To News Editors:

Within the next few days Chancellor von Hertling will most likely speak for the German Government in reply to Lloyd George and President Wilson. In view of the vital importance of this reply and its intimate bearing on the British war declaration, the editors of the United States may be glad to have this first official text of the Lloyd George address for reference. It has been cabled to George H. Doran Company, Publishers, New York City, who give it out for use in whole or in part.

British War Aims Statement

By the Right Honorable

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

On January 5, 1918

(Authorized Version as Issued by the British Government)

"When the Government," said Lloyd George, "invite organized labor in this country to assist them to maintain the might of their armies in the field, its representatives are entitled to ask that any misgivings and doubts which any of them may have about the purpose to which this precious strength is to be applied should be definitely cleared, and what is true of organized labour is equally true of all citizens in this country, without regard to grade or avocation.

"When men by the million are being called upon to suffer and die, and vast populations are being subjected to the sufferings and privations of war on a scale unprecedented in the history of the world, they are entitled to know for what cause or causes they are making the sacrifice. It is only the clearest, greatest and justest of causes that can justify the continuance even for one day of this unspeakable agony of the nations, and we ought to be able to state clearly and definitely, not only the principles for which we are fighting, but also their definite and concrete application to the war map of the world.

"We have arrived at the most critical hour in this terrible conflict, and before any government takes the fateful decision as to the conditions under which it ought either to terminate or continue the struggle, it ought to be satisfied that the conscience of the nation is behind these conditions, for nothing else can sustain the effort which is necessary to achieve a righteous end to this war.

"I have, therefore, during the last few days taken special pains to ascertain the view and the attitude of representative men of all sections of thought and opinion in the country. Last week I had the privilege, not merely of perusing the Declared War Aims of the Labour Party, but also of discussing in detail with the labour leaders the meaning and intention of that declaration. I have also had an opportunity of discussing this same momentous question with Mr. Asquith and Viscount Grey. Had it not been that the Nationalist leaders are in Ireland engaged in endeavoring to solve the tangled problem of Irish self-government, I should have been happy to exchange views with them, but Mr. Redmond, speaking on their behalf, has, with his usual lucidity and force, in many of his speeches, made clear what his ideas are as to the object and purpose of the war. I have also had the opportunity of consulting certain representatives of the great dominions overseas.

"I am glad to be able to say, as a result of all these discussions, that, although the Government are alone responsible for the actual language I propose using, there is national agreement as to the character and purpose of our war aims and peace conditions, and in what I say to you today, ... through you to the world, I can venture to claim that I am speaking, not merely the mind of the Government, but of the nation and of the empire as a whole.

"We may begin by clearing away some misunderstandings and stating what we are not fighting for. We are not fighting a war of aggression against the German people. Their leaders have persuaded them that they are fighting a war of self-defence against a league of rival nations bent on the destruction of Germany. That is not so. The destruction or disruption of Germany or the German people has never been a war aim with the first day of this war to this day. Most reluctantly, and indeed quite unprepared for the dreadful ordeal, we were forced to join in this war in self-defence. In defence of the violated public law of Europe, and
in vindication of the most solemn treaty obligation on which the public system of Europe rested, and on which Germany, as well as other belligerents, has as far as we have seen, been consistently relying. It is true that the British Government has endeavored to show that in no part of the case does there exist a legal ground for the demand for indemnity, such as that which may be derived from the events of 1871. It is not an attempt to shift the cost of the war, but a demand for just and reasonable compensation for the loss and suffering inflicted upon people who have not been found guilty of any wrongdoing. It is a demand for the reparation of the damage inflicted on the property and inhabitants of the countries of which they were a part. This reparation, it is believed, is just and reasonable, and is compatible with the principles of international law. It is a demand that all countries should contribute to the reparation of the damage inflicted upon them by the war. It is a demand that all countries should contribute to the reparation of the damage inflicted upon them by the war.

Serbia, Montenegro, and Roumania will be as independent and as free to direct their own destinies as the German people are. It means that all manner of interferences and restrictions, political and economic, incompatible with the status and dignity of a free and self-respecting people, will be removed from them. If this is the intention then there will be one kind of independence for a great nation and an inferior kind of independence for a small nation. We must know what is meant for equality of right among nations, small as well as great, is one of the fundamental issues this country and her Allies are fighting to establish in this war. Reparation for the wanton damage inflicted on Belgian towns and villages and their inhabitants is emphatically repudiated.

"The rest of the so-called 'offer' of the Central Powers is almost entirely a refusal of all concessions. All suggestions about the autonomy of subject nationalities are ruled out of the question. The question is whether any form of self-government is to be given to Arabs, Armenians or Syrians is declared to be entirely a matter for the Sublime Porte. A people, from which the provinces of minorities 'in so far as it is practically realizable' is the nearest approach to liberty which the Central statesmen venture to make. All that we can insist upon is that there are efforts clear and definite. Under no circumstances will the 'German demand' for the restoration of the whole of Germany's colonies be departed from. All principles of self-determination or, as our earlier phrase goes, government by consent of the governed, here vanish into thin air. It is impossible to believe that any edifice of thought founded on the basis of the powers that were to erect upon such a foundation as this. Mere lip-service to the formula of no annexations and no indemnities are impossible in view of events. The right of self-determination is useless in view of events. The masses of the world, called upon even to begin, the Central Powers must realize the essential facts of the situation.

"The days of the Treaty of Vienna are long past. We can no longer submit the future of European civilization to the arbitrary decisions of a few negotiators striving to secure by chicanery or persuasion the interests of this or that dynasty or nation. The future must be based on the principles of right and justice as will give some promise of stability. Therefore, it is that we feel that government with the consent of the governed must be the basis of any territorial settlement in this war. For that reason also, unless treaties be upheld, unless every nation is prepared at whatever sacrifice to the community, it is obvious that no treaty of peace can be worth the paper on which it is written.

"The first requirement therefore, although it is the duty of the British Government, and their Allies, has been the complete restoration, political, territorial, and economic, of the independence of Belgium, and such reparation as can be made for the devastation of its towns and provinces. This is an act of war indemnity, such as that which was worked out by Germany in 1871. It is not an attempt to shift the cost of the war, but a demand for just and reasonable compensation for the loss and suffering inflicted upon people who have not been found guilty of any wrongdoing. It is a demand that all countries should contribute to the reparation of the damage inflicted upon them by the war. It is a demand that all countries should contribute to the reparation of the damage inflicted upon them by the war.

"Next comes the restoration of Serbia, Montenegro, and the occupied provinces of France, Italy, and Roumania. The complete withdrawal of the allied armies and the reparation for injustice done is a fundamental condition of permanent peace. But this is proposed by the French Democracy to the death in the demand they make for a reconsideration of the great wrong of 1871, when, without any regard to the wishes of the population, two French provinces were torn from the side of France and incorporated in the German Empire. This sore has poisoned the peace of Europe for half a century, and, until it is healed, healthy conditions will not have been restored. There can be no better illustration of the folly and wickedness of using a transient military success to violate moral rights.

"I will not attempt to deal with the question of the Russian territories now in German occupation. The Russian policy since the revolution has passed so swiftly through the phases that it is difficult to speak without some suspension of judgment as to what the situation will be when the final terms of agreement come to be signed. I am not concerned with what he or his Government have done to their people, for I need respect for her treaty led to the wanton invasion of Belgium; and the treaty obligation of Great Britain to that little land brought us into the war.

"The present rulers of Russia are now engaged without any reference to the countries whom Russia brought into the war, in separate negotiations which threaten the future. In the name of all I am urging, however, am not indulging in repetition; I am merely stating facts with a view to making it clear why Britain cannot be held accountable for decisions taken without her advice and foreknowledge, and the complete absence of which she has not been consulted or had her aid invoked.

"No one who knows Prussia and
BRITISH WAR AIMS STATEMENT—3

her designs upon Russia can for a moment doubt the ultimate intention. Whatever phrases she may use to declo-ude Russia, she does not mean to surrender one of the fair provinces or cities of Russia now occupied by her forces. The name and another—and the name hardly matters—those Russian provinces will henceforth be in reality part of the dominions of Prussia. They will be ruled by the Prussian sword in the interests of Prussian autocracy, and the rest of the people of Russia will be partly enticed by specious phrases and partly bullied by the threat of continued war against an impotent army into the Central powers—Russia, the British province, Prussia.

"We all deplore the prospect. The democracy of this country means to stand to the last by the democracies of France and Italy and all our other Allies. We shall be proud to fight to the end side by side with the new democracy of Russia; so will America and so will Italy. As the present rulers of Russia take action which is independent of their Allies we have no means of intervening to arrest the catastrophe which is assuredly beingfalling the Russian provinces can only be saved by her own people."

"We believe, however, that an inde-ent Poland comprising all those genuinely Polish elements who desire to form part of it, is an urgent necessity for the stability of Western Eu-ope."

"Similarly, though we agree with President Wilson that the break-up of Austria-Hungary is no part of our war aims, we feel that unless genuine self-government on true democratic principles is granted to those Austro-Hungarian nationalities who have long desired it, we must take hope for the removal of those causes of unrest in that part of Europe which have so long threatened its general peace."

"On the same grounds we regard as vitally the satisfaction of the legitimate claims of the Italians for union with those of their own race and tongue. We also mean to press that justice be done to men of Roumanian blood and speech in their legitimate aspira-ions."

"If these conditions are fulfilled Austria-Hungary would become a power whose strength would conduce to the peace and security of Europe, instead of being merely an instrument to the pernicious mili-tary autocracy of Prussia, which uses the resources of its allies for the fur-therance of its own sinister purposes."

"Outside Europe, we believe that the same principles should be applied. While we do not challenge the main-tenance of the Turkish Empire in the homelands of the Turks, with its capital Constantinople, the passage between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea being international-ized and neutralized, Armenia, Ar-menia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Pales-tine are in our judgment entitled to a recognition of their separate na-tional conditions. What the exact

form of that recognition in each par-ticular case should be need not here be discussed, on this that it would be impossible to restore to their former sovereignty the territories to which I have already referred.

"Much has been said about the arm-arrangements future. But that is not enough. However wisely and well we may make territorial and other arrangements, there will still be many subjects of international controversy. Some of these must be

"The economical conditions at the end of the war will be in the highest degree difficult. Owing to the diver-sion of human effort to warlike pur-suits, there must be a shortage of raw materials, which will increase the longer the war lasts, and it is inevitable that those countries which have control of the raw ma-terials will desire to help themselves and their friends first."

"Apart from this, whatever settle-ment is made will be suitable only to the circumstances under which it is made, and as those circumstances change, changes in the settlement will be called for."

"As long as the possibility of dispute between nations continues—that is to say, as long as men and women are dominated by passion and ambition, and war is the only means of settling a dispute—all nations must live under the burden, not only of having from time to time to engage in it, but of being compelled to prepare for its possible outbreak. The crushing weight of modern armaments, the increasing evil of compulsory military ser-vices, the vast waste of wealth and effort involved in warlike preparation, these are blots on our civilization of which every thinking individual must be ashamed."

"For these and other similar rea-sons, we are confident that a great at tempt must be made to establish by some international organization an alternative to war, in the form of set-tling international disputes. After all, war is a relic of barbarism and, just as law has succeeded violence as the means of settling disputes be-tween individuals, so we believe that it is destined ultimately to take the place of war in the settlement of con-troversies between nations."

"If, then, we are asked what we are fighting for, we reply as, we have often replied: we are fighting for a just and lasting peace, and we be-lieve that, before permanent peace can be hoped for, three conditions must be fulfilled: firstly, the sanctity of treaties must be established; secondly, a territorial settlement must be secured, based on the right of self-determination or the consent of the governed, and, lastly, we must seek by some international organization to limit the burden of armaments and diminish the prob-ability of war.

"On these conditions the British Em-pire would welcome peace; to se-cure these conditions its peoples are prepared to make even greater sacri-fices than those they have yet en-dured."