

July 25, 1917.

Journal memorandum:

Dinner at Mrs. Hoover's on July 24, 1917. House has been organized to accommodate the heads of the departments under Mr. Hoover. Men brought over from London, including two civil engineers, White and Rickard, that have been working for two years on the Belgian commission, and Ben Allen, living in the household. Dr. Wilbur, Dr. Taylor, Garfield, President of Brown, Judge Lovell ? and two or three other men were there. Six live in the house, more across the street, and all take their meals there.

H. obviously much disgusted because Congress has held up the Food Bill. About coming to the conclusion that it would be possible to conduct the whole thing as a volunteer effort. This is what Shaw believes could be done and suggested to me the other day; I believe that he is right.

H. thinks it possible to pledge up the women of twenty million households. His experience in dealing with bodies of manufacturers and business associations of various kinds, leads him to believe that we could get a practical volunteer cooperation from business.

While we were talking, word came from the N.Y. World to Allen that the President had called the leaders of the House and Senate and told them that he wanted the original Lever Bill and a single Administrator; that he would veto the whole thing if this were not done. H. seems to think that the latter would be fine, and that we could carry out his scheme for cooperation.

Talk of Belgian atrocities:

I asked if it were true that hundreds of children were having their hands cut off. H. says, no, it is impossible to cut the hand of a child off without its bleeding to death; Dr. Wilbur says this is so. *H. Wilbur* says Bryce was exaggerated. Credence given to stories which were more or less the work of imagination; atrocities placed in towns which do not exist. Things that do exist are so incredible, why is it necessary to invent? Told us of an expedition with German staff officers - asked about the report that civilians - hostages - had been shot in certain town - the man said of course they were; we posted the town saying that if there was sniping the hostages would be shot. There was sniping and we shot 600 men and women (no children) in the town square. *He* says this was necessary to establish discipline and to save further loss of life.

Garfield says English military books say that in case of sniping hostages should be shot. He says that the difference between the Germans and the English is that while their books teach

the same thing in regard to hostages and sniping, that the Germans carry out the teaching and the English will not.

Talk of Kellogg who was with German general staff for months. The difficulty with his writing is that when it comes up to the point he will not tell what really happened. Garfield suggests that he may feel a point of honor there; that he was in a sense their guest. H. says this is true, but some things he could tell - those that are common property.

H. tells me that the book which he has read most since the war came was my life of Lincoln. He tells me this was rather by force of circumstance than by inclination; that in going back and forth between London and Belgium, he was obliged to spend on each trip a night in Rotterdam. He had rooms there and the only books he had were the "Rise and Fall" and my Lincoln. He could not sleep, so he read the book from cover to cover. Suggests that one could write a better book of that kind if they had been through a war - told them how I used when working on it say that I would give ten years of my life to have lived through the Civil War.