

Mr. GILLET. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, this is the first notification we have had that the President is coming up. May I inquire why this sudden change?

The SPEAKER. The change was necessitated by the fact that the President suddenly notified us that he was coming over here at 12.30.

Mr. GILLET. I will acquiesce then. I suppose the House has to adopt some resolution on the subject.

The SPEAKER. It is going to adopt it right now.

Mr. KITCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I move immediate consideration and adoption of the resolution which I send to the Clerk's desk.

The SPEAKER. The Clerk will report it.

The Clerk read as follows:

House concurrent resolution 32.

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring).* That the Houses of Congress assemble in the Hall of the House of Representatives on Tuesday, the 8th day of January, 1918, at 12 o'clock and 30 minutes in the afternoon, for the purpose of receiving such communication as the President of the United States shall be pleased to make to them.

The SPEAKER. The question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I make the point of order that there is no quorum present.

The SPEAKER. The Chair will count.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the point.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE.

A message from the Senate, by Mr. Waldorf, its enrolling clerk, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment the following resolution:

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RECESS.

Mr. KITCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the House stand in recess until 12.25.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from North Carolina asks unanimous consent that the House stand in recess until 12.25. Is there objection?

There was no objection.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 10 minutes p. m.) the House stood in recess until 12.25 p. m.

AFTER RECESS.

At the expiration of the recess the House resumed its session and was called to order by the Speaker.

JOINT MEETING OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE.

At 12 o'clock and 25 minutes p. m. the Doorkeeper, Joseph J. Sinnott, announced the Vice President of the United States and the Members of the United States Senate.

The Members of the House rose.

The Senate, preceded by the Vice President and by their Secretary and Sergeant at Arms, entered the Chamber.

The Vice President took the chair at the right of the Speaker and the Members of the Senate took the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. On the part of the House the Chair appoints the following committee to wait on the President: Mr. FLOOD, Mr. SHERLEY, Mr. WEBB, Mr. POU, Mr. COOPER of Wisconsin, Mr. GILLET, and Mr. CAMPBELL of Kansas.

The VICE PRESIDENT. On the part of the Senate the Chair appoints Senators MARTIN, STONE, SIMMONS, OVERMAN, GALLINGER, LODGE, and WARREN.

At 12 o'clock and 30 minutes p. m. the President of the United States, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House and stood at the Clerk's desk.

The SPEAKER. Gentlemen of the Sixty-fifth Congress, I present the President of the United States.

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT (H. DOC. NO. 765).

The PRESIDENT. Gentlemen of the Congress, once more, as repeatedly before, the spokesmen of the Central Empires have indicated their desire to discuss the objects of the war and the possible bases of a general peace. Parleys have been in progress at Brest-Litovsk between Russian representatives and representatives of the Central Powers, to which the attention of all the belligerents has been invited for the purpose of ascertaining whether it may be possible to extend these parleys into a general conference with regard to terms of peace and settlement. The Russian representatives presented not only a perfectly definite statement of the principles upon which they

would be willing to conclude peace, but also an equally definite programme of the concrete application of those principles. The representatives of the Central Powers, on their part, presented an outline of settlement which, if much less definite, seemed susceptible of liberal interpretation until their specific programme of practical terms was added. That programme proposed no concessions at all either to the sovereignty of Russia or to the preferences of the populations with whose fortunes it dealt, but meant, in a word, that the Central Empires were to keep every foot of territory their armed forces had occupied,—every province, every city, every point of vantage,—as a permanent addition to their territories and their power. It is a reasonable conjecture that the general principles of settlement which they at first suggested originated with the more liberal statesmen of Germany and Austria, the men who have begun to feel the force of their own peoples' thought and purpose, while the concrete terms of actual settlement came from the military leaders who have no thought but to keep what they have got. The negotiations have been broken off. The Russian representatives were sincere and in earnest. They cannot entertain such proposals of conquest and domination.

The whole incident is full of significance. It is also full of perplexity. With whom are the Russian representatives dealing? For whom are the representatives of the Central Empires speaking? Are they speaking for the majorities of their respective parliaments or for the minority parties, that military and imperialistic minority which has so far dominated their whole policy and controlled the affairs of Turkey and of the Balkan states which have felt obliged to become their associates in the war? The Russian representatives have insisted, very justly, very wisely, and in the true spirit of modern democracy, that the conferences they have been holding with the Teutonic and Turkish statesmen should be held within open, not closed, doors, and all the world has been audience, as was desired. To whom have we been listening, then? To those who speak the spirit and intention of the Resolutions of the German Reichstag of the ninth of July last, the spirit and intention of the liberal leaders and parties of Germany, or to those who resist and defy that spirit and intention and insist upon conquest and subjugation? Or are we listening, in fact, to both, unreconciled and in open and hopeless contradiction? These are very serious and pregnant questions. Upon the answer to them depends the peace of the world.

But, whatever the results of the parleys at Brest-Litovsk, whatever the confusions of counsel and of purpose in the utterances of the spokesmen of the Central Empires, they have again attempted to acquaint the world with their objects in the war and have again challenged their adversaries to say what their objects are and what sort of settlement they would deem just and satisfactory. There is no good reason why that challenge should not be responded to, and responded to with the utmost candor. We did not wait for it. Not once, but again and again, we have laid our whole thought and purpose before the world, not in general terms only, but each time with sufficient definition to make it clear what sort of definitive terms of settlement must necessarily spring out of them. Within the last week Mr. Lloyd George has spoken with admirable candor and in admirable spirit for the people and Government of Great Britain. [Applause.] There is no confusion of counsel among the adversaries of the Central Powers, no uncertainty of principle, no vagueness of detail. The only secrecy of counsel, the only lack of fearless frankness, the only failure to make definite statement of the objects of the war, lies with Germany and her Allies. The issues of life and death hang upon these definitions. No statesman who has the least conception of his responsibility ought for a moment to permit himself to continue this tragical and appalling outpouring of blood and treasure unless he is sure beyond a peradventure that the objects of the vital sacrifice are part and parcel of the very life of Society [applause], and that the people for whom he speaks think them right and imperative as he does.

There is, moreover, a voice calling for these definitions of principle and of purpose which is, it seems to me, more thrilling and more compelling than any of the many moving voices with which the troubled air of the world is filled. It is the voice of the Russian people. [Applause.] They are prostrate and all but helpless, it would seem, before the grim power of Germany, which has hitherto known no relenting and no pity. Their power, apparently, is shattered. And yet their soul is not subservient. They will not yield either in principle or in action. Their conception of what is right, of what is humane and honorable for them to accept, has been stated with a frankness, a largeness of view, a generosity of spirit, and a universal human sympathy which must challenge the admiration of every friend of mankind [applause]; and they have refused to compound their ideals or desert others that they themselves may be safe.