capelle, who writes the article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, exactly on those lines along which v. Capelle has proceeded in the course of a brief summary made of his announcements in the Reichstag. So I have no retraction to make so far as v. Capelle is concerned. Every charge remains.

But I should like to put the question to Captain Bartenbach: What is your attitude with regard to the criticism which, on April 10, 1918—at which time you were still outside at Bruges—you yourself addressed to his Excellency Admiral Dick. It was published in Tirpitz's book, where you are quoted as follows:

Concerning the taking over of additional yards (page 524) the demands of Str. (that means Struve) have, in the main, been justified.

And did this actually happen? Were additional yards taken over? We have discussed that point this morning.

The arguments which Mr. v. G. has submitted (that is probably Mr. v. Gohren)—

(Witness CAPTAIN BARTENBACH: v. Gamp.)

—(Mr. v. Gamp, then) are not in point. There is not much further use in keeping matters of the U-boat construction secret, since the British have a number of boats in their hands. Motors are being built in the yards, such as, for instance, the Blohm and Voss yard. Development was a question for the Navy.

At the present time, the matter of having existing types reproduced in great numbers by the factories is more important than the question of further development. I may add for your Excellency's information that, since about the beginning of 1917, the construction policy of the Navy Department has been the subject of much sharper attack by the people at the front than by Mr. Struve. But this has nothing to do with the Grand Admiral (that is, v. Tirpitz).

On the contrary, we feel the lack of his broad ideas and energy at every step. All the last building contracts have been materially increased at the sharp insistence of those at the front, and, to an extent, greater than the Navy Department originally stated was at all possible. For this reason, I would suggest that we continue to meet Struve's attacks only in so far as they affect the Grand Admiral personally and his construction policy before and during the commencement of the war.

I shall ask Captain Bartenbach to be kind enough, if he no longer holds by these opinions which he officially expressed in Bruges in 1918, to say so.

Now, so far as Captain Brüninghaus is concerned. Captain Brüninghaus has stated in so many words that he read a newspaper report—as a matter

of fact, he heard not a word of my testimony; that the basis of the statements which he made, I must say, of a most extraordinarily lively nature, was an article of mine in the *Demokratische Korrespondenz*.

(Witness BRÜNINGHAUS: Not at all!)

This is what I wrote:

Captain Brüninghaus succeeded in first giving a sketch of, and some informatory remarks concerning, the U-boat construction. As is easily understood, his object was to defend his Navy Department and to furnish proof that Gothein's charges and mine were without foundation. The more he went into detail—this was the opinion of one of the delegates on the Right—the easier would our work be; otherwise, we would have gone into the next session knowing just as little as we did today. (Those were the sessions of the investigating committee at the office of the Imperial Chancellor in July, 1918.)

Thereupon Captain Brüninghaus spoke long and mightily; he made an excellent impression upon the gentlemen who knew nothing at all, or very little, to the effect that before them stood the Navy Department in its pride, the idea being that "all we needed to do was to listen in peace and thankfulness."

But so far as what Captain Brüninghaus said was concerned, on this point we may turn to the confidential detailed report in which, as a rule, all the figures are openly announced concerning U-boat construction, U-boat losses, U-boat types, and U-boat plans, and find the brief, but this time very significant remark: "B. gives confidential information concerning U-boat construction." So, after all, it is best if the address and the activities of Mr. B. in the Navy Department are covered over with the mantle of love. When we lifted up our voices in criticism, the answer was short and sweet. "All the yards are full up to the neck with U-boats which are building; 479 U-boats are under construction, what more do we want?"

Unfortunately, this statement which Mr. B. made was not in accord with the facts. In the number 479—I quote from my answer—190 boats were included which had only just been ordered. Not a single one of these 190 is as yet under construction. Not even all of the remaining 289 boats are under construction. At the present time they are working in the yards, as follows: At Schichau, 2 U-boats; at the Vulkan, 7 U-boats; at the Blohm and Voss yard, 10 U-boats; at the Germania, 19; at the Weser yard, 15; at the Kaiser yard at Danzig, 5; and at the Bremer Vulkan yard, 23. Those are the U-boats which are under construction. And besides these, there is still a number of UB- and UC-boats in construction the figures of which I also gave."

I do not believe that Admiral Brüninghaus was absolutely bound, as the result of this article which, as he has himself said, was the basis of his testimony of today—

(Contradiction by Witness ADMIRAL BRÜNINGHAUS.)

—I heard you say it with your own lips, that you were quoting an article which I had written in the *Demokratische Korrespondenz*—

(Witness ADMIRAL BRÜNINGHAUS: Then you heard wrong.)

—to say that I had stated that you had deceived, that you had purposely led astray; and afterwards, in some connection or other, with your statements, you made use of the word "lie."

(Witness ADMIRAL BRÜNINGHAUS: Very true.)

I am not in a position to criticise your personal modes of thought, for that does not concern me at the present moment. But I have read my testimony word for word; and there is no personal remark made against you contained therein.

It is true that afterwards Vice Admiral Ritter v. Mann said to me: "All the U-boats which have been ordered can not be put upon the stocks at the same time; Brüninghaus simply meant, by giving this number, to state how many U-boats had been ordered." But it is just as material to find—if you will read one page further (on page 14)—that Delegate Gothein stated as follows:

There is a tremendous difference between U-boats being ordered and U-boats being under construction. If 190 U-boats of the 479 U-boats were only ordered the week before, it simply means that they are not under construction.

You then stated that the situation was such on the docks, where everything was functioning at the highest point of efficiency, that 24 hours passed at the most, that a button was pushed, and that that was all that had to be done.

(Witness ADMIRAL BRÜNINGHAUS: When conditions are ideal.)

You never said a word about ideal conditions, but only stated 24 hours. Why, I could even call attention to your words, to your expression "pertaining to the layman," or something of the kind. But I shall not do so.

It certainly is not easy—v. Capelle has admitted that on numerous occasions today—to get such prompt or such trustworthy information in Berlin concerning U-boat construction as could be obtained by those men at the front day in and day out, who were able to get the actual facts every day from people who were in the yards and who were constructing and building U-boats day after day.

Then, again, of the UF-boats which—Captain Brüninghaus' report was made on the 3d of July, 1918—were ordered in December, 1917—these are statements which I made on July 10, 1918—of these UF-boats, the following were in construction at Schichau and Tecklenburg in the Atlas yards and the Neptune yards and in Geestmünde at Seebeck: at Tecklenburg, by the middle of June, there were only 4 boats on the stocks, only 4 boats at the Atlas yards, and the first plates had just been laid. As yet, the Neptune yard had no boat on the stocks. So great was the time which passed between the date of order and of construction! It is deplorable that at this time we had only gotten as far as having provided work for these docks too.

So that the order was placed in December, 1917, and as late as June, 1918, they were at work on only 4 boats on the stocks at Tecklenburg—4 of the 12 boats which had been ordered. That was the actual fact. That was a matter of our own knowledge; that was the only difference in all the statements made, the reason why we always were bound to take different points of view: on the one hand, being provided with the facts, and, on the other, the lack of knowledge of the facts. So for this reason it was absolutely inconceivable, from the standpoint of one who knew the situation, how anyone could tell us that 479 boats were in process of construction, as we were officially informed on July 3, 1918.

And it is, further, not the fact that at that time Captain Brüninghaus desired to make a mere casual statement, as he told us this morning was the case. It was not his desire to limit himself to a short statement on behalf of the chief of the U-boat division, for, on the contrary, at the very beginning of the session, he asked leave to do so. On page 9 of the report, I read as follows: "For the rest, I venture to make the suggestion that it might be expedient for me to give the gentlemen a brief sketch of the U-boat construction."

The CHAIRMAN: These are criticisms, Dr. Struve, and we must call a halt to them. There is no purpose in going into these matters here. They far exceed the purpose of your examination which, alone, was to provide us with facts.

Witness DR. STRUVE: The Chairman stated that it would be expedient for Captain Brüninghaus to make his statements, and he thereupon made them. Even today I do not know why these statements which Brüninghaus made are not included in the report. The only thing in the report is as follows: "At the request of the Chairman, Captain Brüninghaus gives confidential information with regard to U-boat construction." Our subsequent critique is at the disposal of the court. The memorial lies before me.

Witness ADMIRAL BRÜNINGHAUS: Gentlemen, Delegate—former Delegate Dr. Struve—

The CHAIRMAN: He is still a delegate to the Prussian National Assembly.

Witness ADMIRAL BRÜNINGHAUS: Delegate Dr. Struve of the Prussian National Assembly closed his remarks with a statement that the critique of the facts which I, as representative of the Secretary of State and of the U-boat division, by the use of official figures, not with figures which Admiral Brüninghaus submitted in any way, but the figures which the U-boat division gave me, that these figures of the Navy Department are contained in the 114 pages. This critique of the Imperial Navy Department and of the U-boat division is put in the following words by Delegate Dr. Struve:

My colleague Mr. Gothein has been obliged to leave and has requested me, speaking for him personally, to express to the chief of the U-boat division my special thanks for the steps taken by him in further-

ance of our U-boat construction which are recognized on all hands as being both thorough and such as are adapted to the ends sought. I join in these thanks, with thorough conviction.

And the chairman of that committee, Under-Secretary of State Lewald—or, as I have just noticed, Dr. Kapp, of the Right—summed up the whole situation in the following conclusion:

Gentlemen, I welcome the fact that we are able to state that the result of our conference of yesterday and today is that the anxiety expressed by Delegate Dr. Struve and his political friends with regard to the furtherance of U-boat construction must be looked upon, even from his own standpoint, as without justification.

Delegate Dr. Struve distorts the vital issue of the whole question. He has charged me with having intended, by announcing the report of the U-boat division, that is, giving the official report of the Imperial Navy Department to the effect that there were 479 U-boats in course of construction—perhaps he did not want to give this impression, but I must assume it to be the fact, in view of the nature and manner in which he has attacked me, even in the press—that it was my intention to mislead, by means of these figures, the gentlemen with whom it was our duty to consult and to consider plans in detail as to how we could make the shipyards more efficient.

It is not the fact that I insisted upon addressing these gentlemen at length; it never occurred to me. I did state that it would, perhaps, be quite expedient to make a short statement to the gentlemen of matters which I had before me at that time, so that they would be, to a certain extent, informed prior to taking part in the next session at which the chief of the U-boat division would himself participate. Of course, I added at the time that the official statements which I made at that time would then come up as subject for discussion.

These circumstances would certainly be enough to convince any thinking man, without going any further, of the fact that Delegate Dr. Struve's statement that I wanted to deceive the members of the committee and lead them astray by means of this report, was far from the mark and absolutely untenable.

And I have already added—this fact appears to have escaped the memory of Dr. Struve—that it was possible, perhaps, for him at that time to have entertained the view that I might have intended to say something to these gentlemen which was false. But thereupon the chief of the U-boat division, that is, another officer of the Navy Department—and the Navy Department is composed, not, as Delegate Dr. Struve appears to believe, of Messrs. v. Mann, Brüninghaus and v. Gohren, etc., but, on the other hand, of men who, like us, are nothing more than a link in a chain; we all pull together—that is, the gentleman who relieved me, Vice Admiral Ritter v. Mann, told Delegate Struve in so many words that the number of 479 U-boats, which

was given him by Captain Brüninghaus as an official basis of computation, was to be understood as meaning that these boats were placed for construction and that there was nothing more to be said about the matter. In spite of all this, Delegate Struve has succeeded in again coming forward here before this investigating committee and in the press with the statement which Vice Admiral Ritter v. Mann had already refuted. And so I consider it no more than right to have this proceeding on the part of Delegate Dr. Struve most definitely recognized here for what it is, a matter which affects me very deeply. I should like to state to Delegate Government Architect Gothein—

(Delegate GOTHEIN: Please omit titles; they are not correct anyhow.)
—you stated that I myself said that months passed before construction began in the case of the individual boats. That is exactly the great difference between your conception and mine, which has been characterized by Delegate Struve as that of a layman. I take the stand—and this is the stand taken by those versed in navy technique—that if a U-boat order is placed, we in the Navy Department say: This boat is placed for construction. For, as a matter of fact, construction begins. The question when the individual parts are actually assembled has absolutely nothing to do with the case. Precisely what Delegate Gothein always insisted on, that we should build in series, can only be done if the following telegrams are sent to all the factories after the orders have been placed, to wit, such-and-such types are being built. You are to provide ribs, stern-posts, engines, and other lower parts, in order that the parts may be assembled in the yards. So that the construction of a U-boat begins at the very moment when the order is placed; otherwise, matters will not proceed correctly. I regret the fact that Delegate Struve has so little confidence in my technical knowledge—for he certainly knows that I have been a naval officer—as to suggest that I am ignorant of what goes on in the yards. That is a very serious error. I have had very much to do with matters pertaining to yards, perhaps even more than Delegate Struve, and my knowledge was certainly not provided by people who during the war, ran to him with all these matters both treacherously and treasonably, but my knowledge came to me from navy circles and from people who were absolutely unbiased; and the report which I made to the committee at that time simply consisted in my making a short address based on a document which was given to me by the U-boat division, the proper authority to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: The committee considers that the U-boat war question has been covered and completed, so far as the technical side is concerned, and states that this feature is closed.

Delegate Gothein desires to make a statement of a personal nature.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Rear Admiral Brüninghaus has quoted the closing words which Delegate Struve spoke on the occasion of the conference of

experts which was held either in June or July, 1918, and in which I requested Dr. Struve to extend my thanks in my name to the director of the U-boat division, who was Vice Admiral v. Mann. I may state that the fact which caused me to express my thanks was that, as a matter of fact, in the course of that session our wishes which we had announced, and our construction program which we had had prepared for years were met in every detail, so that we—not, it is true, until July, 1918—were convinced that, from then on, and under the direction of later Secretary of State v. Mann, then Admiral Ritter v. Mann, anything and everything would be carried out which we had for years been requesting to be carried out. These assurances were made to us on the occasion of that session but, unfortunately, too late.

The CHAIRMAN: Dr. Struve will make a statement of a personal nature.

Witness DR. STRUVE: I must protest in the most vigorous terms and, in this connection, ask the protection of the court—

The CHAIRMAN: We are not a court, but only a committee.

Witness DR. STRUVE: I beg your pardon. I need no protection. I can provide it for myself. For a certain Mr. Brüninghaus to go so far even today as to—

The CHAIRMAN: I must definitely protest against such expressions. Dr. Struve, it is not permissible. We are not sitting here as in parliament below, where a certain freedom of expression is permitted, but our committee as a body has in some ways a strong similarity, and is strongly analogous to a court and, consequently, those conventionalities which apply to courts must be held to apply fully by analogy here before this committee, and pointed personal remarks can not be thrown out in the way in which I believe that Dr. Struve had the intention of doing.

Witness DR. STRUVE: I have thoroughly observed court conventions throughout the course of my examination. I just asked whether I might be the recipient of the protection of the court. I was told that it was no court. I then attempted, in as polite a way as it appeared to me that I was called upon to do, to answer the unparalleled charge that matters had been brought to me treacherously and treasonably and that I had made use of this information treacherously and treasonably—

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Brüninghaus did not say that.

Witness DR. STRUVE: That people had run to me with matters treacherously and treasonably—

(Witness ADMIRAL BRÜNINGHAUS: Certainly! Of course!)

—If matters had been brought to me treacherously and treasonably and I had then made use of these matters, I would be oppressed with a sense of guilt today. There is, however, not the slightest ground for this assumption. I should have thought that Mr. Brüninghaus's expression would have been rejected in some way.

Mr. Brüninghaus is absolutely right. In July, 1918, he did nothing more

than to read a piece of paper which, as he himself says, he received from the U-boat division and which gave the figures in accordance with instructions. That is exactly what I said.

I knew Mr. Brüninghaus in 1918 well enough to know that he was quite right when he said that, even at that time, I did not take issue with Brüninghaus as an individual, but with the Navy Department and with the information which it gave out. The fact that the 479 U-boats were not in course of construction remains a proven fact.

The CHAIRMAN: Rear Admiral Brüninghaus will be heard on a personal matter.

Witness ADMIRAL BRÜNINGHAUS: I must, unfortunately, make a brief personal remark, the purpose of which is to deny that I stated that Delegate Dr. Struve ever did anything treacherously or treasonably; that was far removed from my intention. I merely stated that the information which Delegate Dr. Struve obtained to a bountiful extent during the course of the war and which had to do with the deepest secrets of the Navy could, after all, only have been furnished to him by people who, in so doing, according to my conviction—and from this opinion I do not propose to let myself be dissuaded by anyone—perpetrated an act of treachery to their country. That was all I said.

And then Delegate Dr. Struve has just stated—of course, merely a personal remark on his part—that he never had any intention of attacking Mr. Brüninghaus in any way, even at that time; that he had merely attacked the director of a governmental department. Ladies and gentlemen, in the article which Delegate Dr. Struve is always bringing up, the following is stated:

So, after all, it is best, if the address and the activities of Brüninghaus in the Navy Department are covered over with the mantle of love.

I really do not know how anyone could make a more personal remark.

Delegate GOTHEIN: Rear Admiral Brüninghaus has stated that those who furnished Delegate Dr. Struve with secret information of this kind acted with treasonable intent.

Witness ADMIRAL BRÜNINGHAUS: I did not say "intent."

Delegate GOTHEIN: Well, then, acted treasonably. The same kind of information was brought to me, as Rear Admiral Brüninghaus very well knows; for I presented it in committee repeatedly, just as did Delegate Dr. Struve. I protest solemnly against the charge that the gentlemen who provided me with information of that kind followed the dictates of any motive other than that of pure patriotism. In view of the fact that they could not make any impression upon the Navy Department, they sought to give an impetus to U-boat construction by giving confidential information to their representatives, and we brought this actually about, but by means of confidential sessions only.

Witness DR. STRUVE: And Mr. Brüninghaus well knows that information of the most confidential sort was transmitted to him by me in the room of the Navy Department, in his office room, and that he expressed his thanks for this information; at that time the question was up concerning the great amounts of repairs made on U-boats in Pola, and afterwards the necessary instructions were issued by the Navy Department. I can simply testify, as did Gothein, that the information which we received came from conscientious patriots as the result of motives of the purest patriotism; that this information was correct from A to Z and, up to the present time, has not been proved wrong in the case of a single figure given.

The CHAIRMAN: I will now close the present session. Tomorrow's session will open at 10 o'clock. Dr. Helfferich's testimony will be taken.

The session closed at 2:03 o'clock.

TENTH SESSION

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1919

The session was opened at 10:22 o'clock by the Chairman, Delegate Warmuth.

The CHAIRMAN: The session is opened.

Before we start with the testimony of his Excellency Dr. Helfferich, I should like to address two questions to his Excellency v. Bethmann-Hollweg.

The first question is as follows: By whom and in what way was your Excellency informed with regard to the question of the possibility of postponing the unrestricted U-boat war? May I ask for a reply on this point?

Witness DR. V. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: Even prior to the 29th of January, Admiral v. Holtzendorff had repeatedly and positively informed me and Secretaries of State Helfferich and Zimmermann that the U-boat war could no longer be postponed, since the U-boats were already at sea and a large number of them could not be recalled. Admiral v. Holtzendorff, on the 29th of January, categorically repeated this assertion to me personally and to Secretary of State Zimmermann, when we requested that the U-boat war be postponed in view of the telegram which we had received from Count Bernstorff. It was wholly impossible for me personally to make a technical verification in the matter of the possibility of communication with the U-boats.

The CHAIRMAN: So that it amounted to an absolute impossibility of performance.

Rear Admiral v. Bülow wishes to make a special statement touching upon this question.

REAR ADMIRAL V. BÜLOW: In connection with the recall incident, a false conclusion with regard to technical matters has been drawn, which calls for correction. We asserted recently that the sinking of an American ship was not precisely what was required in order to destroy the peace move, but that the same result would follow if an American citizen came to grief as the result of the U-boat war. Now the fact was that we were engaged in the U-boat war on commerce before we entered the unrestricted U-boat war. Each fitted into the other absolutely, and the transition from the one to the other was made without a break. From this fact, two inferences are to be drawn. First, that the fatal incident in question could have happened, let us say, as early as the 28th, 29th, or 30th of January. It was, therefore, not only essential to furnish the 10 boats which remained at sea until after the 7th of February with counter-orders, but it was neces-

sary to furnish with counter-orders all boats which, counting from the 28th of January, were so situated as to sink ships during the ensuing period. So that not 11 boats, but 21, would have had to receive the counter-orders. Secondly, we thought recently that we could safely assume that a period of nine days would have remained open in which the recall could have been effected, and as a matter of fact, we reached this conclusion because the American ships could not be sunk before the 7th. But if, as I have just pointed out, the mishap in question could have happened just as well on the 28th, it turns out that, to a certain extent, there was no period of grace at all in which the recall could have been made. The mishap might well have happened on the 28th or 29th, that is, an American citizen might have been injured or even killed on the 28th or 29th as the result of the U-boat war.

The CHAIRMAN: So that if, up to this time, it has been constantly stated in the course of the proceedings that a period of grace, of three or nine days, that is, up to the 9th of February, was provided, that was, then, an error.

REAR ADMIRAL V. BÜLOW: It was a false conclusion, because we had in mind the sinking of American ships. But that was not the point involved, but what was involved was the possibility of an American citizen being injured. And this possibility existed just as well on the 28th as it had on the 27th or the 26th, etc.

The CHAIRMAN: Then this danger existed not only in connection with the unrestricted U-boat war, but with the war on commerce as well, because you could never tell whether or not you were going to take an American life on board ship, even in the case of a war on commerce.

REAR ADMIRAL V. BÜLOW: Certainly.

The CHAIRMAN: And we said to ourselves: We want to have clean decks, and then to pass the word out immediately concerning the unrestricted U-boat war likewise, so that the unrestricted U-boat war and the war on commerce would be on the same plane with regard to the danger to which these ships exposed American lives anyway.

REAR ADMIRAL V. BÜLOW: Certainly, so that the counter-orders would have had to carry further than we had thought up to that time. An absolute cessation of activities would have had to take place. But the matter which most closely concerned me was to point out that the physical impossibility of having these counter-orders reach their destinations existed to a far greater extent than we recently believed that we could venture to assume.

The CHAIRMAN: Very good!

Professor Bonn!

Expert DR. BONN: I believe that this matter is quite different, when we look at it from the political side. I understand nothing of these technical matters. What has just been stated seems to me to express a false conclusion, looked at from the political side. For the facts were as follows: As long as we sent out even one U-boat, the possibility existed that an

American might be killed—by chance. That was an incident which could have occurred during any day that the entire peace move lasted. And, as a matter of fact, if I remember correctly, it did actually happen in the autumn of 1916. At that time, since Wilson was anxious to bring about peace, he overlooked accidents. But we are not talking about accidents which could have happened prior to the 1st of February. What concerns us is the circumstance that, on the 1st of February, a conscious change of policy came about. As the result, we were faced with an entirely new situation. An accident could have been overlooked, and since Wilson at that time was interested in bringing about peace, it is probable that he would have helped us out in such a contingency. But the situation was quite different when it came to the point of a conscious alteration of policy.

Now, I should like to ask Count Bernstorff the following question in connection with these matters: Let us assume that we had given the President the following information: "Your peace mediation proposal came too late. It is true that we have done our utmost to recall our U-boats, but we do not know whether we shall succeed in doing so in every case; but we want to give you time, so that this new peace move which you have just started may run its course." I should like to put the question to Count Bernstorff as to whether he believes—in matters of this kind, it is always a case of believing, only—that Wilson would, in spite of this, have curtly broken off relations.

The CHAIRMAN: I will accept the question put by Professor Bonn and put it personally to Count Bernstorff and ask him for a reply.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: If I have understood the question correctly, I am to state what would have happened if, on the 29th of January, instead of having given the answer which we did give to the American Government, which as yet knew nothing about the U-boat war—and it was not publicly known that the U-boat war was going to be launched—we had replied to Wilson as follows: "We intend to accept the peace mediation, and, for this reason, to give up the submarine war which we are actually contemplating." This is the question, is it not?

The CHAIRMAN: That is certainly the way I understand the question.

Expert DR. BONN: To postpone the war.

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: If this reply had been given, I am convinced that the peace mediation would have gone further.

Expert DR. BONN: In order to make myself perfectly clear, I should like to emphasize the following: If, in spite of one or more U-boat mishaps, if I may express myself in this way—if the President had been informed as follows: "But some of the boats have already gone out, and we do not know whether they will be able to get instructions in time," do you believe that you can still maintain your opinion that, in spite of this, the peace move would have progressed?

Witness COUNT V. BERNSTORFF: We should, naturally, have been obliged to say that it was possible for such a case to occur. But since, as I recollect, there were at the time some four or five similar cases on the list which had been put off on account of the peace mediation, I do not believe that one or two new cases would have stopped the course of the peace mediation if we had declared that we were ready to accept the mediation in question.

Delegate GOTHEIN: In this connection, I should like to call Admiral v. Bülow's attention to the fact that the war on commerce was carried on by us under the rules of international law, and that a mishap occurred by chance only now and then. If the war on commerce was carried on according to the rules of international law and even then an American citizen lost his life, that fact would certainly not have given America occasion to break off diplomatic relations with us. That matters of that kind often came to pass, Count Bernstorff has just explained to us. I remember that, in December, just at the time when Wilson's peace move was at its climax, no less than 445,000 tons were sunk by our U-boats, etc., while carrying on a war on commerce.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: The form which this inquiry has taken has once again plainly shown how the different aspects of the question are interwoven with each other, the technical with the political, and the political with the military. But the fundamental question still remains: "How could the war have been conducted to a favorable termination so far as we were concerned?" It was not only that political and technical interpretations were involved in the consideration of the then situation, but, above all things, interpretations adopted by the military authorities. For this reason, I should like to put the question to the representative of the Navy, whether the idea at that time was that the results to be obtained by the unrestricted U-boat war would suffer as a consequence of its further postponement, or were we in a position to accept the view that a postponement of the unrestricted U-boat war, in the form that it was to be launched on the 1st of February, would weaken and jeopardize the entire operation? That is the question which, to my mind, was the most important.

The CHAIRMAN: Professor, this question will be made the subject of a separate discussion when we go into the question of the effect of the unrestricted U-boat war: how it actually developed and how it was considered in prospect. It will be gone into quite specially on the occasion of Dr. Helfferich's hearing.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: I simply wanted to have the committee reminded of it, because I do not consider it proper to separate all these different phases one from the other.

The CHAIRMAN: The question will, of course, be kept intact. But first of all, we had a special case to cover and we would certainly be going too far afield if we sought to finish with those ramifications which you, Professor, are connecting with the main question.

Admiral v. Bülow, do you care to make a remark? Continue, if you please.

REAR ADMIRAL V. BÜLOW: Certainly. In reply to what Delegate Gothein said, I should like to state that the U-boat war on commerce was conducted with ever-varying phases. For instance, a new phase was introduced in January by the case of the armed merchant ships. On January 9, the Imperial command was as follows: "From the 1st of February, all merchant ships which are recognized beyond question as carrying armaments are to be made the subject of instant attack. Up to this time—that is, prior to the 1st of February—only armed freight ships shall be attacked without warning." So that an intensification of the U-boat war on commerce had already been initiated in this way; between the 9th of January and the 1st of February, armed freight ships were subject to attacks without warning, whereby, of course, the possibility of an incident was increased.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: I should like to add a question. In this connection, are we speaking of armed enemy merchant ships or of all armed merchant ships? If we were dealing with armed enemy merchant ships, then it was the conception of the intensive U-boat war, which was declared on the 8th of February, 1916, in contradistinction to that of restricted U-boat war. But if the only subject of this order which was given was the armed merchant ship, then nothing else would have happened than that, on January 9, 1917, the situation would have been restored which was declared as existing on the 8th day of February, 1916, and which came to an end as the result of the *Sussex* note. During the entire interim, under these circumstances, a U-boat war would have been carried on which would not, by any means, have approached the intensive U-boat war.

REAR ADMIRAL V. BÜLOW: The only armed merchant ships, and this means armed freight ships, involved were those belonging to the enemy. We received no word concerning armed neutral freight ships.

The CHAIRMAN: So that all that happened was that the old conditions of February 8, 1916, came again into being.

Delegate DR. BONN: I believe that we can get this question settled very easily. That was an objection which could have been entertained on the 9th of January. But, according to my recollection—Count Bernstorff will be able to verify it—complications of this kind, namely, new cases, did not come up between the 9th of January and the 29th of January. It follows that we did not have to concern ourselves on the 29th of January with the question whether, as the result of the order issued on the 9th of January, anything would happen between the 9th of January and the 29th of January. The only question was, whether something would happen during the two days preceding the 1st of February and what the situation would be on the 1st of February.

Delegate GÖTHEIN: And after all, we were in just as good a position on

the 29th of January to again change the new order which had been issued on the 9th of January—in just as good a position as we were to change the instructions concerning the unrestricted U-boat war. So that exactly the same effect which would have resulted with regard to the unrestricted U-boat war following the withdrawal of the instructions, would have possibly resulted with regard to the intensive U-boat war as well.

REAR ADMIRAL V. BÜLOW: In answer to Professor Bonn's statement that such an intensification actually came into being in this way: that the boats which began to leave on the 9th did so under such orders with respect to an intensification of methods. Thus, the order would begin, little by little, to become effective, increasing more and more until, finally, all the boats which were out would be provided with the order. Therefore, I should not care to state that the Navy and those in charge of naval operations were entitled to conclude from the fact that between the 9th of January and the 28th of January nothing in the way of a case which might give rise to war with the United States had resulted from this intensification of method, that there was not a very definite danger that such a case might arise in the immediate future.

I should like to state, in reply to what Delegate Gothein just said, that it is obvious that such a contingency might occur. The only purpose of all the remarks which I have made today is to show that those conducting naval operations saw very definite difficulties in having the order transmitted to its destination, and looked upon that as an element of danger, so far as the peace move was concerned. An attempt could, of course, have been made to revoke any orders as such. But the difficulty lay in having the revoking order reach its destination. It was for that reason that those in conduct of naval operations were bound to inform the Imperial Chancellor that they could not venture to offer any guarantee that an order would go through; it emphasized the physical impossibility.

The CHAIRMAN: If the order was not transmitted to its destination, then the peace move would receive a severe blow anyway, if not a death blow.

REAR ADMIRAL V. BÜLOW: Then the move would be greatly jeopardized, since an incident might occur.

Expert DR. BONN: We have simply the following question to deal with: The problem to be solved was the following: Was it still possible, on the 28th or 29th of January, to postpone the unrestricted U-boat war? Nothing which had happened before the 29th of January could have any further significance in regard to the question. Of course, it could happen that, between the 29th of January and the 1st of February, some unfortunate incident or other might occur as the result of the order of the 9th of January. I admit that. But this, after all, was the point: Could we stop the U-boat war from beginning on the 1st of February, or could we not? If I understand correctly, the Navy pointed to the physical difficulties of the operation.

Of course, I have not the remotest intention of going into these technical questions. But the problem, after all, is this: In spite of these technical difficulties, was it possible at any event to make the attempt to further promote the peace move, or was it impossible? This is no technical question; this is no question of can or can not. For this, the Navy is in no way whatsoever responsible; it is simply a question of the desire of the political branch to do so. The only question was this: Did the Imperial Government, in spite of the difficulties, feel that it could make the attempt to permit the peace move to pursue its course? Now, Count Bernstorff has just informed us that he believes that, in spite of the technical difficulties, and even if one or another unfortunate incident had occurred, the peace move would have continued to develop. It seems to me that that is the decisive point.

The CHAIRMAN: No further speakers are announced in connection with this question. We shall, therefore, close on this point.

I shall now put the second question to his Excellency v. Bethmann: Why did the proclamation with regard to Poland, on the 5th of November, 1916, occur at the time that the peace move which was initiated by us was in full swing? Did we have in mind the unfortunate impression which this proclamation was bound to make upon Russia? I remind you that it was Russia who was the first nation to reply to our peace proposal with the sharpest kind of an answer. I do not know whether it is possible for your Excellency to give us an exhaustive reply to this question at present, or whether your Excellency needs an extension of time in order to recall to memory in detail the occurrences of that period. For these reasons, I should be satisfied with a brief answer at the present moment and put off a detailed discussion of the question to a later date.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The Polish question is by far too complicated a thing for me to speak of here more or less as an incidental point in reply to a question injected in this way. The fact that there have been striking differences of opinion concerning the course which the incident has taken, makes it imperative that any statement made should be in strict accord with events as the latter are recorded. It is impossible for me to make any such statement today. I would therefore request the committee to reserve this subject for special treatment at a later date.

The CHAIRMAN: We will postpone the hearing on this point.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Of course, the Polish question must be taken up in connection with the Eastern problem. That is undoubtedly right. But there is a question which seems material to us at the present time and which, perhaps, after all, can be answered. The peace move was initiated by us on the 18th of October. Now the question which concerns us is, what were the political preparations which were to usher in this peace move. And in this connection the question comes up—since the existence of the Kingdom of Poland was proclaimed on November

5 and the first wrathful answer to our peace proposal came from Russia—whether this answer is in any way to be connected with the autonomy of Poland, which was shortly before proclaimed. Our peace proposal was initiated on the 18th of October. So that the proclamation took place within the period of preparation for our peace move. Of itself, that complexity of questions having to do with the East is not connected with this question. It is a question of the political steps taken to prepare the way for our peace proposal.

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: The whole Polish question was not only a problem having to do with the Eastern question, but was a problem involving the question of our relations to our Austrian allies and one having to do with the war on the whole. I state that it is impossible for me to attempt to single out and treat individually a single phase of the problem, as the recording secretary would like to have me do, without discussing the other phases of the problem. I believe that it is quite impossible, in this political connection, to put the questions antithetically as they have been put here. That would result in giving an absolutely incomplete picture of the matter and one which in no way would tend to assist in clearing up the actual situation.

The CHAIRMAN: When does your Excellency think that you will be in a position to give us a complete picture of all the Eastern questions of which the answer to the question which I have put does not only form a part, but upon which it will have a particular bearing with reference to the principal theme which we are working out here: the matter of Wilson's peace move? When does your Excellency think that you will be in a position to do this?

Witness DR. v. BETHMANN-HOLLWEG: I should consider it of great importance to talk over these questions personally with the then Secretary of State v. Jagow, who cooperated with me in all features of the Polish problem, which was very definitely taken up in the course of the negotiations of August, 1916, which were carried on with Austria. Since, at the present time, it is impossible for me to give you any definite information as to when Secretary of State v. Jagow, who lives in Münster, in Westphalia, will be able to come here, I regret to state that I can give you no idea as to when I shall be able to give you the information which you ask.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall, of course, have to hear what Mr. v. Jagow will say on this question. I believe that a preparatory period of two weeks will suffice.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: In the capacity of expert, in which I have been called upon to act here, I should like to avail myself of the present occasion to state publicly that I do not consider that this method of picking things to pieces and selecting individual points in this or in that connection, is a method which can bring about the result which we are supposed to attain

by means of this investigation. These questions are intimately interwoven, and they are questions of the greatest import, involving the existence of our government and of our people. These questions can not be answered by juristically segregating individual points. They must be answered in their entirety and in their proper connection. I feel that it is my duty as an expert to express my opinion in this way, because I have had some experience as to how historical truths are to be arrived at.

The CHAIRMAN: Professor, I can simply answer that it is impossible to go ahead on any other method than that which we are following, and that is, the method of covering, one after the other, the various questions which we consider important for clearing up the entire situation. We can do nothing else but push our investigation of individual questions to a termination, because the replies to these individual questions bring us back again to the questions, taken as a whole, the answer to which will lead to the solution of the entire problem. I can see no possibility of proceeding in any other way than we have done.

I will now pass to the examination of his Excellency Helfferich. Although I expect that your Excellency will present us with a connected story by the answers which you will give us, nevertheless I should like, first of all, to submit to you a number of questions, points of view, which are very important to us. So, your Excellency, you will be called upon to tell us what your opinion is with regard to the operation of the unrestricted U-boat war in its various phases, and, in particular, what effect you expected it to have upon the economic conditions of England, as well as upon England's capacity to continue the fight and her inclination to accept peace, and what, according to your opinion, actually were the economic results of the unrestricted U-boat war which was launched on February 1, 1917, particularly, those results which constitute for you the reasons why the unrestricted U-boat war, although the sinkings exceeded the estimated monthly amount of 600,000 tons, failed to bring about the result expected, which was to incline England to accept peace. Then, your Excellency, you will be requested to give your opinion concerning the effect of the U-boat war upon our relations to the neutral Powers, particularly with regard to the United States of America, and state whether you expected that, as the result of the announcement of the U-boat war at the beginning of the year 1917, the peace efforts of Wilson would be brought to naught. And I call your particular attention to the fact, your Excellency, that you will be called upon to explain how it was that your attitude, after the decision with regard to the U-boat war, was in conflict with the attitude which, up to the time of this decision, you had maintained with regard to the unrestricted U-boat war, and what the reasons were which led you to defend the unrestricted U-boat war after the decision of January 9, 1917. And in this connection, I will read the telegram which you yourself sent to the Imperial Chancellor on

the 9th of January, 1917, and then the speech in the main committee which you made only a short time thereafter; in which your changed attitude stands out in sharp relief. I consider it necessary to set out these matters in full, in order that it may be made possible for you to justify in detail the change of attitude which you manifested a short time thereafter. I will read the telegram which you sent to the Imperial Chancellor on January 9, 1917, and which was forwarded by his Excellency Wahnschaffe:

Secretary of State Helfferich telegraphs your Excellency as follows:

1. The gist of the new memorial submitted by the Admiralty Staff is the comparison of the effects of an unrestricted U-boat warfare upon the shipping which is now operating with England, with the effect of the present U-boat war on commerce (No. 5 of the attached document). It is stated that a ruthless U-boat war would diminish British sea commerce by about 39 per cent in the course of five months, whereas the U-boat war on commerce, on the contrary, would reduce it only to the extent of 18 per cent; that the diminution of 39 per cent would be sufficient to make England's situation unbearable, whereas the loss of 18 per cent would not be such as to force England to sue for peace. The calculation of the 39 and 18 per cent is based on the following reasoning:

It is assumed that the ruthless U-boat war would result in a monthly loss of 600,000 tons, whereas the war on commerce would bring about a loss of 400,000 tons. The effect of the unrestricted U-boat war would be heightened by the frightening away from England of two fifths of the neutral tonnage now available, whereas the continuation of the U-boat war on commerce would not result in the frightening away of any enemy tonnage.

I beg to call attention to the fact that the loss of a certain amount of the neutral tonnage on account of intimidation has already come to pass as the result of even a U-boat war on commerce carried on according to the rules governing cruisers. The memorial of the Admiralty Staff calls impressively to our attention, on pages 22 and 23, the temporary stagnation of trade between Holland and Great Britain and the stoppage of the trade between Norway and the Murman coast. A vigorous continuation of the U-boat war on commerce will doubtless go far to bring about the tying-up of neutral tonnage, or at least its discontinuance on English trade routes, even if the intimidating effect of an unrestricted U-boat war would not be equalled. At any rate the difference between 39 and 18 per cent would decrease.

On the other hand, the following point of view should, in my opinion, be thoroughly tested: If the effect of the unrestricted U-boat war is to bring seafaring neutrals into the war on the side of England, the intimidating effect of the U-boat war would at least be eliminated to a very definite extent. In such case, the voyage to England would no longer mean a mere act of commerce for the neutrals in question, to be undertaken or avoided after weighing the advantages and disadvantages, but a war move in connection with which resulting losses and deaths would play no particular part. Of course, we can not submit any proofs of the amount of percentage in losses which England will be able to endure in her merchant trade before coming to the point

where she can hold out no longer. For example, if the domestic food situation were critical, it would require a shorter time and a less paralyzing grip upon her commerce to bring this about than it would if the domestic food situation were favorable.

2. The estimates of the Admiralty Staff with regard to England's present supply of foodstuffs, and the possibilities of future imports, are moderate. In my opinion, they are favorable, rather than unfavorable to England.

In my opinion, England at the present time has only enough wheat on hand to last from eleven to twelve weeks, whereas the memorial of the Admiralty Staff counts on a fifteen-week supply; and again, according to the estimate submitted by me to the budget committee at the end of September, 1916, England was at that time supplied with cereals for four and one-half months, or, in other words, for about nineteen weeks. The English stock on hand will steadily decrease through January and February, on account of the difficulties of importation. England, and with England, France and Italy, are approaching a food crisis, to increase the dangers of which I know of but one effective method; the imposing of restrictions upon the consumption of the products of the great producing countries, especially the United States. The latter needs for its own consumption an amount which is given in the memorial of the Admiralty Staff, page 34, at 623 million bushels (about 17 million tons), according to Snow. The unrestricted U-boat war will, on the one hand, still further restrict imports which, as it is, are already very greatly reduced—more so than the limited U-boat war on commerce.

On the other hand, in the process of weighing advantages and disadvantages, a point which up to the present time has been neglected should not be overlooked. If the unrestricted U-boat war results in the entrance of the United States into the war, America will be just as much interested in England's being victorious as she would be in a cause exclusively her own. If it is true that England's defeat can only be avoided by providing her with a sufficient grain supply, then America must and can make sacrifices to this end to an extent which, in the capacity of a neutral State, it would not consider, that is, by the limitation of its own consumption of cereals in favor of England. This limitation will by no means necessarily bring about the imposition of a system of short rations applied to American bread consumption; the result would undoubtedly be reached by means of great purchases made by the government and, possibly, by means of forced purchases. Since the Union has more than twice as many inhabitants as England, every *per-capita* restriction of the American population in the matter of grain consumption means more than a double gain *per capita* for the English population. If the outcome of the war were dependent thereon, I would not consider it at all impossible that the United States would be able to bring about a 10 per cent restriction on its normal consumption in favor of England, whereby 1.7 million tons (8.5 million quarters) would at once be released to meet an English shortage of three months. And if a half of this amount were to be sunk in the voyage to England—a percentage far outstripping the possibilities estimated by the Admiralty Staff—such a step would be of invaluable, or perhaps decisive, assistance to England.

Paradoxical as it sounds, it is not altogether impossible, therefore, that, compared with the limited U-boat war on commerce, the unrestricted U-boat war would not, in the last analysis, have a harmful effect upon the supplying of England with breadstuffs, but would rather operate in favor of such a supply.

3. The considerations brought out in Nos. 1 and 2 show how important it is to the results sought by a U-boat war, to have the neutral Powers held off from participation. Whether this will be possible if ruthless methods are adopted in the U-boat war, we shall be able to judge better in the course of a few weeks, when the answer of the Entente to Wilson and its results are before us, than we are today.

There is no occasion for reaching precipitous decisions since, at the present, time is working for us and not against us in the matter of England's food supply. January and, particularly, February are, for obvious seasonal reasons, unfavorable months for importing cereal foodstuffs to England. During the years 1909-14, the average monthly imports amounted to 8,670,000 hundredweight; the January average was only 7,050,000 hundredweight, the February average only 5,870,000 hundredweight, whereas the March average was 7,513,000 hundredweight and, again, the April average 9,251,000 hundredweight. This time, as I prophesied would be the case, basing my opinion on the crop situation, the falling off of the grain imports began as early as September. In spite of England's efforts and of the terrific prices which she paid, the amount of imports for the four weeks in December, 1916, has only reached 1,410,000 quarters, as against 1,955,000 quarters in the preceding year. All signs indicate that this situation will continue until March and April, when the Argentine and Australian crops will begin to arrive.

If, for the reasons above set out, we put off for a few weeks our decision with regard to launching the unrestricted U-boat war, then when our decision is made, prospect of having the English grain supply decreased to a point materially lower than a twelve-week supply will be good. The lower the supply at the commencement of an unrestricted U-boat war, the more certain will our results be and the quicker will they be attained.

I have hastily set down the above in written form in the brief time available to me under the circumstances. I should, therefore, appreciate it if your Excellency would make use of these notes for your own personal information only, and would be good enough not to release them in written form.

HELFFERICH.

Now, in the main committee (I believe on the 31st of January) your Excellency made a speech, the material contents of which I shall ask the recording secretary to give us.

Recording Secretary Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: This speech to the main committee was delivered following certain statements made by Dr. David who asked that at least the unrestricted U-boat war be postponed, or that, in any event and above all, the decision to launch the unrestricted U-boat war was to be deplored and to be opposed, particularly in view of

the United States and of its military resources. Then you, your Excellency, answered as follows:

Dr. David has stated that it was impossible for him to share the hopes which we mentioned yesterday; that he was afraid that the decision which had been reached would result in great disaster to the Fatherland and that for this reason he deplored this resolution. If I ask for your indulgence and that you hear me once again with regard to the economic aspect of the entire question, I do so because it is a matter of extreme importance to me to dispel the anxiety to which Dr. David has given expression. I should like to believe that, in particular, the attitude which I have maintained up to the present time with regard to the U-boat war question and, above all, the views which I hold concerning the significance of an attack by the United States, must have impressed Delegate Dr. David with the idea that I am not one who runs blindly to the support of any proposition, and that it is my custom to pass upon questions with a quiet and, if you choose, skeptical mind.

It is not that my attitude has been changed in the sense of one who was against it yesterday and for it today. That is not the way things are. I should like to recall to the mind of Dr. Stresemann our talk when these matters were last discussed. At that time, in September of last year; he told me that what I had said meant the word "never" to him, and I answered him, stating that I could not concede that my remarks could be construed as meaning "never," and that I, just as was the case with the Imperial Chancellor, was only speaking *pro tempore*. And I further answered in this way: "It is a quite different matter for us to begin the U-boat war at a time when our opponents are in a favorable situation from the standpoint of food supply, when England has stocked up within her own territorial boundaries sufficient supplies to last from four and a half to five months, from what it would be if we were to begin the war at a time when England has only enough of her own grain in the country to last her from two and a half to three months." That is the point at which we have arrived today. The development of events since last September has brought me, too, to the state of being honestly and firmly convinced that the time for commencing the U-boat war has now arrived, and so convinced as to make me feel that its commencement will not brook any further delay.

We have studied all the elements of the case—and I have followed up especially, with the utmost scrutiny, the economic factors of the past two years and, as the result of so doing, have reached the conclusion that now is the time. To take upon ourselves the responsibility of not launching an unlimited U-boat war would be a far greater burden than to accept the hazards of the U-boat war—and I admit that it is a question of hazards.

So that I should like to express and lay before you these matters as points which weigh especially heavily in the balance.

And then there follow economic and technical statements concerning wheat supply, wood for mines, metals, and foodstuffs, which, in the main, it will perhaps be best for your Excellency yourself to take up in connection

with your general remarks, so that I need not anticipate you in this connection. However, I may, perhaps, call particular attention to the words with which these remarks of yours close:

The conclusion to which we have come is the result of a fundamental consideration of all those factors which enter into the matter, particularly all the economic factors. Even those gentlemen whose views Delegate Dr. David has announced would, I believe, be impressed by the facts which I have permitted myself to set out.

Then, perhaps, I may remind you in this connection of a statement which you made in your book which, in turn, goes back to a remark which you made to the budget committee in October. This reads as follows:

If the cards of the unrestricted U-boat war are played and they do not trump, then we are lost; then we are lost for centuries.

That was the view which you expressed in October. Your views of the 9th of January are set out in the telegram, and I have just read to you what your view on the 31st of January was.

The CHAIRMAN: May I now ask your Excellency to make a statement to us of everything which you may have to say upon the matter, giving special attention to the items to which I have called your attention, particularly to what has just been stated by Dr. Sinzheimer and myself.

Witness Secretary of State DR. HELFFERICH: Mr. Chairman: Before I make here any statement to the committee with regard to this matter, I should like to make a few remarks with regard to the oath which I have here given. The Chairman during the first session of this committee called attention to the fact that the purpose of the committee was simply the establishment of facts. But back of this committee stands the national court. The Chairman himself, if I have correctly understood him, stated at the same time, on the occasion of the first session, that, in case the facts here established should prove to be such as to reflect unfavorably against a given individual, it was possible that an accusation might be filed against such person before the national court still to be established. I consider it necessary, just as was the case with Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg in the course of his hearing, to call attention, so far as I too am concerned, to the peculiar situation resulting from the circumstances under which we are summoned here to give our statements under oath. In view of the parliamentary history of this committee and, I may venture to state, in view of the nature of the questions put by a number of the members of this committee, there is no doubt whatsoever as to who those persons are who shall be summoned to answer charges before the national court. It is certain that there will be no question of whether they will be representatives of the present government or their revolutionary predecessors; it is certain that no such thought was entertained, but that former representatives of the Imperial Govern-

ment are those who are had in mind. So that the former members of the Imperial Government are here, more or less in the position of accused persons whose testimony, given under oath in the course of a preliminary inquiry is directed against themselves. I desire to have this abnormal situation definitely brought out in the minutes.

In spite of this, I have taken the oath which I was requested to take, and, on the basis thereof, I propose to speak the pure truth, no more than the truth and no less than the truth, so far as possible in view of the scope of the investigation. It was all the easier for me to take this oath since, holding my convictions, I was not willing to put myself in the position of having availed myself of the otherwise ordinary legal privilege of refusing to testify and in that way to subject myself to the imputation of having followed a course of action punishable according to the tenets of the written law, or those of the still unwritten law of the national court. Having made this statement, may I now take up the matter before us?

The CHAIRMAN: Let me make a remark at this point. It is unquestionably true that the situation is a very peculiar one; particularly is it fraught with very abnormal possibilities from the legal standpoint, when we consider that a person is making a statement under oath which may possibly result in bringing him later before the national court. This, however, is established by the constitution itself; and we are bound by its terms and must hold fast to them. But, over and beyond this, it is not to be doubted that this proceeding has for its main object what is indeed the purpose of the entire committee, namely, the establishment of the actual facts. The statement made under oath is, of itself, full and sufficient guarantee that the picture which we desire to be reconstructed from events of the past will actually be so reconstructed.

Since your Excellency has made the statement that the way in which questions are put has occasionally shown a distinct tendency, and that individual questions which have been asked have been somewhat too strongly colored by individual feelings, I must answer you by stating, on behalf of the members of this committee, that we must refuse to concede the charge that the character of the questions asked shows a definite bias. Every single member of this committee is anxious to reach the point of having matters shown up in their true light. If, as the result of the political views of one member or the other, it might seem that the personal attitude injects itself into the situation, that is an impression, superficial in nature, which is hardly to be avoided in one case or the other. But that does not in any way stand in opposition to the fact that the only purpose of every single member is the establishment of nothing but the truth.

The recording secretary also would like to make a statement.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Your Excellency, the Chairman has stated that your view that we are confronted here with something abnormal in

law, is, under the circumstances, one to be shared. For my part, I venture to call to your attention the fact that the conflict of which we have spoken, and which, moreover, has probably occurred to no one here, can be avoided by you at any time by the exercise of your well-known right to refuse to testify with regard to matters concerning which you might possibly assume that your statement thereupon might be made to your disadvantage.

And I may, perhaps, further call to your attention that the institution which is officiating here is, I might almost say, a European institution common to all democratic States, and that it is not known to me that the point of view which you have just expressed regarding investigating committees in other countries has ever been mentioned by statesmen or military leaders.

The CHAIRMAN: So far as the question of the witness's right to refuse to testify is concerned, it is very doubtful that it could be availed of in the present instance, on the analogy of the right of refusing to testify in criminal proceedings. It is true that the right of a witness to refuse to testify exists in the case of crimes to which penalties would be meted out at the present time by the existing criminal courts. But it is a very great question, whether it would be possible for us to admit that a witness had the right to refuse to testify in connection with the idea of the national court, because at the present time we are totally ignorant of how this national court will be established, of the offenses over which it will have jurisdiction, of the penalties which it will impose, and of what those penalties will consist. These are all matters which are absolutely unsettled for the time being, and it is on this account that, in my opinion, the absolute conclusiveness of the answer to the question of how matters stand with regard to the right of the witness to refuse to testify, falls to the ground.

Delegate DR. COHN: I do not propose to enter into the discussion concerning the future position in which witnesses may find themselves so far as the national court is concerned. So far as I am concerned, I do not expect that any proceedings will take place before the national court. I am, however, very confident that light can be thrown upon the facts, so far as the proceedings of this committee go. In connection with this process, I have no definite purpose except to lay before the German people and the public, by means of the testimony of the persons who have appeared here as witnesses and by means of supplemental inquiries, those facts which the representatives of the old government have, to the highest degree, concealed and kept secret. The facts must be cleared up, the facts which the German people must know in order to appreciate the situation to which they have been brought through the representatives of the old government.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: I should like to take exception to a remark made by Dr. Sinzheimer: He has stated that a ruling characteristic of foreign investigating committees has always been the honest desire to get actual

facts, and that they entered upon their tasks absolutely unbiased. For my part, I must state that, from what I have seen of the establishment of foreign commissions of investigation, this remark is not to the point, but that they are always affected by political aims.

The CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, Professor, for interrupting you, but this altercation seems to me to be far from the mark, since, to the extent that I followed Dr. Sinzheimer, I was not aware that he made this statement.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: I did not say that. I stated that, in the case of committees of investigation as they are usually established in all other countries, it was not known that foreign statesmen and military leaders in these committees had raised the objection that his Excellency Helfferich raised.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I shall be satisfied to have my remarks set down in the minutes. For the rest, I have stated that I am ready to testify without limitation.

The Chairman set forth the questions which I am to answer. I assume that I shall be allowed to designate the order in which I shall proceed to take up individual points; this order would differ somewhat from that proposed by the Chairman:

The CHAIRMAN: The order is a matter which is left entirely to your discretion.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: The point which the Chairman mentioned last of all will be the one which, generally speaking, I shall put off to the last—the point that my position on the 9th of January, 1917, with regard to the Imperial Chancellor, was different from the position taken by me on January 31, 1917, toward the main committee of the Reichstag. This change of view was, of course, based upon the complex whole of the phenomena which will be the subject of my remarks to you. But at present, I shall establish just three facts which entered into the situation between the time of my telegram of the 9th of January and my attitude of the 31st of January or the 1st of February, 1917. These facts are: first, the resolution to launch the unrestricted U-boat war, a resolution to change which was a matter with which I had nothing to do and which created a new situation for the representative of the Imperial Chancellor to meet. Secondly, the rejection by the Entente, on January 10, of President Wilson's peace note, the contents of which are well known to you and the contents of which I have no need to repeat to you here. One word will suffice: This note is the peace treaty of Versailles. Thirdly, President Wilson's note of the 22d of January, which I, not only today, but even at that time, interpreted very differently from the way that Count Bernstorff, some of the members of the committee and expert Professor Dr. Bonn have interpreted it. Those were three new facts of the greatest historical importance, as it seems to me, which came into being between the 9th and the

31st of January and which I will mention first, in order to avoid the thought coming up at the outset that, perhaps, other than real and patriotic purposes had moved me between the 9th and the 31st of January.

The Chairman has made an excellent differentiation in the matter of the two great sets of questions which divided the opinion of the responsible authorities and officials in connection with the decision rendered concerning the unrestricted U-boat war. That is, we have, first, the effect of the U-boat war upon our enemies, particularly upon England, and, secondly, the effect of the U-boat war upon our relations to the neutral Powers, particularly our relation to the United States. And, as a matter of fact, the process of estimating and weighing both these results constituted of itself the pivot around which centered the various points of view of those authorities who participated in the decision, and which, as is well known, developed into sharp conflict of opinion; it was around this process of weighing and estimating both these results that the fight centered in the main committee of the Reichstag, in the public press, and in public opinion. And I should like to add, at this point, that it was around this process of estimating and weighing effects that the battle raged in the soul of each and every one who participated in the ultimate decision of these portentous questions.

The question of the unrestricted U-boat war could not be and could not be allowed to be a question of principle; could not be and could not be allowed to be handled and judged as a question of principle. It was a question of the political and military conduct of war. It was not a question of a dogmatic doctrine having its true believers and its faithless backsliders, but a question of expeditious action—action with regard to which changing grounds of expediency alone could, according to their nature, be binding. It was a question of fitting the method to meet the situation. Those who were called to share the responsibility of this decision upon which the fate of our country depended, were constantly required to weigh the pros and cons and the cons and pros, and to sift their validity in the most conscientious manner; they were called upon, from the moment when the question of the U-boat war was submitted to them, to constantly take counsel with themselves and to constantly test their stand by the development of all the elements that came into play, by the march of military and political events, by the changing forms of economic conditions at home and abroad, on our side and on the side of the enemy, and by the technical development of the U-boat weapon, etc. All these things made it necessary for us to decide, again and again, the most portentous questions which have ever been submitted to the decision of a statesman, general, or admiral, in the history of the whole world.

This tremendous responsibility, equally heavy—and I emphasize this point—whether the result was to refrain or whether it was to go ahead,

made itself felt at every conference. There was no such thing for anyone as a win-all lose-all game, which expression has also been used here in this very hall. Everyone of those who participated was fully aware of the enormous responsibility and advocated whatever steps he felt bound, according to his conscience before God and his people, to take for the rescue of his country. He who speaks today of a win-all lose-all game has no idea of the faithfulness to duty and of the conscientiousness with which all the great decisions were finally reached during this war. He who today speaks of a win-all lose-all game—and I may well venture to say so—participates in the proceedings of this committee with an attitude which is incapable of doing justice, even in the remotest degree, to those motives which lay at the bottom of the great decisions taken during this great war.

Now, to come to the point! On account of the decisive part which the United States ultimately came to play in this war, allow me to take up at first our relations to the United States and their influence upon the U-boat war. I need not waste a single word to point out how important it was not only to keep the United States out of the war, but to keep the United States in a position of honest neutrality which would not put us at a disadvantage in comparison with our enemies. You have been told by Count Bernstorff, who is certainly not biased against the United States or against President Wilson, of the conclusive extent to which the policy of the United States, in spite of all the idealistic speeches of President Wilson, was influenced by material interests during this war. I may call to your attention the fact that Count Bernstorff told you that, following the great concessions which we had made to America in the *Sussex* note of May 4, 1916, President Wilson's confidential man, Colonel House, told him, Count Bernstorff, in May, 1916, that Wilson could do no more then, after we had steered our U-boat war methods back into the paths of international law, toward inducing England to observe the principles of international law regarding maritime warfare, that is, to give up her commercial and hunger blockade—and, forsooth, for the reason that the commercial and financial relations between the United States and the Entente countries had assumed too large proportions and had turned out to be too lucrative to be terminated. That was the confession of a noble soul, and one which we must bear fast in mind, an admission which is more important for the decision of the question with which we are confronted, namely, whether we could expect a peace move from President Wilson which held out prospects of being acceptable so far as we were concerned, which is more important for the determination of this matter, I say, than all those details which have been taken up during these long proceedings.

Wilson, who already in May, 1916, admittedly subordinated the sacred principles of international law and of treaties to the interests of commerce, but whose lips, as before, continued to proclaim the sacredness of inter-

national law and of treaties, is the man with whom we have to deal. I ask you to keep this in mind above all else.

The material development of the United States along lines leading to the interests of the Entente was something which we had to apprehend from the very beginning of the war. From the beginning, we were at a disadvantage with the Entente. The closing, in violation of international law, of all intercourse by sea between Germany and the outer world and of intercourse by sea with neutral States, particularly with reference to wares which were not on the contraband list, and also of the intercourse by sea of non-combatants—all this was bound to bring about a development of commercial and financial conditions in a way which favored the countries of the Entente.

At the same time a counter-effect in our favor would have been possible if such counter-effect had been looked upon by the authorities of the Union as a consummation to be desired and had been fostered by them. But from the very beginning that was not the case. It is true that attempts were made to bring about this counter-effect. The committee could take the testimony of witnesses on this point. Soon after the commencement of the war, former State Secretary Dr. Dernburg was instructed by the Imperial Government to go to America and to act more or less as a personal *point d'appui* for our interests over there, and particularly to represent our financial and commercial interests in that country; moreover, one of the very best officials of the Interior Department, Mr. Albert, the present Under-Secretary of State in the Chancelry, was sent over for the same purpose. And moreover, great private concerns made such attempts. For instance, at my suggestion the *Deutsche Bank*, of which I was one of the Directors at the outbreak of the war, sent one of its acting directors to New York vested with full powers, in order that he might be of assistance over there when the difficulties, which we fully expected, should occur in the matter of news communication. But all these gentlemen met difficult obstacles at the very beginning, not only in the matter of public opinion, but obstacles attributable to the general national feeling as well as to the attitude of official circles.

The action taken with regard to our wireless communications, which has already been mentioned here, is significant. Count Bernstorff has already testified that after the outbreak of the war and at the direction of the American Government, we were only allowed to send telegrams in cipher, for which the American Government had the key, by our own wireless station in the United States; and they were German companies. The fact that our enemies owned a small interest can not alter the situation in any way. In order to improve our news communication with the United States, immediately after the outbreak of the war I got into touch with the wireless company and with the Foreign Office on the point of creating new wireless

communication for the purpose of supplementing the work of the two stations which we had and which were not very efficient. The establishment of a new and efficient wireless communication would have been technically possible and would not have taken an excessively long time at that; but the plan had to be given up as the result of the unfriendly attitude of the American Government toward our stations, whereas the Entente was allowed to send over on their own cables which, after all, were attached to American territory, all the telegrams, ciphered or not ciphered, that they desired; the governments, as well as private parties, were allowed to do this. On the other hand, during the entire war, we had to depend upon the meager and controlled communication maintained between these two wireless stations, which often failed to operate, and upon occasional favors granted us by the American Government, so far as our exchanges were concerned; and, further, upon circuitous routes which we had to obtain by way of neutral countries by the exercise of great efforts and marked by constantly increasing difficulties. If America had been neutral from the start, I ask here why should there have been any objections to having our wireless communication with the United States instantly developed on the greatest scale? What principle of international law could stand in the way of the American Government permitting the carrying out of such improvements in the communication between Germany and America, a neutral country?

Then, too, the endeavors to interest the American business world in us, financially and commercially, were exerted in vain. The view has been expressed by the public, from time to time, that America's attitude toward us would have been different if, like France and England, we had, from the very start—to use a vulgar expression—“gotten things on tick” in the United States; but we in Germany were too proud for this, and we had made it a matter of personal pride to have all our loans taken up at home. Ladies and gentlemen, I remember that this question was occasionally referred to in the budget committee of the Reichstag. I remember that, in the beginning of May, 1916, in the main committee, a delegate congratulated me—I was at that time Imperial Treasurer—on the ground that I had not been obliged, as the British and the French had been, to look for money in America. In reply I stated at that time that the gentleman was decidedly overestimating my virtuous abstinence in money matters, and that I should be very glad indeed to obtain money from the United States if I could only get it. But the result of all efforts made in this line was pitiable. With the exception of a rather large amount of war loans, which an active propaganda in German-American circles had taken up over there, we were only successful in one or two instances, to a ridiculously small extent, in placing treasury notes of the Empire in the United States, and even these treasury notes had to be withdrawn from the market within a short time. None of the great banks, which had no scruples about entering into operations with the Entente, were

available to operations with Germany. These insignificant deals had to be closed with one of the medium-sized banks.

And to just as little extent were we successful in seriously interesting the American business world in the matter of reviving commercial relations. It was only by dint of the greatest exertions that a few experimental cargoes of non-contraband were sent on neutral ships, and on these occasions the risk was secondarily assumed by the Government. These attempts failed because the American Government did nothing to prevent the taking and detention of these ships in violation of international law, and the Americans interested were satisfied to accept money compensation, the prospect of which was held out to them by the British.

In the summer of 1915—I was still Secretary at that time—I hoped that I could stir the great American cotton interests into life in our favor, so that conditions in this field which otherwise might result in great injury to us, might be improved. During the first stages of the war, the absence of the German market had at that time made itself severely felt in the American cotton market. There was a drop in the sale of cotton and in cotton prices. Mr. Lohmann, the merchant financier of Bremen, who, unfortunately, has died since that time, was negotiating at that time with American business friends for the purchase of a large amount of cotton, conditioned upon delivery in German harbors by American or neutral ships. I was prepared, as Secretary of State for the Treasury, to make it possible for the Government to take over the risk of this enormous business. But the closing of the bargain was brought to naught because England, in violation of international law, put cotton upon the contraband list. The United States, in spite of its great interest in cotton exports, did not raise a single objection to the putting of cotton on the contraband list; at least, not at that time and so far as my knowledge goes.

But not only that. The patience of the American Government and of the American business world toward the Entente went still further; it was stretched even to the point of overlooking the infringements in which England permitted herself to take part on American soil. England took upon herself to permit only such American dealers to ship cotton to Europe as were members of the Liverpool cotton exchange and bound themselves not to deliver cotton to Germany, even indirectly by means of any neutral Power. As with cotton, so it was with copper and other metals.

So that if the material interests of the American producers and dealers were crippled so far as Germany was concerned, and if the material interests of the American producers and dealers were developed to the extreme with regard to the Entente, this was not only permitted to happen, but was encouraged by the American Government, Mr. Wilson's Government. Therefore the dilemma in which Mr. Wilson found himself and to which Colonel House called attention in May, 1916, in his conversation with

Count Bernstorff, was the result of the unneutral attitude of the American Government from the outset.

In this connection, I can not let the question of the delivering of ammunition to our enemies by the United States pass unnoticed. Perhaps it is true that, from the standpoint of international law, the question is open to doubt; it could not be open to doubt so far as Mr. Wilson himself was concerned. According to my information, Wilson, shortly before the outbreak of the war, himself furnished a precedent. In February, 1914,¹ that is, six months before the outbreak of the great war, President Wilson based the prohibition issued by the American Government against the delivery of arms and ammunition to the two belligerent parties in Mexico on the following reasoning:

Since Carranza has no ports and, on the contrary, Huerta has ports through which weapons can be brought in, it is our duty as a nation to place both on the same footing if it is our desire to carry out the true spirit of neutrality and not a mere neutrality on paper.

Such a view, brought to its logical conclusion after the outbreak of the World War, would have naturally meant the issuance of an embargo on the exportation of arms and ammunition to the belligerent countries; for the case was exactly what it had been in Mexico; munitions could be brought to the Entente, but not to us. But in this case, which was, we shall certainly admit, a good bit more important than the Mexican incident, Wilson renounced the "true spirit of neutrality" and decided upon a course of action which, six months before, he himself had characterized as a "mere neutrality on paper." This paper neutrality prolonged the duration of the war for years, cost the lives of millions of human beings, crippled millions and extended the limitless ocean of blood and tears. And why? Colonel House gave Count Bernstorff the answer, an answer, the meaning of which is this: Because Mr. Wilson did not want to disturb or could not afford to disturb business, which fundamentally existed in turning the blood and tears of Europe into American gold. (Bravo! from the audience.)

The CHAIRMAN: I should like again to request most earnestly that all expressions of approval or disapproval are to be restrained. I can not permit such expressions to be heard here. I admit that, in individual cases a person may feel the desire to express himself as the result of some statement which touches him very closely. But we must not forget that this is a proceeding which is thoroughly analogous, in its outward form, to that of a court. And just as it is a matter of general understanding that every effort must be made in a court room to refrain from any loud expression of feeling which could in any way interrupt or trouble the proceedings, so must it be understood that this is also the case here. I most earnestly request you once more to refrain from any action which is in conflict with this principle.

¹ The proclamation of February 3, 1914, revoked the proclamation of March 14, 1912, prohibiting export of arms to Mexico.—EDITOR.

Delegate DR. COHN: Mr. Chairman, I would very greatly appreciate it if the witnesses could be informed that it would be advisable for their statements to be made in a form not too much in conflict with our purpose of getting at the truth.

The CHAIRMAN: I must leave it to the discretion of each witness to express himself as his feelings prompt him. If he observes the proper conventions in tone and form, each witness is at liberty to say what he deems proper.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: If I may be allowed to proceed, the German people came to sense the development of events, very largely through instinct. They sensed them correctly, until, at a later date and to their undoing, their sound common sense became confused by those who spoke in Wilson's praise. The German people during the first years of the war were fully alive to what was opposing them over there in the way of misunderstanding, double-dealing, and cold-hearted commercialism. It was lately stated here before this committee that the feeling against the United States was injected into the German people by artificial agitation. That can only be stated by one who was not in touch with the people, and especially with the fighting armies. Who is there amongst us all who has never heard our boys in gray at the front express their rage at American shells, American poison gases, American barbed-wire, and American fliers?

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: No, that is a mistake, your Excellency. It was stated that the enthusiasm for the U-boat war was, in part, inspired.

Expert DR. SCHAEFER: "Artificial provocation" was the term used.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: My recollection was that an artificial working-up of the feeling against America was what was mentioned.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, that was what was mentioned.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I should like to state that there can be no talk of any such artificial working-up of public opinion. The feeling against America was absolutely genuine and elemental, and—I will say it today and here, too—it was justified. The authorities did not work the people up; there was not the slightest necessity to work them up. I have been engaged long enough in public positions to state that if, in any way, we had anything to do with the feeling of the people against the United States, we tried to temper this feeling at various times when it seemed necessary and right for political and compelling reasons. For politics is an unsentimental business, and it can not be worked on the basis of feeling. When the proper time comes, those who are moulding policies can make use of feelings of the masses, but they must not allow themselves to be led by them. And moreover, at the proper moment, they must be able to make headway against the stream. We all knew that, we who had to carry on these various phases. And I believe I can state that in matters involving

the United States the governmental departments acted on the basis of these principles. Great as was the burden which this attitude of the United States, fundamentally unneutral as it was, inflicted upon the Government in its fight for life and death, the Government was, nevertheless, clearly alive to what the entrance of the United States into the war would mean for us. I myself invariably opposed, whenever I got the opportunity to do so, the view which was very wide-spread, that the help which the still formally neutral United States was giving our enemies could not be increased and exceeded even if the United States entered the war. I considered that that view was wrong, and have always very emphatically said so. On the basis of my knowledge of America's resources as an ally, I fought against this view in the confidential conferences which were held with the Supreme High Command of the Army and with those who were conducting naval operations, just as I opposed it here in this hall at the conferences of the main committee of the Reichstag. As far back as March, 1916, when I was obliged to take the office of Imperial Secretary of the Treasury in place of Secretary of State of the Interior v. Delbrück, who was then incapacitated, I emphasized this point of view very strongly. I stated at that time: Selfish and proud as the American is, he will do all that he can, if it comes to war, to have the war terminate with our prostration. I took this ground in the conference of the 31st of August, 1916, at the General Headquarters, a report of which is in the hands of the Committee, and did so with equal emphasis in the memorandum written for the Supreme High Command of the Army, in which I stated:

The difficulties which today confront the Allies in the matter of American loans (difficulties had come up in passing) would disappear if a break with the United States should come. In that case, the United States would throw into the balance on the side of the Entente the entire weight of that financial strength of hers which has increased to an amazing degree during the war. It follows that America will be able to increase to a marked extent and without the slightest doubt the munitions industry which it has carried on up to the present time. The steel production in Germany is about 14 million tons, as compared with a production in the United States of about 40 million tons. And finally, in a war in which the factor of numbers available to either side is of such enormous importance, we can not afford to ignore a country of 100 millions of inhabitants who belong to a cultured and hardy race, viewed from a purely military standpoint. The example of the British in the present war, as well as the example of the Union in the Civil War, shows what can be accomplished by such unschooled forces at a time of crisis.

I set that out at that time in the form of a memorandum addressed to the Supreme High Command of the Army, in connection with the conference at Pless.

In October of 1916, I spoke to the same effect before the main committee

of the Reichstag; and in connection therewith I referred to the possibility of the transportation of American troops, and stated as follows:

It is true, of course, that the transportation of a million men is a matter of enormous difficulty. That is an advantage for us. Whether this advantage would continue to prove so in the case of a war with the United States, unless we are able to force England to accept a peace within a brief period of time, is an open question. My optimism, at least, does not go as far as to doubt that, in case of war, the United States will be able to bring over here very considerable numbers of troops. And this, too, even if we were to sink a good many transport steamers. It is said that there are at least 400,000 men at Saloniki. This entire army was taken over there on transports and is receiving its supplies in the way of men, ammunition and foodstuffs in spite of the fact that our U-boats are active in the Mediterranean. The fact is that troop transports are much safer in making such a voyage than other steamers.

So that I certainly did not underestimate the danger of a war with the United States. It was then that I addressed to the committee of the Reichstag the words which the recording secretary has already quoted:

If the cards of the unrestricted U-boat war are played, and are not trumps, then we are lost; then we are lost for centuries.

And I added:

If the condition of neutrality actually ceases to exist in this war, then the Entente's dream of today will be able to come true, namely, the commercial war after the war; in that case, for years to come will we play the part of the boycotted dog from whom no human being in the world will accept even a piece of bread.

Again and again did I refer to these points. They got rather tired of it in the main committee, and I met their impatience in this way:

What we want to do is to see clearly at this point, what we want is exact knowledge of how things are; and if the U-boat war were to be launched, then we want no one amongst us who, afterwards when chances may appear to get pretty slim, will say: "But if we had only been told this or that—if only those who were in the responsible positions had told us about this or that!"

You see from this, ladies and gentlemen, that I actually anticipated this subcommittee, as well as certain statements which we have heard up to this time.

But what was the effect at that time of my statements, and of the statements of the Imperial Chancellor along the same lines? I will place the document down on the table here: the announcement of the Center party of October 7, 1916, of which Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg has already spoken. I must read it aloud once more in this connection:

In the name of *all* (in bold type: all!) the members of the Center party of the budget committee, the following resolution is announced:

The Imperial Chancellor is alone responsible to the Reichstag for the decision of political questions concerning the conduct of the war.

—the announcement of a principle which, as you will see, is made inapplicable for this single case by the following phrases. The resolution continues:

The decision of the Imperial Chancellor shall, in the main, be based upon the decision of the Supreme High Command of the Army.

If the decision is to the effect that the unrestricted U-boat war shall be launched,

—that is, it does not say that it is immaterial whether the decision is for or against; but “if the decision is to the effect that the unrestricted U-boat war shall be launched”—

then the Imperial Chancellor will be certain of the support of the Reichstag.

Here is the resolution. By this resolution, the largest political body, that subdivision which in the U-boat question formed the tongue of the scales—the term “tongue” is a very modest expression to use in connection with this great body—announced that it left the decision concerning the unrestricted U-boat war in the hands of the Supreme High Command of the Army, and in advance held the Imperial Chancellor harmless for the purposes of this decision, so far as his political responsibilities were concerned, provided the decision which was made was in favor of the unrestricted U-boat war. And, moreover, at the outset it eliminated the Reichstag, so far as it could be eliminated, from participation in further dealings with the U-boat question, by this agreement that the unrestricted U-boat war should be launched, which it thus announced in advance. At that time, Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg—I can bear witness to this—took the ground that nobody in the whole world, not even the Supreme High Command of the Army nor the resolution of the most powerful political party of the Reichstag, could relieve him of his responsibility—not his political responsibility, for of course the Reichstag could do that by giving him full power, but his responsibility in the eyes of God, in the eyes of his Emperor, and in the eyes of the German people. If there are people today who raise a loud outcry against the former political department on account of the launching of the unrestricted U-boat war, and the results of that measure, but who at that time took part in issuing this resolution, I would in private life characterize the attitude of these people as the very acme of hypocrisy. In any event, and speaking now as a private individual, I absolutely deny the right of those people who today are so loud in their reproaches and who now desire to play the part of judges, to thus deport themselves, and I do so on the basis of this resolution.

My attitude in the matter of the U-boat war was, from the first day to the last, just as long as the struggle for the decision was going on, as follows—and I am speaking in quotation marks:

We shall only be in the position to launch the unrestricted U-boat war with the prospect of success if we are able to deliver our blow against England so surely and so quickly as to force her to sue for peace before the United States can throw the great weight of its financial and industrial strength and that of its population into the balance.

That is how I described the most important of all conditions essential to launching the U-boat war, in a definite opinion addressed to Field Marshal v. Hindenburg in the autumn of 1916. To me, that was the cardinal point of the whole question, and my view was shared by the Imperial Chancellor. This attitude was not the result of personal feeling; not by personal feelings were they ever so justified. It was merely the result of a consideration of actual conditions which had to be coolly and carefully calculated over and above any question of personal feeling in this battle of life or death.

Nor was our standpoint dictated by far-fetched speculations. If, for instance, Grand Admiral v. Tirpitz in his memoirs connects my attitude toward the U-boat war with a memorial which was published in the summer of 1916 and addressed to the German princes, supposedly by me, in which it was recommended that we get into touch with England, and in which, further, objections are made to an understanding with Russia—then the Grand Admiral was simply wrongly informed. Even at that time, I very energetically repudiated that memorial. And the Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg, too, had nothing to do with this memorial; he had no knowledge of it. It was then—I received it from another party—that I submitted it to him. So that Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg had not the slightest thing to do with this memorial, and its contents were just about the reverse of the views which were announced by me at that time.

But my conviction that England was the soul of the coalition of the enemy Powers, and my burning wish, too, to strike a blow at the very vitals of England, were just as powerless to cause me to forego a practical and cool-headed examination of what the prospects were in connection with the use of the U-boat weapon as were my feelings with regard to the very injurious and unneutral attitude of the United States.

I have now given a brief statement of the main views which I entertained, and now ask to be permitted to go briefly into the individual phases of the developments which actually came to pass, to the extent that I was called upon to participate in them. (Interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: I think it best for us to continue immediately.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: The U-boat war upon commerce, which was launched at the beginning of February, at the time when I was designated to take charge of the Imperial Treasury, and upon which I, too, had set

great hopes, turned out to be a failure. I do not know how great the amount of the tonnage sunk monthly was. It was not, I believe, given out at that time; in any event, I have no memoranda covering the point. But the effect upon the British imports and exports—for those figures were certainly made public at that time—was astonishingly small.

Then it was that the *Lusitania* case brought us to the first sharp clash in the course of our relations with the United States. The tangible results of the U-boat war as it was carried on at that time did not appear to me to justify the risk of a break with the United States. Since President Wilson at the end of July characterized a repetition of the perpetration of acts by German U-boats which resulted in injuries to the rights of American citizens, as a “distinctly unfriendly act”—a very definite threat—but at the same time offered to cooperate in restoring the freedom of the seas even during the war, and against all opposition whatsoever, I took the view that the attempt ought to be made to bring about a clarification of the situation by clasping and holding the proffered hand, the hand which was held out to us, be it in good faith or only apparently so. It seemed to me that this could be brought about by a temporary cessation of the U-boat war, from which I, as I have already stated, in view of the result which had been brought about up to that time, could not otherwise expect any notable outcome in our favor.

However, before a decision was reached on this point, the *Arabic* sinking followed that of the *Lusitania*, and on this occasion, again, American nationals lost their lives. As a matter of fact, the U-boat war had, at that time, been very definitely limited as to methods, partially so even before the sinking of the *Arabic*, since instructions had been issued that passenger vessels, the so-called “liners,” could only be sunk after warning previously given and if measures were adopted to secure the safety of the non-combatants. So that the stage for the cooperation suggested by Wilson in connection with the restoration of the freedom of the seas was set as the result of these arrangements, provided the other side was acting in good faith.

And then, in November,¹ 1915, the President had had a very detailed note sent to England, a note which in places was very sharply put—a note in which he declared that the United States “unhesitatingly assumes the task of championing the integrity of neutral rights and to the accomplishment of that task it will devote its energies.” You see, these are very bold words. But for the threat which was constantly resurrected against us—the threat that any acts on our part would be looked upon as “unfriendly acts” and that diplomatic relations would be broken off—for such a threat you will look in vain in this note which pretends to be sharply worded.

At the same time, it certainly looked then as if the Government of the United States was actually desirous of pursuing a course which would

¹Letter of Robert Lansing to Ambassador Page, October 21, 1915, last paragraph.—EDITOR.

result in the Entente observing not only the precepts of international law in general, but the individual rights and interests of the United States. The indication of this was that, on the 18th of January, 1916, Secretary of State Lansing, who directed the foreign policy of the United States, addressed to the representatives of the Entente in Washington that note which has already been recently referred to here, in which he proposed that the U-boats should limit their methods to the principles of a war on commerce, but that, on the other hand, the merchant marine of the belligerent States should refrain from arming itself in any way. And Lansing added that his government was seriously considering the view that, for the future, all armed merchant ships should be regarded as auxiliary cruisers.

Ladies and gentlemen, this proposal was of preeminent importance. The carrying-out of this proposal would have placed our U-boat war upon a plane which was quite new and altogether acceptable to us—upon a plane which would have permitted an effective method of warfare thoroughly measured to meet the character of the U-boat weapon, and upon a basis which, above all, would, in all human probability, have eliminated further friction with the United States. That is the significance of this note of Lansing's to the representatives of the Entente Powers, the importance of which can not be overestimated. But what was the further history of this note? It suddenly turned out that this document was a personal expression on the part of Mr. Lansing. Something happened of a quite extraordinary nature, something which has not been explained to me up to the present time, and which can, perhaps, be cleared up by the gentlemen who were in the United States at that time. When we ourselves, acting absolutely in accord with the spirit of Lansing's proposal, announced at the beginning of February the so-called intensive U-boat warfare against armed merchant vessels—in other words, when we did exactly that thing which had been characterized by Lansing as justifiable and which he had designated as a way out of our difficulties in the future, President Wilson personally intervened by a letter to Senator Stone, the chairman of the Senate Committee for Foreign Affairs, in which he protested with the greatest vigor and in the sharpest possible manner against our intensive U-boat war. On March 25 the American Government revealed its new attitude in the matter of armed merchant ships, in a memorandum communicated to the Powers which was in conflict with the view expressed by Lansing two months before, the upshot of which was that the belligerents were bound to admit the existence of a presumption on the high seas that an armed merchant ship was only armed for purposes of defense and, consequently, only had the character of an ordinary merchant ship. That an armed merchant ship could only be considered as part of the armed forces of the enemy if the evidence was such as to show positively that it was armed for purposes of attack; that is, if she let loose with her guns.

In doing this, the American Government played the game of England without England having, even in the slightest degree, prior thereto or thereafter, receded from her methods of conducting the war in violation of international law. There was no further whisper of American pressure being brought to bear upon England to restore the freedom of the seas. On the contrary, even before this change of attitude, Lansing had again taken up the *Lusitania* case—the case had never been quite settled; it was always held in reserve in order to be resurrected at a given moment—and he kept pushing our ambassador, both stubbornly and sharply, in an endeavor to make us admit in so many words the “illegality”—the *illegality*—of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and, in so doing, to close the door against the further conduct of the U-boat war.

Then, on the 24th of March, almost on the same day as that on which this memorial went out, came the sinking of the *Sussex* in the Channel. As is well known, this sinking brought on clearly and sharply the crisis which had been brewing during the preceding weeks. On April 20, Ambassador Gerard handed over the note to our Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs here, in which the Government of the United States threatened, in so many words, to break off diplomatic relations unless the German Government should at once desist from its U-boat methods adopted against passenger steamers and freight steamers, announce this renunciation and put it into practice. The note was given a particular significance because of the fact that the President, directly before it was delivered, brought it to the attention of Congress by a message which, so far as I know, he read in person.

It was perfectly plain that, so far as we were concerned, it was either bend or break.

At that time the opinion was maintained by many, and is even today the view of a great many people, that we should have and could have allowed matters to come then to the breaking point. Even Admiral Koch, if I have correctly understood him, announced as his view, in the last or next to the last session of this committee, that the spring of 1916 was the right time for launching the unrestricted U-boat war, a course which I naturally assume would, even at that time, have involved us in the danger of a war with the United States.

At that time, as the result of a painstaking scrutiny of the subject-matter, I reached the opposite conclusion. In my opinion, we could not venture to undertake a repetition of the mistake of February 15, 1915, to enter upon a U-boat war with a number of U-boats which was hardly sufficient for the purpose and, in all probability, to involve ourselves in a war with the United States as the result. If the memorandum which I drew up for my personal use with regard to the matter at that time, is correct, we had but 62 U-boats, only a portion of which were ready for the front. In spite of all the statements which were made here yesterday, the situation,

so far as U-boat construction was concerned, was good. We were justified in expecting the monthly delivery of a very substantial number of U-boats—at times, more than 10 per month—U-boats which, moreover, were supposed to be far ahead of the greater portion of the existing number in the matter of efficiency. We were to count upon having materially more than double the number within a year's time. Always providing that my memoranda are correct, we actually increased our number of 62 U-boats to 148 within a year's time; that is, to more than double the figures, and double the amount of materially more efficient U-boats in the bargain.

Although Captain Bartenbach stated in the session before last that improvements in measures of defense had made up for the increased number of U-boats, I do not find that that statement is thoroughly confirmed in every respect by examinations made at this time of the actual results of U-boat performance; and, after all, it is the performances which count. These results are made up, on one hand, of the components of the number and efficiency of our U-boats, and, on the other, of the components of the measures of defense. And these results did, after all, increase very materially from the spring of 1916 on. I should like to call attention to the fact that, in the spring of 1916, the highest yield for the month of the intensive U-boat war was, so far as I know, only 225,000 tons. This in the intensive U-boat war! On the other hand, in the last months of the year 1916, we succeeded with that U-boat fleet which had grown materially in numbers and efficiency, in sinking more than 400,000 tons in the course of a mere war on commerce which, of itself, should really be less effective than the intensive U-boat war—

(Contradiction by Expert DR. HOETZSCH.)

—In the last months, more than 400,000. That means, in November, December, and January—

(Renewed contradiction.)

—Well, then, I shall ask the gentlemen of the Admiralty to verify my figures. According to my memoranda, in the months of November, December, and January, we succeeded in getting more than 400,000 tons. The figures are not before me at the present moment, but they can, of course, be verified by the Admiralty immediately.

So that, according to my view, bearing in mind earlier experiences, aside from the point that our U-boat fleet as it existed in March and April, 1916, was hardly sufficient to justify us in running the risk of a war with the United States, the fact that England's economic reserves had, at that time, to be estimated as comparatively strong, was an argument which, in my opinion, spoke lustily against the break; as did especially the fact that England's grain stock was at that time larger than it had been in the preceding year, and that the producing countries to which she had easiest access and which, above all, were depended upon for England's food supply, the United States and Canada, had just gathered in a record crop—a record

crop which was such as to exclude the possibility of a food shortage in England; in all probability, such as would actually be felt, even though great numbers of grain ships were to be sunk. And, finally, too, our own economic situation was one which had to be considered. At that time, we had to depend upon getting the great wheat shipments in from Roumania, which was then still neutral, to make up the deficiency in our own crops, and, in my opinion—the Central Purchasing Company was actually engaged in bringing home those shipments which, as a matter of fact, helped us tide over the summer of 1916—we could not venture to take the risk of having Roumania at once go over to the side of our enemies as the result of a declaration of war by the United States. No one can state definitely whether that would have happened or not. But, as matters were then, what we had to count on were possibilities—yes, even probabilities. Finally, there existed that political and military situation concerning which Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg has lately spoken in detail.

The occurrences of the summer of 1916 fully justified, in my opinion, those who took the view that the entrance of the United States into the war would have resulted in imposing upon us, situated as we were, an added burden which would have been nothing short of fatal.

I remember the terrible battles which took place on the battlefields of the Somme and which we were still called upon to withstand in the summer of 1916; I remind you of the dreadful, dreadful defeat of the Austrians in Volhynia, of the Brussilow offensive which very nearly caused the collapse of our entire eastern front, and I finally remind you of the Roumanian attack which, too, constituted a serious crisis of the war. And I am still today of the opinion that the break with the United States in the spring of 1916 would have led us straightway to ruin. But I admit that opinions differ on the point. Actual proof, for or against, can not be furnished. I can only testify here that those who had to participate in the decision reached only had in view the welfare of their country; only considered the obligation incumbent upon them in making that decision, that which they held necessary and right to be accomplished in this difficult situation.

At that time, we yielded in the note of May 4, 1916. You may well believe me when I say that it was unspeakably difficult for those who considered it their duty, in accordance with their best judgment and conscience, to advise the Emperor to make this decision. In our answer, we referred back to Wilson's readiness, which had been announced in so many words in 1915 but which, as yet, had not taken the form of action, to cooperate with us, even during the war, in the matter of restoring the freedom of the seas; and to our statement that we would restrict the method of the U-boat war to the form of a war on commerce, we expressly appended the further statement that we expected that the American Government from then on, in view of our very full concessions, would demand that the British

Government would observe the principles of international law applicable to the conduct of war upon the sea, and would see that these demands were complied with. We expressly reserved for ourselves freedom of action in case the steps which the United States would take should fail to bring about the desired results. And in return we received Wilson's reply. The answer which Wilson made to our great concession, the concession which we allowed to be wrung from us with heavy hearts—the note of May 10—stated with cutting candor that the American Government was not inclined to concede to Germany that its attitude in matters affecting the U-boat war was in any way to depend upon matters pending between England and the United States. By not a single word did President Wilson hold out the prospect of taking any step to bring England back into the domain of international law. By not a single word did he hold out the prospect of taking any steps to put an end to the most frightful and murderous methods pursued by the British, constituting the most frightful and most murderous crime of this bloody war, the British hunger blockade. As a matter of fact, so far as I know, he took not a single step in this direction after having received our note of the 4th of May, 1916. On the contrary, he sat and looked calmly on when England and France, on July 7, 1916, read themselves completely out of the Declaration of London affecting maritime warfare, which the President himself, at the beginning of the war, had proposed should be taken as announcing the guiding principle for naval operations. Even before this time, it had already become as punctured as a sieve, but from this time on England and France felt so sure of the United States that they simply threw the last vestige of the Declaration of London overboard, in the course of a public and official announcement. That was when Colonel House told Count Bernstorff that Wilson's freedom of action was restricted on account of the great business interests with the Entente.

But now the U-boat question again reached an acute stage for us in August, 1916, as the result of renewed proposals by the Admiralty Staff which informed the Imperial Chancellor that, after carefully considering all the conditions, it was now of the opinion that the time for launching the unrestricted U-boat war had arrived. The conferences which considered this subject occurred on the 31st of August in Pless, and were participated in by those gentlemen who had just been called to the Supreme Command of the Army, General Field Marshal v. Hindenburg and General Ludendorff. A few days before, Roumania had declared war upon Austria-Hungary and had invaded Transylvania. We found ourselves faced with one of the sharpest crises of the entire war. The report of the conference is in the hands of the committee. I have nothing to add to it. The conference closed with the announcement by the Imperial Chancellor that at the next opportunity he would inform the Reichstag that, in view of the present war situation, it had been decided to postpone the decision, since Field Marshal v. Hinden-

burg had announced that, for the present, he must await the development of the Roumanian campaign before a definite conclusion could be reached with regard to the U-boat war.

From this time on, the question of a peace proposal is injected into the question of the U-boat war and our relations to the United States of America; and, gentlemen, in this connection, I should like to call attention to a matter which, as it appears to me, has up to the present time escaped the notice of the honorable committee, something to which, moreover, no reference was made by the recording secretary in his preliminary statement. The first step taken in the peace question was taken by America, and not by us. The records which lie at the disposal of the committee show that Count Bernstorff telegraphed as early as April 11, 1916, that, according to statements made by Colonel House after the settlement of the *Sussex* case, Wilson would like to make peace within a few months—I emphasize these words “within a few months.” So that the initiative was taken and the first impulse was given by Mr. Wilson.

In reply to this telegram, Count Bernstorff received an encouraging answer from Mr. v. Jagow. Mr. v. Bethmann has already said that when the *Sussex* matter was closed in May, he made suggestions to Mr. Gerard of the same nature. It will be found by reference to the records, that Mr. Gerard also reported this to the United States. Matters dragged along. On June 22, Count Bernstorff telegraphed that a peace mediation by Wilson was certain to come in the course of the summer—in the course of the summer!—for election reasons, if for no other. So that at that time the question of the election was not an obstacle, but an incentive. In a report of August 16, Count Bernstorff speaks of a few weeks at the end of which we were to expect a peace move by Wilson. But the weeks and months went by, weeks and months of struggling on the battlefields of the Somme, weeks and months which cost us rivers of the best German blood—and President Wilson did nothing. He neither took any action against the hunger blockade, which was carried on in defiance of international law, nor moved to bring about peace negotiations.

Our situation came to a crisis. At the end of August came the Roumanian advance; the Pless conference with the new leaders in command of the Army, to which I have already referred, took place—those conferences concerning our general military and political situation. I received the impression at that time, and I believe that this impression was held by all, that we had to do everything to bring peace about within an approximate period; and that, if we were not successful in this, we would be forced to combine our utmost strength with every available means at our disposal, even the most risky, in the final battle for our existence. Back of the conferences at Pless, and of the conferences on the subject of peace which were carried on at that time by Mr. v. Bethmann, Mr. v. Jagow, and my-

self, was the compulsory auxiliary service law, that is, the last call upon all our sources of strength at home, and there was the intensive U-boat war in case peace negotiations, which were to prevent the continuation of the war on into the next winter, should not be entered upon.

It was this situation which brought about the inquiry which Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg made to Count Bernstorff on the 2d of September, in which Mr. v. Bethmann asked what Count Bernstorff's personal opinion was concerning the peace mediation by President Wilson. And it was in this telegram that it was also stated that if the opposite proved to be the case, the unrestricted U-boat war would have to be considered in dead earnest.

So that, from the beginning of September on, our Ambassador in the United States, Count Bernstorff, was fully cognizant of the fact that if the peace mediation did not come, and did not come soon, the unrestricted U-boat war could not possibly be avoided.

Count Bernstorff replied that Wilson's peace move—which had been a matter of discussion ever since April, and concerning which we had been told at that time that it was coming soon, that it was coming in a few weeks, that it was coming in a few months—had been postponed as the result of Roumania's taking part in the war. Wilson could not undertake to do anything more before the election. Gentlemen, it was still a far cry to the elections. September and October and the first week in November, from nine to ten hard weeks, during which it was a question of nip and tuck for us. To wait was no small matter for us under such conditions. Count Bernstorff states further in his telegram that it was his personal opinion that the President would immediately come out with his peace move in case he were reelected. This "immediate" was qualified by Count Bernstorff in a second telegram, in that therein he stated that he considered a peace move by Wilson not as certain, mind you, before the end of the year, but as "very probable." The Chancellor insisted again, on September 26, that Wilson's action would have to come soon, for, otherwise, the momentary opportunity, which was favorable for the peace move, would have ceased to exist, and it would be impossible to avoid an unrestricted U-boat war. Gentlemen, in view of the poor means of communication with the United States, and in view of the scarcity of opportunity to communicate, every word which was telegraphed had to be given its full significance, and if the Imperial Chancellor telegraphed that the peace move would have to come soon, and that, otherwise, the momentary opportunity which was now favorable, so far as the peace move was concerned, would cease to exist, and that it would be necessary to revert to the unrestricted U-boat war—I say, again, that those representing us in the United States must have been informed of the situation.

Count Bernstorff again replied that Wilson was not willing to start until

after he was reelected, and he added that the outcome of the election was "quite uncertain." In a further telegram of October 14, he characterizes the outcome of the election as "still very doubtful."

It was at this time that President Wilson, in one of those quite rare personal interviews—rare, so far as I can make out and so far as I can understand from statements made by Count Bernstorff—in one of those interviews which he had with Count Bernstorff, he let it be known that a definite suggestion or request on the part of Germany that he undertake peace mediations, would be welcome to him. That is contained in the telegram of the 14th of October. So that, at that time, Wilson was not afraid of any initiative or any suggestion on the part of Germany. I call particular attention to this fact because, later on, the President's *alter ego*, Colonel House, expressed himself to Count Bernstorff to the effect that the peace move which Germany made was detrimental to Wilson's efforts in the interests of peace, because it had resulted in bringing Wilson under the suspicion of being pro-German. Count Bernstorff, on his own initiative, told Wilson, on the occasion of this interview, that, in his opinion, there was no prospect of one belligerent Power making such a definite appeal for mediation on Wilson's part, and, in confirmation of this view, received a telegram from the Chancellor on the 14th of October, which expressly supported him on the point. At that time the Chancellor telegraphed him as follows: "We could only consider a spontaneous appeal for peace coming from Wilson himself, and it is only toward making such spontaneous appeal that Wilson should be encouraged." And this is a *nuance* which, I believe, we must bear in mind if we want to pass judgment on the question, whether and to what extent the German people interfered with its own freedom of movement by encouraging President Wilson to make an appeal for peace.

On November 6, Wilson was reelected to the Presidency. No news from the United States about any move by Wilson. Only Counselor of Legation Mr. v. Haniel sends word to Minister v. Treutler, on November 20—and this is also in your records: "What Wilson will do now" (that is, after his election) "in the field of international politics, remains to be seen." On November 16, since we still remained without word regarding Wilson's intentions, that is, so far as I can see, at least, Mr. v. Jagow wired to Count Bernstorff:

Kindly ascertain whether the President is going to take steps in the matter of peace mediation, and, if he is, what steps and when? Question important for decision regarding other possible steps in the same direction.

This specific indication that we ourselves would possibly take up the peace question was made almost four weeks before our peace move. A week passed, and no word from Count Bernstorff! On November 22, he was sent for his personal information the following message:

Provided the favorable military situation justifies it, it is our purpose, acting in conjunction with our allies, to announce forthwith our willingness to enter upon peace negotiations.

Now, Count Bernstorff telegraphed on the 25th of November that Wilson had informed him of his own accord, through Colonel House, that he intended to take steps in the matter of a peace mediation "presumably" between then and the New Year. I emphasize the "presumably." But in the same telegram attention is called to the fact that the Belgian deportations were raising a new obstacle, and it is further stated in the same telegram:

Wilson still hesitates because the State Department expects a refusal from our enemies.

On the next day, November 26, Secretary of State Zimmermann sent the telegram which has been so much discussed here, in which he stated that we would give the Wilson peace move precedence over our own; but he added that, in this connection, it was, nevertheless, beyond question our desire to have Wilson make up his mind to act promptly. Zimmermann gave detailed reasons showing why the protraction of the matter until the New Year was not feasible.

That was on November 26. On December 7, Count Bernstorff reported that everything was ready for the peace move, but that, so far as the vacillating Mr. Wilson was concerned, it still remained a matter of doubt as to when he would actually come out with it.

Ever since the 11th of April, that is, for nearly eight months, the Imperial Government in Washington had been put off again and again. Even at the beginning of December, there was absolutely no certainty as to whether and when Mr. Wilson would proceed. Even in a report dated the 14th of January, that is, when matters had already dragged into the new year, Count Bernstorff stated in a report that Wilson's peace note would probably have been sent out by Christmas, irrespective of our action, "although this is not so absolutely certain, in view of the hesitating character of Mr. Wilson, whose inclination is to handle all questions in a dilatory manner." So that, on January 14, 1917, Count Bernstorff still had some doubts as to whether Wilson would have come out with his move at Christmas or before New Year's without any peace proposal having been made by us. One of the experts, Professor Bonn, has stated in his book, *America as an Enemy*:

The German peace proposal had not only forced the President to prompt action . . . etc.

To prompt action after eight months! So that Professor Bonn, who writes here that our peace proposal had forced the President to "prompt action" seems to have been of the opinion, in writing his book, that, before our peace move and without our peace move, that which he designates as

prompt action was not to have been expected with absolute certainty from Mr. Wilson.

The impression that, as a matter of fact, Wilson was absolutely undetermined, even at the beginning of December, is confirmed by what Mr. Gerard—and now comes the American side—says in his book, which, I assume, is known to the members of the honorable committee; it is very important for the determination of this question. It is true that, in many ways, the book is to be taken with a grain of salt in matters which I myself can personally verify. Mr. Gerard, who had gone to the United States for the express purpose of furthering the cause of peace, returned to Europe from New York on the 4th of December. In his book he states—it will be found on page 349—that he had an interview with the President before he left, an occurrence which, in view of the critical nature of the situation, would really have to be taken for granted. He adds that he received the impression that the President desired above all things to have peace and to make peace. So he really received the “impression.”

Of course (he adds) this question of making peace is a very delicate one. A direct offer on our part might have subjected us to the same treatment which we gave Great Britain during our Civil War when Great Britain made overtures looking towards the establishment of peace, and the North answered, practically telling the British Government that it could attend to its own business, that it would brook no interference and would regard further overtures as unfriendly acts.

The Germans started this war without any consultation with the United States, and then seemed to think that they had a right to demand that the United States make peace for them on such terms and at such time as they chose; and that the failure to do so gave them a vested right to break all the laws of warfare against their enemies and to murder the citizens of the United States on the high seas, in violation of the declared principles of international law.

Nevertheless (Gerard says in closing) I think that the inclination of the President was to go very far towards the forcing of peace.

Whoever reads these passages from Mr. Gerard's book is certain of one thing: That when Wilson gave Mr. Gerard his audience on his departure—shortly before the 4th of December—he did not give him even the slightest hint as to whether and when he proposed to make any move of any kind; and that was also the impression which I very definitely received from Mr. Gerard as the result of a personal interview with him after his return.

I repeat: for eight months, Wilson and his confidential man, Colonel House, had talked over the peace move from all angles, and still no definite promise was made, no definite expression of opinion on the part of the President that he was willing to undertake a peace move, what kind of peace move he was willing to undertake, and when he was willing to undertake it. Could the political branch of the Government assume the responsibility of waiting still longer for something to be done by this eternally

hesitating man, this man who was eternally putting things off, and who never committed himself even to the extent of the most minute word, when it seemed to its leaders that, as the result of the general situation, a serious attempt to bring about peace was urgently called for?

You know the history of the proposal for negotiations of the Central Powers. The first move in connection with this proposal was made by Baron Burian in his conference with Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg on the 17th of October. As soon as the Roumanian campaign had been brought to a certain stopping point, the attempt must be made to bring about the termination of the war without the sacrifice of vital interests. That was the gist of Burian's opinion, as he expressed it.

Quite independently of Baron Burian, and without any knowledge of his suggestion, in the course of a conference with Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg on the 20th of October with regard to the speech which Sir Edward Grey had made two days before in London, I made the same kind of a proposal. The proposal was in the air. Those were the days of the taking of Kustendje and Cernavoda. The Roumanian campaign was approaching its end. Our situation had, once more, been reconstructed. The prospect of overwhelming us within a determinable period and without further frightful sacrifices of human life, had eluded our enemies. All the tremendous tides of war were pushing towards a halt. Every human heart throughout the whole world was bound to feel that Christmas would either bring to suffering and bleeding Europe the promise "on earth peace, good will toward men," or that most frightful transition from the locked embrace of battling nations to the death grapple of utter desperation, in which no means would be left untried—yes, more than that: the danger that the entire civilization of Europe should be toppled to ruin from its pedestal of several thousand years. That is the way things stood.

As late as the afternoon of the 25th of October, the Chancellor discussed the peace move with the Emperor and, with the latter's consent, went to the General Headquarters on the evening of the same day. Field Marshal v. Hindenburg likewise agreed that we would have to attempt to get peace at this time.

Negotiations were entered into with Austria-Hungary and our other allies. They were not altogether easy, but required a certain time; nevertheless they were carried on with great energy. On the 31st of October, after the Chancellor had informed the Emperor how events were shaping themselves, the Emperor wrote the Chancellor a letter—a letter which, according to my view, certainly belongs in the records of this investigating committee and which I shall venture to read with the permission of the Chairman. The Emperor wrote at that time to the Chancellor:

The proposal to bring about peace is an act of morality which is necessary in order to relieve the world and also the neutral Powers

from the weight which burdens all. For the performance of such an act, there is needed a ruler who has a conscience and who feels himself responsible to God and has a heart for his own people and for enemy peoples, and who, untroubled by possible deliberate misrepresentations regarding his step in this direction, has the will to relieve the world of its sorrows. I have the courage to do it. I will risk it in the name of God.

I saw with my own eyes at that time the card on which the Emperor addressed these words in pencil to the Chancellor. It made the deepest impression upon me. I ask whether there is anyone here who can harbor the least doubt about the honorable nature of the intent to make peace, about the deep moral seriousness, about the Christian and human feeling of responsibility which led to the German peace move. Is there anyone who, having a knowledge of the actual circumstances, ventures to express to our own people or to the world at large any doubt of the earnest feeling or of this sense of responsibility—to that world which, during the war, was our enemy and which—may Heaven hear the complaint—is our enemy today. And today I still announce as my opinion, that, for all time, it shall stand to the glorification of the German name, that it was Germany and Germany's allies who submitted the question of peace to the world at that time, which was such as to permit one to speak of peace between equals. It is possible that you, ladies and gentlemen of the committee, may take exception to the tactical expediency of the proposal, that you may be in doubt as to whether it might not have been proper, in spite of the seven or eight months of delays on the part of the President, to let Mr. Wilson, in order not to put him "out of humor," have the guiding hand in the matter, even to the point of running the risk of having month after month pass, with their streams of blood. The point is that we were not dealing here with a question of tactical finesse, with questions of etiquette, with questions of precedence; we were not here arranging the seats for a banquet of honor; what we had to deal with was the question which affected all humanity—the question of peace after more than two years had been spent at war; we were to determine the question whether this war should continue on and on indefinitely and grow more bitter with such continuance, or whether the common sense of mankind was strong enough to stop it. Where there is a will, there is always a way. Who will contest the fact that there was in our breasts an honorable desire, the honest wish for peace? Peace must have come—it must have!—under any and all circumstances; peace must have come, if there had been a spark of this honorable yearning in the breasts of our enemies. And I will say, furthermore, that peace must have come if, on the part of that mightiest of neutral nations, the United States of America, and its leading men, there had existed the desire for peace to the same honorable and obvious extent that it was shown to have existed on our part.

I shall not go any further into details which have already been submitted, but shall simply establish the most important points as they developed in the course of the further run of events.

On December 12, we came out with our peace move. It was a common-sense and sincere proposal—a proposal for negotiation between the belligerents on a basis which should guarantee the honor, existence and freedom of development of our people and of the peoples of our allies. I can testify to the fact that those men who are responsible for this move had absolutely no intention of in any way thwarting Wilson's peace move. And I can testify to this with all the greater assurance because I personally took a skeptical attitude from the very beginning toward a peace move by Wilson, and because from the beginning I depended but little upon such a peace move. At the time when the Chancellor was in Pless, on the 31st of August, 1916, and in the presence of Mr. v. Jagow was talking over the matter of an appeal to President Wilson in the interests of peace, I voiced my objections. In view of all the experiences which we had had up to that time with Wilson and with the United States, I could not see that any good was to come of having the American President participate in matters relating to peace. I suggested at that time that it would be better to attempt to reach an understanding with Russia at the cost of Poland and, if necessary, at the cost of that part of East Galicia which was then occupied by the Russians.

To be sure, I was naturally not informed in all detail of the exchange of telegrams with Count v. Bernstorff; but I can say this: that, as the result of all my conferences with Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, with whom at that time I was most certainly in constant contact, I got the impression that Mr. v. Bethmann-Hollweg too was no longer able to believe absolutely in an earnest purpose on Wilson's part to do something in the cause of peace, just as he himself has stated here. After the picture which I have presented to you, can you wonder at this? Can even the most patient man be surprised at this, after all these delays to which this peace question had been exposed ever since April, 1916?

Then on the 21st of December, President Wilson's peace note was handed out after our peace proposal. Nobody can tell, and even Professor Bonn does not appear to consider it a settled fact, that the note would have been issued if our peace proposal had not preceded it. As a matter of fact, the purpose of Wilson's peace proposal came to the same thing as the proposal of the Central Powers, namely, a mutual exchange of peace terms. The only difference was that we had suggested a definite method for reaching this end, to wit, the immediate coming together of the belligerents for the purpose of negotiating peace. On the other hand, Mr. Wilson had purposely left the method an open one, so far as his note was concerned. He stated in so many words in his note that he would not suggest any definite course to

be followed in order to bring about this end, but that he desired to leave the method to the determination of the belligerent Powers. It is true that, secretly, he suggested the idea to Count Bernstorff, through Colonel House, that he should be used as a clearing house for the purpose of these peace activities—and in this connection I use the same expression which Colonel House has used. For this purpose, President Wilson secretly let it be known that he was to act as a clearing house.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: May I ask your Excellency to read this note? The contents seem to me to be different. The point is that, in this note, Wilson requests that he be given the peace conditions, that he attempted in a very positive manner to have the peace conditions disclosed to him.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: "To him!"—that is not in the note. It is stated in so many words in the note, that the peace conditions be publicly given, so that they could be contrasted with and counterbalanced by one another.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Certainly.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: But he has stated expressly that he desired to leave the methods to be selected by the belligerents. He stated expressly, if I remember correctly—at the moment I have not the note before me—that he would not be the mediator and that he would not even go as far as to make a definite proposal, but that he would leave the form and the method to the belligerent Powers. But I should like to suggest that the matter be taken up in its proper connection.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: There is the note. It begins with a request to disclose the peace conditions.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps the recording secretary will be good enough to read it, in order to spare your voice.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I have the passage in question before me. The President suggests that—

an early occasion be sought to call out from all the nations now at war such an avowal of their respective views as to the terms—

You see, this is quite impersonal: that the opportunity shall be availed of to learn the peace conditions.

upon which the war might be concluded and the arrangements which would be deemed satisfactory and as a guarantee against its renewal or the kindling of any similar conflict in the future as would make it possible frankly to compare them. He is indifferent as to the means taken to accomplish this.

Just exactly as I said.

He would be happy himself to serve, or even to take the initiative in its accomplishment, in any way that might prove acceptable, but he has no desire to determine the method or the instrumentality. One

way will be as acceptable to him as another if only the great object he has in mind be attained.

So here, too, the President, on his part, recommends no definite method, but leaves it to the discretion of the belligerent Powers to settle the question themselves. To be sure, he had Colonel House state to Count v. Bernstorff secretly that he would be glad to act as a clearing house.

Now, as affecting the further course of events, the circumstance is important, that even before Wilson made his peace note public, the hostile statesmen had already expressed themselves in their speeches in parliament with regard to our peace proposal. The French were in the greatest hurry to do so. Our peace proposal was made known on the 12th, and, already on the 13th of December, Premier Briand denounced our proposal as a maneuver, the purpose of which was to sow discord among the allied Powers. He really was in a very great hurry, this Mr. Briand! The following days brought the declarations of the Russians, the Italians and the British, all sharply unfavorable. At the very best, one might have seen in Mr. Sonnino's declaration a hidden back door whose latch might be open to peace; that is, if we were willing to look very very sharply.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: With regard to this matter, there was a particular note.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I shall not go into this matter, because it is going to be made the subject of confidential discussions as to whether and to what extent Mr. Sonnino's case represents a special case; as to whether, at that time, he entertained a willingness for peace. For this reason, I say that, if we had looked very very sharply, we might have found a back door, very well hidden, through which peace might have slipped in.

On the 30th of December, the joint reply of the Entente to our peace proposal provided us with the official answer. With a sharpness that cut, the Entente refused to accept a "proposal without sincerity and without import." The contents of this reply, which was issued with the full knowledge of Wilson's peace note, was such as to lead all to expect that Wilson's proposal would be flatly rejected by the Entente. The Entente had had time, from the 21st to the 30th of December, to draw up its answer with full knowledge of Wilson's note, and if the slightest intention had existed not to give an answer which amounted to a rejection, the door of peace could not have been locked and bolted in the way that it was by means of the answer to us of the 30th of December.

As is well known, Wilson's note was rejected in the joint note of the Entente Powers which Briand handed over to the American Ambassador in Paris on January 10, 1917. In the sharpest terms, this note placed all the responsibility for the war and for all the abuses which occurred in connection with the conduct of the war, upon the Central Powers. This note announced war aims which were nothing short of the dismemberment and humiliation

of Germany, the termination of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the destruction of Turkey—in short, a program which was just as similar to the peace of Versailles as one egg is to another. The Entente Powers protested—and this is an important point, too—with polite words in the course of their note—for they were dealing here with Wilson and not with us—but in sufficiently plain terms, against being put upon the same basis as the Central Powers. This protest against being put on the same basis with the Central Powers was directed to Wilson. The protest was a categorical rejection of mediation of any kind, and of all good offices which a third party could in any way perform for the purpose of bringing about an understanding between the two belligerent groups. For such mediation and such good offices are only possible, of course, when dealing with two parties on the same footing.

When I read this note, I said to myself: President Wilson has never been offered such an insult in his life; I am anxious to see what President Wilson's answer will be to this insult—for it was plain to anybody who was versed in interpreting diplomatic documents that it was an affront. You know the answer, of course. I shall come back to it again, but I must insert a remark at this time.

In the face of such a curt cutting-off of the possibility of any and every peace move, the effect of which it was impossible to eliminate by ever so well-meant an attempt by a third party to have things appear in a more tempered light, for the facts were too plain—in the face of such a curt cutting off, the significance of those detailed interviews referred to in the former sessions of the committee, in the course of which Colonel House sought to win over Count v. Bernstorff and, through him, the German Government, to the Wilsonian conception of the “clearing house” must pale. So far as I have been able to deduce from the records, all Colonel House's efforts at that time were concentrated in the attempt to win over the German Government to the clearing-house idea. The German Government stood firm to the policy of a direct exchange of ideas between the belligerents themselves, upon which it had agreed with the German High-Command of the Army and with its allies—and this means an exchange of ideas without the assistance of a clearing house, as the only way which would lead to peace—and brought out this point in its reply to Wilson's note of the 6th of December. And it submitted, in addition thereto, the proposal that delegates of the belligerent Powers might at once arrange to meet at some neutral place. That was a more detailed proposal than our offer of the 12th of December, in which the coming together for the purpose of entering into peace negotiations had only been spoken of in general terms. But now we proposed that delegates of all the belligerents should at once proceed to meet in conference at some neutral place in order to take up the question of the possibilities of peace, and in order to discuss the point, as Wilson had suggested, as to whether an equalization of peace terms would be possible.

The German Government continued to maintain this standpoint. I refer to Count Bernstorff's telegram of the 29th of December, which was received in Berlin on January 3, 1917, and answered by Secretary of State Zimmermann on January 7. And at the same time, the answer of Secretary of State Zimmermann of the 7th of January contained the announcement that our war aims were altogether moderate, in contrast with the war aims of the Entente, and that we had no desire to annex Belgium, an announcement which, according to a statement made by Colonel House to Count Bernstorff, was looked upon by President Wilson as "valuable in the extreme."

Up to this time, ladies and gentlemen, as long as we stuck to our program, which was to bring about a direct conference between the belligerents concerning the real question of the conclusion of a peace, and then a conference to which neutrals would be invited and in which general questions of international law would be taken up, which would be settled at the conclusion of peace, such as disarmament, arbitral tribunals, league of nations—just so long did the question of the attitude which President Wilson would really take with regard to the war aims of the belligerent groups play no part, at least no part in the exchange of dispatches between Berlin and Washington, and probably no part in the negotiations between Count Bernstorff and the President's confidential man. This, of course, changed as soon as the clearing-house idea was broached. The way in which one who has been engaged in the consideration of the peace terms of both parties would actually approach the question of peace conditions, is naturally an entirely different proposition from the way in which one who has simply brought both parties together and has said to them: "Now, talk this matter over between yourselves first," would approach peace conditions.

So that, up to this time, we on our side had been of the opinion that it was going to be possible to limit President Wilson's cooperation in the matter of the actual peace negotiations to the exercise of his good offices in the process of bringing both parties to the conference table. Now, if Wilson, in connection with his peace note of the 21st of December, which, apparently, left all methods open, claimed all the attributes of a "clearing house" and insisted that the peace aims of both sides be disclosed to him, this, of course, constituted a very definite step beyond the limits of activity which had, up to this time, been agreed upon. From that point on, it was but a single step to that of arbitrator between the belligerent Powers.

Now, in their joint note of the 10th of January, the Entente Powers had informed Wilson of their peace aims, of those well-known exorbitant peace conditions of which I have already spoken. It was now destined to appear clearly what the real purpose of Wilson's peace move was. The view was announced even by neutral Powers entitled to respect that if the President was really in earnest with his peace proposal, he must state unequivocally

that this answer could not possibly serve the cause of peace, but that it would make the continuation of the war unavoidable. An opinion expressed by a neutral Power entitled to respect!

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: There are other neutral ideas on the subject.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: Certainly, I have already called attention to the fact that there are other neutral ideas on the subject.

The CHAIRMAN: Of course, that can only be made the subject of confidential conferences. I would, moreover, suggest, in order that excessive strain be not put upon your voice, that we break off at one o'clock or at some suitable stopping point, at your discretion. Moreover, I believe that our attention will be subjected to too great a strain on account of the extent of the subject-matter which you are submitting to us, if the hearing is continued.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I request that no regard be had for my voice.

The CHAIRMAN: How much longer will your testimony last?

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: My testimony will take some 40 minutes more.

The CHAIRMAN: Well, that would be altogether too much of a strain so far as we are concerned. I, therefore, would like to repeat my suggestion to the effect that you, your Excellency, will terminate your testimony for today as soon as you have closed with this phase.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: We are now, if I may be permitted to finish with this phase, considering the question of Wilson's attitude in respect to the monstrous reply made by the Entente, which was no more nor less than an advance announcement of the Versailles peace.

On the 22d of January, Wilson sent his much-discussed message to the Senate, which, on the same day, was officially transmitted to all the belligerent Powers through their diplomatic representatives. In this message, the President went through the length and breadth of the future regulation of the world which he was planning at the time. The following points were material to the vital question of peace:

1. The message not only failed to contain any rejection of the unprecedented peace terms of the Entente, but a critique of the announcements made by the Entente and the Central Powers, which, in its outcome, was plainly in favor of the Entente and—I assert this in contradiction of an effort to gloss this over, made by Delegate Dr. Sinzheimer in the first session of the committee—which treated the war aims of the Entente, which were by no possibility acceptable to the Central Powers, as debatable. The President stated in his message:

The Central Powers united in a reply which stated merely—

Merely is what is stated in the text.

that they were ready to meet their antagonists in conference to discuss terms of peace. The Entente Powers have replied much more defi-

nitely and have stated, in general terms, indeed, but with sufficient definiteness to imply details, the arrangements, guarantees, and acts of reparation which they deem to be the indispensable conditions of a satisfactory settlement. *We are that much nearer a definite discussion of the peace which shall end the present war.*

I doubly emphasize the last sentence, because the recorder did not read it when he made his preliminary speech in which he quoted the sentences which immediately preceded it. In this sentence, the unparalleled war aims of the Entente, regarding which Wilson states, in so many words, that for the Entente they constitute the indispensable conditions of a satisfactory settlement—conditions so unheard of as to be bound to be unacceptable to every nation not actually in a state of collapse—these conditions, I say, are characterized as such as to have resulted in bringing us so much nearer to a definite discussion of the peace.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: You refer—I have discussed the matter with you privately—to the last sentence alone.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I refer to both sentences.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: No, it is in the following line of thought that the true meaning of the expression is to be found: The Central Powers have expressed their willingness to take part in a peace conference in order to discuss peace, and the Entente has informed us of its peace conditions; and as the result of both announcements, we have made an advance in the direction of peace.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: The expression which, in my opinion, constitutes a criticism on the part of the President, and which, in my opinion of that time, contained such a criticism, is as follows: The Central Powers have “merely”—*merely*—communicated their peace conditions, whereas the others have replied in far greater detail. It is therein that the criticism lies—

(Contradiction by Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER.)

—If you feel differently about it, I can not help it. My impression is as I have just stated.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: The real point is this: whether President Wilson characterized the conditions as constituting a ground for discussion, as such as could be made the subject of debate.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I will read it again:

The Central Powers united in a reply which stated merely that they were ready to meet their antagonists in conference to discuss terms of peace.

That the word “merely” is no expression of satisfaction or acquiescence, you will admit. Then he goes on:

The Entente Powers have replied much more definitely and have stated, in general terms indeed, but with sufficient definiteness to imply

details, the arrangements, guarantees, and acts of reparation which they deem to be the indispensable conditions of a satisfactory settlement.

If peace was to result, the following sentence would have to appear at this point: "These conditions are impossible; in this way, we shall not get peace." But instead, this is the sentence which follows:

We are—

You may include our announcement, by implication, but, by means of this unprecedented reply of the Entente, the result of which was to shut out the possibilities of peace in the judgment of every thinking man we were.

that much nearer a definite discussion of the peace which shall end the present war.

Delegate DR. SINZHEIMER: Because we have two statements before us.

Expert DR. BONN: I believe that if we eliminate all pathos, this is a matter for which there is a very simple explanation. What we have to deal with is the following: We have a man who wants to play the part of mediator, who wants to bring both parties together. He addresses both parties on the point. One party says: "I am ready to sit down and confer with the other side." That is what we said. The other party comes out with a list of conditions. In so doing, it announces in so many words: "I am not ready to deal with the other party on equal ground." Thereupon President Wilson, the mediator, says: "As the result of these two announcements, we have advanced another step; A is willing to confer with B; B says positively what he wants; as the result, a basis is reached—

(Interruptions and commotion.)

—I beg of you to let me finish—as the result, we reach a basis which can be discussed. Then the parties continue: B states, however, that he is not willing to sit down and confer with the other party; B states his desire that the other party should not be considered as having equal rights with him in this matter. And right at this point we have a manifestation of the real spirit of Wilson's entire move, in Wilson's announcement that what he insists upon is a peace between equals. I will show that this is so in a minute. It would, of course, have been very much better if we could have postponed all these discussions to a later time. (Agreement.) But if arguments are to be made the basis of judgment, then the arguments of all parties must be heard.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: My opinion is that even the preliminary statement of Dr. Sinzheimer gave evidence of certain judgments having already been formed; it is perfectly true that I can not testify to matters here without giving vent to certain expressions of judgments formed; for these judgments are not being formed at the present time, *ex post facto*, but, on the contrary,

they were being formed at the time when the great decision was the thing before us which is now being discussed here. These opinions were conclusive in their effect upon my attitude on the 31st of January. For that reason, I claim the right to express them, and this right will certainly be afforded me by the Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: It goes without saying that your Excellency has this right. I beg that you will now continue, if there is something more to be said.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: I believe that it would be best for you gentlemen to permit me to close this phase briefly and without further interruption, and for me to be enabled to make my further statements in connection therewith tomorrow.

The CHAIRMAN: Very well; I shall then request your Excellency to continue with your statement until you reach a natural stopping point, and I shall request the gentlemen to refrain as far as possible from asking further questions.

Witness DR. HELFFERICH: What we had expected and what we were bound to expect, was that President Wilson, if it was his sincere desire to bring about peace and if, in addition to this desire, he had the clearness of conception required for a correct understanding of our vital interests in this matter, he would now give the Entente to understand that which even neutral statesmen took for granted, namely, that these conditions were such as to make any and every peace impossible. But the President took the view that, by means of this reply of the Entente, we had come so much nearer to the peace. As the result, the main impression that this was bound to make on us was: "Thank God for having kept us safe from this peace mediator!" And that is the first point.

I remind you, further, that this sentence is contained in President Wilson's message: "I take it for granted, for instance"—quite as a matter of fact, as if he were discussing a piece of bread and butter, or an egg—"I take it for granted, for instance, that statesmen everywhere are agreed that there should be a united, independent, and autonomous Poland."

And immediately following, he speaks of the necessity for all great nations (and of course the Poles naturally are to be classed as one of the great nations) of having a direct outlet to the sea, and, where this can not be done by the cession of territory, it can be done by the neutralization of direct rights of way under the general international guarantee—the guarantee the fruits of which we at present have the good fortune to enjoy under the existing Versailles treaty.

So that it was not only that Wilson took the view that, generally speaking, the impossible war aims of the Entente could be made the subject of discussion, or at least he did not consider them as constituting an obstacle to peace—he took a decided stand in favor of a solution of a single point which

was a most particularly delicate matter, so far as Germany was concerned—a solution which was absolutely unacceptable to Germany; that is, to any except a prostrate Germany. The matter was mentioned during Count Bernstorff's hearing—and Count Bernstorff verified the fact with a smile—that Wilson had absolutely no conception of the conditions existing in our eastern provinces and in Poland. I assume that this is correct; otherwise, on the ground of this statement alone, I would brand Wilson as the man of all men responsible for the dragging out of the war. Even if he had no conception of what those conditions were, regarding which he made his lofty announcement far above our heads, and which formed part of such an important document as this message of the 22d of January, and in which he proceeded to lay down the law—even if this had been the case, I will again make the statement: Thank God for having saved us from this peace mediator!

I have never been able to conceive, and I never shall be able to conceive, how this message of Wilson's to the Senate can be looked upon from this side or from that side as an announcement of good faith, of the absence of bias, and as an indication that Wilson had formed no preconceived judgment. So far as I was concerned, it was but a confirmation of my worst fears. For me, it constituted a document which exposed to the brightest light of day Wilson's utter lack of capacity to release himself from the prejudicing effect of prior judgment, his ignorance of our history, our geographical conditions, our ethnical conditions, and the necessities of our national existence, and of his incurable prejudice against Germany. And the only way in which I can account to myself for the fact that Ambassador Count v. Bernstorff interpreted this message to constitute a further step toward a peace acceptable to us, and continued to send in reports even after the 22d of January, reflecting this view, is the length of time during which he continued to be cut off from every direct intercourse and every direct contact with his German home, subjected to the strongly suggestive influences of the American world by which he was surrounded. This message of President Wilson's of January 22, 1917, was but the mask which failed to conceal behind it the features of the Wilson of Versailles.

With this I should like to conclude today.

The CHAIRMAN: The hearing is closed. We shall meet again Friday, November 14, at 10 o'clock.

The session closed at 1:09 o'clock.