## **BELGIANS FORCED** TO AID GERMANS

Kaiser's Officers Showed Open Disregard of International Law.

WORKMEN SEIZED AS SLAVES

Cardinal Mercler Moved to Bitter Condemnation of Acts of German Authorities Which Aroused Detestation of Christendom.

Contrary to rules laid down by the Hague convention, and all principles of civilized warfare, German suthorities forced Belgians to aid them in the prosecution of the war. The committee on public information gives the facts concerning these atrocious deeds in a pamphlet recently made public, from which we take the following:

October 12, 1915, the German authorities took a long step in the development of their policy of forcing the Belgians to aid them in prosecuting the war. The decree of that date reveals the matter and openly discloses a contempt for international law.

"Article 1. Whoever, without reason, refuses to undertake or to continue work suitable to his occupation, and in the execution of which the military administration is interested, such work being ordered by one or more of the military commanders, will be liable to Imprisonment not exceeding one year. He may also be transported to Germany.

"In voking Belgian laws or even international conventions to the contrary, can, in no case, justify the refusal to work.

"Article 2. Any person who by force, threats, persuasion, or other means attempts to influence another to refuse work as pointed out in Article 1, is liable to the punishment of imprisonment not exceeding five years.

"Article 3. Whoever knowingly by means of aid given or in any other way abets a punishable refusal to work, will be liable to a maximum fine of 10,000 marks, and in addition may be condemned to a year's imprisonment.

rendered themselves guilty of such an offense the heads of the communes will be punished.

"Article 4. In addition to the penalties stated in Articles 1 and 3, the German authorities may, in case of need, impose on communes, where without reason, work has been refused, a fine pr other coercive police measures.

"This present decree comes into force immediately.

"Der Etappeinspekteur, "VON UNGER,

"Generalleutnant.

"Ghent, October 12, 1915." "Slavery," Said Cardinal Mercler. Cardinal Mercier's brief comment is as follows: "The injustice and arbitrariness of this decree exceed all that could be imagined. Forced labor, collective penalties and arbitrary punish-

ments, all are there. It is slavery, neither more nor less." Cardinal Mercier was in error, for the German authorities were able to imagine a much more terrible measure. In October, 1916, when the need for an additional labor supply in Germany had become urgent, the German government established the system of forced labor and deportation which has aroused the detestation of Christendom. The render will not be misled

thorities to mask the real purpose of the decree. "I. People able to work may be compelled to work even outside the place where they live, in case they have to apply to the charity of others for the support of themselves or their dependents on account of gambling. drunkenness, loafing, unemployment or

by the clumsy effort of the German au-

idleness. "II. Every inhabitant of the country is bound to render assistance in case of accident or general danger, and also to give help in case of public calamities as far as he can, even outside the place where he lives; in case of refual he may be compelled by force.

"III. Anyone called upon to work, under Articles I or II, who shall refuse the work, or to continue at the work assigned him, will incur the penalty of imprisonment up to three years and of a fine up to 10,000 marks, or one or other of these penalties, unless a severer penalty is provided for by the laws in force.

"If the refusal to work has been made in concert or in agreement with several persons, each accomplice will be sentenced, as if he were a ringleader, to at least a week's imprison-

"IV. The German military authorities and military courts will enforce the proper execution of this decree. QUARTERMASTER GEN-RRAL, SAUBERZWEIG.

"Great Headquarters, 3d October, 1916." Military Rulers Responsible.

The responsibility for this atrocious program rests upon the military rulers of Germany, who had labored so zealously to infect the army and the people with the principles of ruthlessness. It is significant that the decree of October 3, 1916, followed hard upon the elevation of Hindenburg to the supreme command with Ludendorf as his sief of staff. In his long report of January 16, 1917, Minister Whitlock | deportation."

says: (On file in state department.) "Then, in August, Von Hindenburg was appointed to the supreme command. He is said to have criticized Von Bissing's policy as too mild; there was a quarrel; Von Bissing went to Berlin to protest, threatened to resign, but did not. He returned, and a German official here said that Belgium would now be subjected to a more terrible regime-would learn what war was. The prophecy has been vindicated. Recently I was told that the drastic measures are really of Ludendorf's inspiration; I do not know. Many Ger-

If Von Bissing had opposed the policy of deportation when his own judgment was overruled, he consented to become the "devil's advocate" and defended the system in public. Especially instructive is the following conversation reported by Mr. F. C. Walcott:

man officers say so."

"I went to Belgium to investigate conditions, and while there I had opportunity . . . to talk one day with Governor General Von Bissing, who died three or four weeks ago, a man seventy-two or seventy-three years old, a man steeped in the 'system,' born and bred to the hardening of the heart which that philosophy develops. There ought to be some new word coined for the process that a man's heart undergoes when it becomes steeped in that system.

"I said to him, Governor, what are you going to do if England and France stop giving these people money to purchase food?

Von Bissing Relied on Starvation. "He said, 'We have got that all

worked out and have had it worked out for weeks, because we have expected this system to break down at any time.'

"He went on to say, 'Starvation will grip these people in thirty to sixty days. Starvation is a compelling force, and we would use that force to compel the Belgian workingmen, many of them very skilled, to go to Germany to replace the Germans, so that they could go to the front and fight against the English and the French.'

"'As fast as our railway transportation could carry them, we would transport thousands of others that would be fit for agricultural work, across Europe down into southeastern Europe, into Mesopotamia, where we have huge, splendld irrigation works. All that land needs is water and it will blossom like the rose.

"The weak remaining, the old and the young, we would concentrate opposite the firing line, and put firing squads back of them, and force them through that line, so that the English "If communes or associations have and French could take care of their own people.'

"It was a perfectly simple, direct, frank reasoning. It meant that the German government would use any force in the destruction of any people not its own to further its own ends."-Frederick C. Walcott, in National Geographical Magazine, May, 1917.

A brief general view of the character of the deportations can perhaps be best from the report of Minister Whitlock.

"The deportations began in October in the Etape, at Ghent, and at Bruges, as my brief telegrams indicated. The policy spread; the rich industrial districts of Hainault, the mines and steel works about Charlerol were next attacked; now they are selzing men in Brabant, even in Brussels, despite some indications and even predictions of the civil authorities that the policy was about to be abandoned.

[The etapes were the parts of Belgium under martial law, and included the province of western Flanders, part of eastern Flanders, and the region of Tournal. The remainder of the occupled part of Belgium was under civil government.]

Pitiable and Distressing Scene.

"During the last fortnight men have been impressed here in Brussels, but their seizures here are made evidently with much greater care than in the provinces, with more regard for the appearances. There was no public announcement of the intention to deport. but suddenly about ten days ago certain men in towns whose names are on the list of chomeurs received summons notifying them to report at one of the railway stations on a given day; penalties were fixed for failure to respond to the summons and there was printed on the card an offer of employment by the German government, elther in Germany or Belgium. On the first day out of about 1,500 men ordered to present themselves at the Gare du Midi about 750 responded. These were examined by German physicians and 300 were taken. There was no disorder, a large force of mounted Uhlans keeping back the crowds and barring access to the station to all but those who had been summoned to appear. The commission for relief in Belgium had secured permission to give to each deported man a loaf of bread, and some of the communes provided warm clothing for those who had none and in addition a small financial allowance. As by one of the ironies of life the winter has been more excessively cold than Belgium has ever known it, and while many of those who presented themselves were adequately protected against the cold, many of them were without overcoats. The men shivering from cold and fear, the parting from weeping wives and children, the barriers of brutal Uhlans, all this made the scene a pitiable and distressing one.

"It was understood that the seizures would continue here in Brussels, but on Thursday last, a bitter cold day, those that had been convoked were sent home without examination. It is supposed that the severe weather has moved the Germans to postpone the

## **WILSON OUTLINES** RAILROAD POLICY

Tells Congress Taking Over of Lines Was Necessary to Safety.

### WILL CONSERVE INTEREST

Proper Returns to the Roads Will Be Guaranteed-Urges Prompt Action and "Dealing With Great Matter in a Great Way."

Washington, Jan. 5 .- President Wilson yesterday laid before congress, assembled in joint session, his recommendations for carrying out government operation of railroads. Bills to carry out the president's ideas already had been prepared under the supervision of the department of justice and were immediately introduced, with plans for prompt consideration, in both house and senate.

The president spoke as follows: "Gentlemen of the Congress: I have asked the privilege of addressing you in order to report that on the 28th of December last, during the recess of congress, acting through the secretary of war and under the authority conferred upon me by the act of congress approved August 29, 1916, I took possession and assumed control of the rallway lines of the country and the systems of water transportation under their control. This step seemed to be imperatively necessary in the interest of the public welfare, in the presence of the great tasks of war with which we are now dealing.

"As our experience develops difficulties and makes it clear what they are, I have deemed it my duty to remove those difficulties wherever I have the legal power to do so. To assume control of the vast railway systems of the country is, I realize, a very heavy responsibility, but to fail to do so in the existing circumstances would have been a much greater. I assumed the esser responsibility rather than the weightler.

Complete Mobilization Needed.

"I am sure that I am speaking the mind of all thoughtful Americans when I say that it is our duty as the representatives of the nation to do everything that it is necessary to do to secure the complete mobilization of the whole resources of America by as rapid and effective a means as can be found. Transportation supplies all the arteries of mobilization. Unless it be under a single and unified direction the whole process of the nation's action is embarrassed.

"It was in the true spirit of America and it was right, that we should first try to effect the necessary unification agreed that, in view of the many comunder the voluntary action of those plex interests which must be safewho were in charge of the great railway properties; and we did try it. The directors of the railways responded to and ability in this new field of governthe need promptly and generously.

Praises Railway Executives. "The group of railway executives who were charged with the task of actual co-ordination and general direction with patriotic zeal and marked ability, as was to have been expected, and did, I believe, everything that it was possible for them to do in the circumstances. If I have taken the task out of their hands it has not been because of any dereliction or failure on their part, but only because there were some things which the government can do and present management cannot. We shall continue to value most highly the advice and assistance of these gentlemen, and I am sure we shall not find

them withholding It. Government Control Needed. "It had become unmistakubly plain

that only under government administration can the entire equipment of the several systems of transportation be fully and undreservedly thrown into a common service without injurious discrimination against particular properties. Only under government administration can an absolutely unrestricted and unembarrassed common use be made of all tracks, terminals. terminal facilities and equipment of every kind. Only under that authority can new terminals be constructed and developed without regard to the requirements or limitations of particular roads. But under government administration all these things will be possible-not instantly, but as fast as practical difficulties which cannot be merely conjured away give way before the new management.

Little Disturbance as Possible

"The common administration will be carried out with as little disturbance of the present operating organizations and personnel of the railways as possible. Nothing will be altered or disturbed which it is not necessary to disturb. We are serving the public interest and safeguarding the public safety, but we are also regardful of the interest of those by whom these great properties are owned and glad to avail ourselves of the experience and trained ability of those who have been managing them. It is necessary that the transportation of troops and of war materials, of food and of fuel, and of everything that is necessary for the full mobilization of the energies and resources of the country, should be first considered, but it is clearly in the public interest also that the ordinary activities and the normal industrial should be interfered with and dis-

shipper will be as carefully served and safeguarded as it is possible to serve and safeguard it in the present extraordinary circumstances.

To Keep Lines in Good Repair. "While the present authority of the executive suffices for all purposes of administration and while, of course, all private interests must for the present give way to the public necessity, it is, I am sure you will agree with me, right and necessary that the owners and creditors of the railways, the holders of their stocks and bonds, should receive from the government an unqualified guaranty that their properties will be maintained throughout the period of federal control in as good repair and as complete equipment as at present, ando that the several roads will receive under federal management such compensation as is equitable and just allke to their owners and to the general

"I would suggest the average net rallway operating income of the three years ending June 30, 1917. I carnestly recommend that these guarantees be given by appropriate legislation and given as promptly as circumstances

"Deal Justly With Securities." "I need not point out the essential justice of such guarantees and their great influence and significance as elements in the present financial and industrial situation of the country. Indeed, one of the strong arguments for assuming control of the railroads at this time is the financial argument. It is necessary that the values of railway securities should be justly and fairly paid and that the large financial operations every year necessary in connection with the maintenance, operation and development of the roads should, during the period of the war, be wisely related to the financial operations of the govern-

"Our first duty is, of course, to conserve the common interest and the common safety and to make certain that nothing stands in the way of the successful prosecution of the great war for liberty and justice, but it is an obligation of public conscience and of public honor that the private interests we disturb should be kept safe from unjust injury, and it is of the utmost consequence to the government itself that all great financial operations should be stabilized and co-ordinated with the financial operations of the government. No borrowing should run athwart the borrowings of the federal treasury and no fundamental industrial values should anywhere be unnecessarily impaired. In the hands of many small investors in the country, as well as in national banks, In insurance companies, in savings banks, in trust companies, in financial agencies of every kind, railway securities, the sum total of which runs up to some \$10,-000,000,000 or \$11,000,000,000, constitute a vital part of the structure of credit, and the unquestioned solidity

of that structure must be maintained. "The secretary of war and I easily guarded and harmonized, as well as because of his exceptional experience mental action, Hon, William G. Mc-Adoo was the right man to assume direct administrative control of this new executive task. At our request he consented to assume the authority and duties of organizer and director general of the new rallway administration. He has assumed those duties and his work is in active prog-

May Need Treasury Grants.

"It is probably too much to expect hat even under the unified rallway administration which will now be posthle sufficient economies can be effected in the operation of the railways to make it possible to add to their equipment and extend their operative facilities as much as the present extraordinary demands upon their use will render desirable without resorting to the national treasury for the funds. If it is not possible, it will, of course, be necessary to resort to the congress for grants of money for that purpose. The secretary of the treasury will advise with your committee with regard to this very practical aspect of the matter. For the present I suggest only the guaranties I have indicated and such appropriations as are necessary at the outset of this task. I take the liberty of ex-

WAGE BOARD AGREED UPON

pressing the hope that the congress

may grant these promptly and un-

grudgingly. We are dealing with great

matters and will, I am sure, deal with

them greatly."

Railway Director McAdoo and Broth. erhood Chiefs Come to An Understanding on Plan.

Washington, Jan. 5.-Railway Diector McAdoc and the brotherhood chiefs agreed upon the creation of a wage beard to have jurisdiction over the wages of railroad employees while they are under control of the government. The board also will adjust disputes that may arise, and will be appointed and at work within 30 days, according to the plan.

BANDITS ARE DRIVEN BACK

U. S. Troops and Texas Rangers Chase Mexicans Across the Border-Two Robbers Killed.

Marfa, Tex., Jan. 5 .- Mexican bandits who raided the Drite ranch near Candelaria, have been driven back and commercial life of the country across the border by United States troops and Texas rangers, according to turbed as little as possible, and the reports here. Neither the rangers nor public may rest assured that the inter- the troops crossed the border. Two of est and convenience of the private the bandits. It is reported, were killed.

# A WAR CONFERENCE

ARMY OFFICERS AND CABINET MEMBERS ARE COMING TO LINCOLN

#### **NEWS FROM STATE CAPITAL**

Items of Varied Interest Gathered from Reliable Sources at the State House

A two-day Nebraska war conference in Lincoln Friday and Saturday, January 18 and 19, to be addressed by federal officials from Washington and first of the year so that the men can by army officers just returned from "somewhere in France," will be held under the auspices of the Nebraska state council of defense with which will co-operate the national council of defense and the speakers division of the United States committee on public information.

This state-wide gathering, which the government hopes will "be an event of the first magnitude in its community and in the state," is announced through a bulletin to the chairmen of the county councils of defense sent out by Prof. M. M. Fogg. director of the council's recently established bureau of speakers and

A convention of the Nebraska fourminute men has also been cailed by Professor Fogg, state head of the four-minute men, division of the committee on public information. There are over 1,000 "four-minute" men now enlisted in 53 cities and towns.

Will Take Steps to Secure Armories

Lack of armory accommodations in their home towns for seven of the companies is the principal obstacle now standing in the way of recognition for the Seventh regiment, Nebraska national guard, by the war department. The information is contained in an official letter from the chief of the militia affairs bureau to Adjutant General Clapp of Nebraska.

Steps will be taken at once to secure armories for the organizations that do not have them now, Governor Neville announces. Ample funds for this purpose are available, as the last legislature appropriated \$40,000 for armorf rental, only a small part of which has been used. The calling of the first three regiments of the national guard into federal service lightened the demands upon this fund, and there will doubtless be a considerable surplhs left in it at the cloes of the biennium, after the Seventh is fully provided for.

Aside from the matter of armory rental, no serious drawbacks have developed to prevent the recognition of the Seventh.

Classification Work Progressing

Work of classification under the To Co-operate in Garden Survey draft in Nebraska is proceeding rapidly and should soon be complete with the exception of cases appealed to district boards, according to Captain Walter Anderson of the governor's office, who was named by the war department to assist Governor Neville.

Captain Anderson is swamped with letters from local exemption boards requesting information relative to answers of questions which each registrant must give.

Despite the fact that many millions of dollars have been subscribed by Nebraska people for liberty bonds, war savings certificates, the Red Cross and V. M. C. A. work, and other activities incident to the war, the state banks of Nebraska make a remarkable showing in their last reports for the year 1917 to the state banking

department. Deposits have declined \$1,396,963 since August 21, the time of the last previous reports, which is due in large part to the fact that corn has been backward and this condition, together with the railroad car shortage, has prevented any considerable amount of it moving to market as early as usual.

Inquiries have been coming in to the state council of defense as to which has the war emergency food whether men enlisting in the home survey in charge, has placed an guards' organization who are of draft age may order and wear the regulation army khaki uniform before they are called into service. The council has taken the matter up with Gover- of the schedules and will distribute nor Neville and is authorized to say that such uniforms may be worn with a strip of blue on the coat sleeve to show that the man is not yet in serv- Washington to most dealers in food ice, but is likely to be called,

The mere fact that a man is married and has a wife and child dependent upon him for support does not ex-Captain Anderson of the governor's local exemption boards of Nebraska. Captain Anderson, who has been especially commissioned by the war department to supervise the operation of the draft in Nebraska, says that unless a man is engaged in a produclive work, dependency does not mean division four.

Is no Legal Obstacle

No legal obstacle to the sale of horse meat exists in Nebraska, according to opinions jointly handed down by the food commission and the service. legal department. The project of a Grand Island man to kill horses and sell their meat will receive no interference from the state, providing that it is done in a sanitary manner under slaughtered, and no deception is practiced on the purchaser of the moat.

PREPARING FOR WAR SERVICE

Special Vocational Courses Being Mapped Out for Drafted Men

To aid the government in securing 79,000 skilled workmen needed at once for service in the army, the state board of vocational education and University of Nebraska authorities are already laying out the special courses to be established at the University for the training of men who are likely to be called soon under the selective draft law.

Chancellor Avery is preparing a letter which will be mailed out to men on the draft registration lists, telling them about these courses and inviting them to attend and qualify themselves for some form of skilled work. It is expected that the classes will be organized immediately after the be trained as soon as possible.

Director Fulmer of the vocational education bureau for Nebraska is cooperating with the university and state farm authorities and with the state superintendent's office in forwarding the project. The following details have been agreed upon:

Drafted men applying for instruction in a given course must pass an entrance examination, unless recently examined.

Anyone found unable to perform the work must be promptly notified of the fact, so that his time and that of the instructors will not be wasted in trying to fit him for something wholly out of his line.

All instruction to be free and no fees to be collected.

Classes may be conducted in the day time or evening, as is most convenient all around.

Courses to be laid out covering definite periods in weeks or months in all the principal lines of mechanical and industrial training.

Men taking a course and qualifying to be given certificates signed by the dean, the chancellor and the state superintendent.

Records of the work done by all men to be filed with state appeal boards passing upon occupational claims of drafted men.

Besides getting the vocational training work along such lines started without delay, as the United States government has requested. Director Fulmer and the state board of vocational education will collect statistics of the various trades in Nebraska, to find out how many men this state now has in the following classes:

1-Carpenters from 18 to 40 years of age.

2-Blacksmiths from 18 to 40 years. 3-Masons from 18 to 40 years.

4-Plumbers from 18 to 40 years. 5-Electricians from 18 to 40 years.

6-Telephone operators from 18 to 40 years. 7-Telegraphers from 18 to 40 years.

8-Auto men from 18 to 40 years. 9-Machinists from 18 to 40 years. 10-Foundry men from 18 to 40 vears.

Two hundred Nebraska towns have agreed to co-operate with the agricultural extension service of the state university in conducting a garden survey this fall and winter, looking forward to a renewal of the war garden activities next summer. According to C. W. Watson, leader of the junior division of the extension service, the present survey will include the acquisition of all necessary information. The work will be done entirely by boys and girls working in co-operation with the school authorities. In each town owners of back yards and vacant lots will be asked to tell whether they will garden or rent the property next year. The students will also ascertain the kind of soil, the available supply of fertilizer in the town and similar information. The location of each garden spot will be recorded on a card with the details concerning it. It is believed that

To facilitate the taking of the national inventory of foods in Nebraska. the bureau of markets of the United States department of agriculture, agency of the survey with its local office at the University Farm, Lincoln. Nebraska. H. C. Filley, in charge of the local office, has received a supply them in response to personal or mail request after January 2. Copies of the schedule have been mailed from materials in Nebraska.

several thousand acres of land wills

thus become available for gardening

in Nebraska next spring.

A Great Economic Saving.

That federal possession and operation of the railroads will work for cuse him from military service, says much greater efficiency in Nebraska. is the opinion of Victor Wilson and office in an official bulletin to the H. G. Taylor, members of the state railway commission.

They understand that the new order is not to interfere with the authority of the Nebraska commission in regulation of purely local matters.

Mr. Wilson and Mr. Taylor point on that the Nebraska commission he should be placed in class A of has co-operated with the federal autherities in every railroad matter

> Governor Neville has authorized the use of the regulation government army khaki uniforms for use by the home guards, but a strip of blue must he worn on the coat sleeve to show that the wearer is not yet in actual

One of the first things local exemption boards will do when they start classifying registered men will be to look for all the bricklayers in their dithe same conditions cattle are visions. Nebraska has been asked to provide thirty-five bricklayers as soon as possible.