

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 58 minutes p. m.) the House stood in recess.

At 1 o'clock p. m. the members of the Serbian mission, escorted by the committee appointed by the Speaker, entered the Hall of the House and were announced by the Doorkeeper. The members of the mission were: Dr. Milenko R. Vesnitch (chairman), Dr. Sima Lozanitch, Gen. Michailo Rachitch, Lieut. Col. Michailo Nenadovitch, Capt. Milan Yovitchitch, and Mr. Vladislav Martinatz.

Mr. Lioubomir Michailovitch, minister from Serbia to the United States, accompanied the mission into the Hall of the House, together with the Third Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. Breckinridge Long; A. B. Ruddock, of the Department of State; and Lieut. H. F. Armstrong, United States Army.

The SPEAKER. Gentlemen of the House of Representatives, almost 500 years ago the Turks overran the Balkans and got as far as the capital of Austria, and John Sobieski, the heroic King of Poland, went down there with an army and defeated the Turks under the walls of Vienna. From that day to this the Turks have been retreating eastward, sometimes very slowly and sometimes more rapidly. During all these years, nearly five centuries, the Serbians and Montenegrins have kept up a more or less constant warfare against the Turks. [Applause.] They never admitted that they were conquered. Serbia was one of the first of the Balkan Provinces that achieved its independence. It is one of the smaller States of Europe, but no nation in the world has ever put up a braver fight. [Applause.] About the time that the western end of the Balkans, including Serbia, had achieved independence from the Turks, the Austrians precipitated this war by an assault on Serbia. They did not get along as easily as they supposed they would, and the Serbians fought them inch by inch, and were driven from their own country only by the overwhelming force of men and guns. I suppose that in this war the Serbians have suffered more than any other nation in Europe.

I take pleasure in introducing to the House the head of the Serbian mission to the United States, Dr. Milenko R. Vesnitch, who will now address the House. [Applause.]

Dr. VESNITCH. Mr. Speaker and gentlemen of the House of Representatives, we stand here, in this post of honor, my friends and myself, thanks to your great courtesy, and my first thoughts go beyond you to your constituents, to those whom you so conscientiously represent, and who probably have often asked of you the reason for this catastrophe overwhelming the world, and which has imposed upon them the greatest sacrifices which humanity has ever been called upon to endure. Would that my voice might reach them all, but, alas! I fear that I can not hope to succeed in this self-imposed task, for the voice of a modest representative of a small nation is too weak to be heard throughout this vast country. Nevertheless, I dare not hesitate, and your democracy, gracious and gentle as it is powerful, will lend its ears to my voice, because I ask the favor of speaking the truth and of invoking justice for the cause of the allies and for that of my desolate country.

The most distinguished of our common allies have explained to you from this platform the reasons for which Germany and Austria-Hungary have provoked this tremendous war, and for which all righteous and liberty-loving nations have been successively and necessarily involved in this conflagration. This duty was for none of them so great and so imperative as for me; for little Serbia, as you know, was the first nation attacked by Austria-Hungary, and later invaded by Germany, Bulgaria, and Turkey. Serbia was the first object of the Teuton's aggression. In a single moment the armies of four powers, representing 150,000,000 inhabitants, were hurled against a small nation of hardly 5,000,000, whose army was exhausted by two preceding wars.

Why did the central European powers attack us, aided by their Turanian, Asiatic, and half-Asiatic allies? Why did the liberal nations of Europe interfere in this unequal struggle? Why was it impossible for your great country to stand, as it were, apart, and await the final result of this immense conflict, far from the field of battle? To frame clearly the answer of these questions would require hours and hours, if not days, and, as I may not impose upon your good nature or claim more than half an hour of your precious time, I shall endeavor to be very brief. Because of this my address will necessarily suffer, but I count upon your indulgence.

You will, I sincerely hope, agree with me that a great and enlightened democracy has the right in our time to be fully informed why it is that its citizens, so far removed from the battle field, why, to be specific, the countrymen of Washington and Monroe, should forsake their regular occupations, renounce all their cherished plans, and concentrate their thoughts and

their powers, physical as well as moral and material, exclusively on one object—to win the war. The necessity for this is absolute.

Two motives have led Germany and Austria-Hungary to crush Serbia, both of which were peremptory and categorical. The first was dictated by the determination of the Germans to become the masters of the world after having successfully subjected Europe to their will and having settled themselves in Asia Minor. The second was due to the horror in which the German mind holds democracy. If you consider these two motives more closely you will readily persuade yourselves that their origin is the same autocratic mentality of the Teutons, of which the Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburgs are the strongest and the most evident personifications. This mentality manifested itself long ago in the Middle Ages, when the Hohenzollerns imposed Christianity with the sword for political purposes, and when the Hapsburgs forced a people to stand bareheaded before the hat of Gessler. Medieval, feudal robbers, the Hohenzollerns descended from their mountain castles, and, passing through the county of Nuremberg, founded the Duchy of Brandenburg, outraging and exterminating the Slavs, and colonizing their lands with Teutons. Through persistent intrigue and military activity they have transformed their dominions into the Kingdom of Prussia, which they enlarged by robbing Austria of Silesia, Denmark of Schleswig-Holstein, and, excluding Austria from the circle of German States, formed the North German Confederation, under the leadership of Prussia. Five years later the South German States, through compulsion and compromise, were united with the North German States and merged into an empire, and, enlarged by the cynical annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, under the dominion of this same Prussia, the German States have become Prussianized. From that moment the ambition of the Hohenzollerns has known no bounds. They have resolved to conquer the world. Indeed, before Nietzsche announced his theory of the superman, the German people considered themselves to be a superior people. Their superior people—Über-volk, to use their own expression—ought, in their opinion, to govern and direct the world, because, in their pride, they claimed to be the cultured people—in their own language Kulturvolk—and the transmitters of culture, as they termed it, Kulturtrager—to the peoples of the earth. The first step to be taken was to secure financial and agricultural resources for the struggle which this ambition would necessarily provoke. These, they early saw, were to be found in Palestine and Mesopotamia, where there were cotton and wheat in abundance. After having for scores of years lulled the Turks into a belief in their friendship, until the Kaiser, with turban on head, knelt before the grave of Mohammed, the Germans decided to cut their way through the Balkans. But to reach Constantinople and Saloniki it was necessary to win over or to crush Serbia. As we could not be won over, our destruction was quickly decided at Berlin and Vienna.

The House of Hapsburg had even more reasons to wish for our disappearance from the map. Old feudal brigands, descending from the Swiss mountains, the Hapsburgs conquered, often fraudulently acquired, Province after Province. By cabal, corruption, and treachery, they acquired the crown of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, without ever seeing in their provinces and realms anything more than private lands or family domains. Even nowadays the Hapsburgs do not recognize an Austrian or Hungarian, a Czech or Croat country, nor even an Austria-Hungary. They only know lands and estates belonging to their house like simple property, and it is on the basis of these conceptions that they administer their Provinces, considering the inhabitants as belonging to and forming a part of their estates. At the same time, being essentially a Teutonic dynasty, the Hapsburgs have always been in the East the agents of German policy. With the exception of the German, and from the latter half of the last century Magyar, they have never tolerated national tendencies under their rule, and they have persecuted systematically every nation or race with those ambitions, especially the Slavs; but they have emptied the vials of their wrath upon the Yougoslavs, because the democratic Slovenes and Croats had seen in the Serbia of their brothers the realization of their dreams extending over centuries, and, as they have openly and with all their energy favored our development, many of them abandoning their homes and their native lands in order to pass over to and to settle in little Serbia, the feudal and bureaucratic Hapsburgs have seen in our country a real danger to their political situation. And because of this menace, as they considered it, they long ago inaugurated the policy of oppressing the Yougoslavs, of persecuting Serbia, and of thwarting all our endeavors toward a normal economic and political development.

If Austria-Hungary has become a hell to all her inhabitants, with the exception of the Germans and Magyars, no nationality has suffered more under Hapsburg misrule than the Yougoslavs.