

School Children Submit Petition for Peace in Europe



Scene at the State Department, Washington, February, 23, 1915, when twelve girls of the Washington public schools turned over to Secretary Bryan a petition, signed by thousands of children throughout the United States and addressed to rulers of the warring nations of Europe, pleading for a speedy end of the great war.—Washington Star. (Illustration by courtesy of the Washington Star.)

Bryan Receives Plea of 350,000

(From the Washington Evening Star, February 23, 1915.)

A protest by children against the wanton slaughter of humans in the effort to uphold national dignities, a protest against the deprivation to the children of Europe of their fathers and guardians, was laid in the hands of Secretary Bryan of the state department this morning by twelve little girls of the Washington public schools, all dressed in white. It was a two-and-a-half-mile protest from 350,000 children of the United States, scattered over forty-five states, against the continuance of the European conflict and a plea to the crowned heads of the powers at war to declare an armistice, to submit their troubles involved in the present war, and all future troubles to the Hague.

Secretary Bryan in his office in the state department, where peace and arbitration treaties have been negotiated, where the seals have been affixed binding the United States to submit to investigation any international dispute in which it shall be involved, received the petitions, which came in rolls of several thousand names each, and deposited them on the desk where peace treaties have been signed and where many more may be signed.

PRESENTS PETITION AND PLEA

After the party had been ushered into the office of the premier and had been introduced by Miss Kate Devereux Blake of New York City, originator of the movement, Miss Ruth W. Kebler of the Johnson public school of Washington, D. C., stepped forward with one of the petition rolls nicely tied with broad white ribbon. She was the first to lay the petition

in the hands of Secretary Bryan, and as she did so she said:

"Mr. Secretary, we, the children of the national capital, present to you these petitions from the children of our United States in which we ask for peace in Europe and we pray with more energy to have war kept from this nation."

Miss Blake, at the conclusion of Miss Kebler's remarks, asked the secretary if he would not go to the front of the building to have pictures taken at the peace party.

"No," he said. Then came a pause while the party stood wondering the cause.

"I desire to say something myself.

WEARS SPECIAL BADGE

"I wore down this morning a peace badge, which, as you see," he said, pointing to a white dove design affixed to the lapel of his coat, "is the dove of peace with outstretched wings.

"I am very glad to receive petitions for peace here from any one. However, I think that they can come from no portion of the population with more propriety than from the women and children. I was in the army once myself for five months, not in active campaign, but in camp, and it was then that I became convinced more than ever that the burdens of war fall heaviest upon those at home.

"The women at home have to bear the larger part of the burdens of war, and they should have something to say in the determination of those conditions which may or may not cause war. Next to the mothers come the children, they suffer next to the mothers.

SEES COMING OF PEACE

"No one knows how far your petition will go toward bringing about

an end of the present strife. God does not enable us to look ahead, but he does enable us to decide questions as they arise, and you women and children have done your part in giving voice to your desire for peace."

Following the ceremonies in the secretary of state's private office, Secretary Bryan went with the women and children to the steps of the building, where they were filmed for the movies. As the picture was being taken, Ambassador Naon of the Argentine republic, one of the diplomats who assisted in settling the recent differences between the United States and Mexico, came up, and Miss Blake insisted upon him getting into the picture as a representative of another neutral nation.

The petitions were then taken to the big state reception room, where they were piled high on the tables, to become a part of the official archives of the state department.

A copy of the petition is to be sent to the diplomatic representatives in this city of the nations at war, and they are to be informed, and are, in turn expected to inform their governments, of the receipt of the petition and the fact there is on file at the American state department a petition two and a half miles long bearing the names of 350,000 school children of the United States, begging "on behalf of the helpless children of Europe and Asia, who are being deprived of their fathers and their education, and are being irreparably degraded by the hideous conditions created by the war," that the strife be ended.

THOSE IN THE PARTY

The following children carried the petitions to the state department and presented them to Secretary Bryan: Miss Ruth W. Kebler, Miss Margaret W. Tracey and Miss Esther Edgerton, pupils of the Johnson school; Miss Elizabeth R. Swenk, Miss Theodate

P. Wilson, Miss Josephine L. Finkle, Miss Elsie R. Finkle, Miss Sophia Walman and Miss Ruth E. Thomas, pupils at the Ross school; and Miss Catherine A. Pfeiffer and Miss Louise E. Hyatt, pupils at the Hubbard school, and Miss Mary J. Pardee, pupil at the Powell school.

Others in the party were Miss Kate Devereux Blake, Mrs. L. F. Kebler, Mrs. Franklin Wilson, Mrs. Kate Waller Barrett, Mrs. William Kent, Mrs. Robert M. La Follette, Miss Ethel Smith, Miss Jeanette Rankin, Mrs. Churchill and Arthur Deerin Call, executive director of the American Peace society.

WISDOM

Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in of the doors: Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man. O ye simple, understand wisdom: and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. I, wisdom, dwell with prudence. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. Riches and honor are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold.—Proverbs viii., 1:19.

Poverty may pinch an honest man, but it never lands him in jail.—Ex.