

LETTERS OF GENERAL MAURICE THREATEN TO UPSET PRESENT CABINET OF GREAT BRITAIN

has made it known that it will consider the adoption of Mr. Asquith's resignation as a matter of no confidence and will, as a matter of course, promptly tender their resignation.



PREMIER LLOYD GEORGE Charged by General Maurice with making misstatements in Parliament regarding the situation of the British army

The same correspondence understands that the Premier in tomorrow's debate will make a full statement regarding the issue raised, and says: "He will probably find it necessary to give certain facts and figures which, from a military point of view, it might be better not to discuss."

TEXT OF MAURICE LETTER WHICH CAUSED BRITISH CABINET CRISIS

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The text of Major General Sir Frederick Barton Maurice's letter to the Daily Chronicle follows: To the Editor of the Daily Chronicle: "Mr. Pringle has been called to answer given in the House of Commons on April 23 by Mr. Bonar Law to questions put by R. C. Lambert, Colonel C. R. Burn, and W. M. R. Pringle as to the extension of the British front in France. Those answers contain certain misstatements which, in sum, give a totally misleading impression of what occurred. This is not the place to enter into a discussion as to all the facts, but Hansard's (parliamentary) report concludes: "Mr. Pringle—Was this matter entered into at the Versailles war council at any time?"

Douglas Haig's fighting strength on the eve of the great battle which began March 21 had not been diminished. This is not correct. Again in the same speech the Prime Minister said: "In Mesopotamia there is only one white division, and in Egypt and Palestine there are only three white divisions. The rest are either Indians or mixed with very small proportion of British troops in these divisions. I am referring to Infantry divisions, Ibid, p. 1, 327."

Now, sir, this letter is not the result of a military conspiracy. It has been seen by no soldier. I am by descent and conviction as sincere a democrat as the Prime Minister, and the last thing I desire is to see the government of our country in the hands of soldiers. My reasons for taking the very grave step of writing this letter are the statements quoted above are known to a large number of soldiers to be incorrect, and this knowledge is breeding such a distrust of the Government as can only end in impairing the splendid morale of our troops at a time when everything should be done to raise it. I have therefore decided, fully realizing the consequences to myself, that my duty as a citizen must override my duty as a soldier, and I ask you to publish this letter in the hope that Parliament may see fit to order an investigation into the statements I have made. I am, sir, yours faithfully, F. MAURICE, Major General, 29 Kensington Park Gardens, May 6, 1918.

VARIOUS NEWSPAPER COMMENTS ON CRISIS

London, May 8. Comment of the various newspapers on General Maurice's letter follows: The Times and Daily Mail (two Northcliffe newspapers), came to the support of Premier Lloyd George today in the incident involving charges by General Maurice that misstatements had been made regarding certain military affairs. Both papers expressed the belief that the Premier would be able to justify his statements. The Times and the Mail favor the Government's method of investigation. The Mail believes Asquith thinks he has found a weapon with which to destroy the present Government and return the old Government—of which he was the head—to power. The Daily News "hopes Commons will not allow the issue to pass from its hands." It understands the Government will not accept the Asquith letter, and will treat it as a vote of censure. Therefore, Parliament will make a decision which will involve the life of the Government. The Post is bitterly opposed to the Government. The Daily Express, neo-Government, declares Maurice may be punished for a grave infraction of military regulations in writing the letter. The Daily Mirror understands that Lloyd George will give the whole facts and figures in an open session of the House of Commons, and will invite the members to give judgment. The Daily Telegraph, in its comment upon General Maurice's letter, said: "It does not derive its importance wholly from within itself, but to a large extent because it focuses upon the public mind a question of the most serious nature. It may have momentous consequences, and according to the good old English fashion, each side must be heard before judgment can be pronounced. The Chronicle's parliamentary correspondent writes this morning: "The House of Commons, always jealous of its own rights, did not jump to Bonar Law's suggestion that the allegations contained in Maurice's letter should be inquired into by a court of two judges. In order to constitute such a court, legislation would be necessary, and the terms of the reference to it would have to be settled by the House, but the objection of the members is not to the time that would be occupied by these preliminaries. It is the traditional objection to calling in of any external tribunal to pronounce on matters affecting the House of Commons. "Last evening Mr. Asquith handed in a notice of a motion that a select committee of the House be appointed to inquire into Maurice's allegations. The motion will be discussed on Thursday. I understand the Government will oppose it and treat the matter as one of confidence. In short, they propose to regard Mr. Asquith's motion as a vote of censure. That being so, a division on Thursday evening will be one of critical importance. A hostile majority would mean the downfall of the Government. "In ministerial circles the situation is viewed with serene composure. I am informed the Government are confident of their ability to substantiate the accuracy of the statements that have been impugned. As to the statement about the fighting strength at Haig's disposal on March 21, it may well be that Maurice excluded certain factors that were included in the estimate made by the prime minister. Otherwise the variance is inexplicable. It is incredible that Lloyd George in a carefully prepared speech such as that of April 9 would make a misstatement on a vital matter that must have been for days previously engaging the attention of the war cabinet. General Maurice and other officers of high rank were present at cabinet councils where the facts and figures in regard to the strength of the British army in France and Flanders were discussed."

Others May Be to Blame One explanation offered in circles well acquainted with the practical workings of British parliamentary institutions of the Premier and Mr. Bonar Law came to make the statement questioned by General Maurice is that their statements were the mere slips of busy men trusting details of transactions concerning which they were compelled to trust subordinates for information. It is stated that General Maurice is the last man to fail to appreciate the effect, both national and personal, of his remarkable letter. He is not only a distinguished soldier, but also a highly cultivated writer and noted for his keen, analytical mind. Bred up, moreover, in all the traditions of the British Empire, he could never have broken with his country's traditions of professional matters unless he was convinced that it was absolutely necessary. He feared, it was suggested, that the army was growing indignant at what it considered an attitude of the civil officials. It knows that it is facing the hardest task ever set to a British Army, and it is performing it without regard to the cost to itself. It remembers certain passages in Lloyd George's Paris speech, in which its efforts of last year were disparaged, and it is indignant that there should be any misconception of the conditions under which it is facing the present tremendous German offensive.

Think Subordinates Blamed The friends of the Government are quite sure that the ministers never intended to mislead the nation. Their surmise is that Bonar Law, knowing he was to be questioned about the extension of the British front, applied in the War Office, and that the official who supplied it blundered. Consequently, the blame is now shifted for the mistakes of his subordinate. As for the statements of the Premier, it is pointed out that they were made in the course of a long speech introducing the man-power bill, which, it is safe to assume, was not entirely of his own composition. It was noted at the time that he read from voluminous notes which he said he had only partly written himself, and it is urged that to hold him personally responsible for every word in the technical part of his address would require of him an accuracy of detail impossible in a man of his immense responsibilities. Moreover, even his friends have never accused Lloyd George of pedantic exactness of mind.

Meanwhile, Maurice's letter has inevitably roused excited speculation as to its effect on the Government, and many have felt that it will assuredly cause its fall. Coming as it does, just as the Irish question is once more springing into prominence, it is doubly dangerous. It is believed that there is no real majority of Irish conscription in the Commons, and that if the desire to keep the Government in were removed they would be defeated over that. Then, of course, they could appeal to the country if they wished, and would probably find that their Irish policy was far more popular in the constituencies than in the House of Commons.

They would have, therefore, a chance of remaining in power, but the old objections to general elections on a register nearly five years old remain in full force. The register, with the addition of millions of women and new voters, is not likely to be ready before November, and there will undoubtedly be a great effort made to prevent a political upheaval until that time.

Suggests Asquith and Milner This implies the possibility of a stop-gap Government to carry over, and one very interesting suggestion is a Milner-Asquith combination. Lord Milner has gathered considerable strength since he became a member of the war cabinet, and his appointment of War Secretary was generally approved. Strangely enough, considering that it had been considered correct to criticize him on the ground of his arbitrary method, he has won great favor among the younger labor leaders. They regard him as a straightforward, able man who cares nothing for old politics and parties and is only out to win the war, but he is no parliamentarian, and a British Prime Minister must be a ready speaker and debater. It is, therefore, suggested that he might lead the Government from the peaceful atmosphere of the Lords, while Asquith, with his rare personal popularity, would lead the Commons.

Of course, there would be an outcry against Asquith's return to the ministry from certain sections of the community, and indeed it is unlikely that he could again be Prime Minister during the war. But those who favor his inclusion in a possible Milner cabinet hold that, as the leader of the House of Commons, his great powers of conciliation would be again turned to the service of the country, while Milner would, in himself, be quite strong enough to

give sufficient decision and sternness to the policy of the Government. The foregoing is an outline of general unofficial comment in circles which have parliamentary, departmental and other official relations. Letter Called Bombshell General Maurice's letter is generally described as a bombshell. Both the radical Star and Lord Northcliffe's Evening News used that term. The latter paper at first followed the example of the Daily Mail in not publishing the letter, but gave it in full in later editions, together with the editorial in the Daily Chronicle, which the News said: "Has consistently supported the policy of the Government."

The Westminster Gazette in an editorial written before Bonar Law's announcement in the House of Commons of the judicial inquiry plan spoke of Maurice having "taken a strong step which can only be justified by an extreme public necessity." Another added: "Whatever allowance may be made for the necessary vagueness of official statements respecting the strength of the army in time of war, no Government could allow its secrecy to be impugned by a soldier in Maurice's position and pass it by in silence. The statements challenged have an intimate bearing on the relations of the Government with the army, their cumulative effect was to suggest that the army had suffered a reverse for which the Government was blameless and the army alone responsible.

Many Similar Affairs The Star says: "Only this Parliament is to consider the globe which for some time past has been attacking the Government, comes to the conclusion that 'Present regime in Downing street cannot last,' and is anxious that 'our Allies and our dominions should read that a charge in Downing street is inevitable, and we would caution them against the fable that the fall of Lloyd George involves a relapse toward defeatism or pacifism, which were never at such discount in Great Britain as today.'"

The Globe's parliamentary correspondent writes this morning: "The House of Commons, always jealous of its own rights, did not jump to Bonar Law's suggestion that the allegations contained in Maurice's letter should be inquired into by a court of two judges. In order to constitute such a court, legislation would be necessary, and the terms of the reference to it would have to be settled by the House, but the objection of the members is not to the time that would be occupied by these preliminaries. It is the traditional objection to calling in of any external tribunal to pronounce on matters affecting the House of Commons. "Last evening Mr. Asquith handed in a notice of a motion that a select committee of the House be appointed to inquire into Maurice's allegations. The motion will be discussed on Thursday. I understand the Government will oppose it and treat the matter as one of confidence. In short, they propose to regard Mr. Asquith's motion as a vote of censure. That being so, a division on Thursday evening will be one of critical importance. A hostile majority would mean the downfall of the Government. "In ministerial circles the situation is viewed with serene composure. I am informed the Government are confident of their ability to substantiate the accuracy of the statements that have been impugned. As to the statement about the fighting strength at Haig's disposal on March 21, it may well be that Maurice excluded certain factors that were included in the estimate made by the prime minister. Otherwise the variance is inexplicable. It is incredible that Lloyd George in a carefully prepared speech such as that of April 9 would make a misstatement on a vital matter that must have been for days previously engaging the attention of the war cabinet. General Maurice and other officers of high rank were present at cabinet councils where the facts and figures in regard to the strength of the British army in France and Flanders were discussed."

grave precedent set. The Evening Standard, as a governmental supporter, feels it to be its duty to point out that a very grave precedent has been created by the letter, adding: "Clearly if every distinguished soldier who does not see eye to eye with the cabinet on questions of policy or fact is to act as a kind of public prosecutor, a fatal blow will have been delivered at the system of ministerial responsibility to which we are accustomed in this country. The position of a minister whose conduct is subject to parliamentary inquiry held on the demand of a subordinate is scarcely possible. He cannot act with authority when that authority is, in fact, impugned. If General Maurice is held to be justified in this case, no government's existence can be guaranteed against similar attacks, and it is easy to understand that all such attacks might not be with the transparent honesty which characterizes the general's letter."

Experts Secret Session "The supporters of the Government are not disturbed on a simple matter of fact. It ought to be easy to prove

who has spoken the truth and a select committee, which might continue its deliberations for weeks, seems a cumbersome tribunal to decide a point of honor which an impartial judge would settle in five minutes. If military secrets are to be disclosed, it is probable that the House will go into secret session."

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the most formidable in his history. The forces that elevated him are now arrayed against him. GUFFEY IN LANCASTER

Lancaster, Pa., May 8. — Joseph P. Guffey, who seeks the gubernatorial nomination of the Democratic party, and several of his running mates opened their campaign in this city yesterday. The candidates had a rousing reception at the Stevens House. With Mr. Guffey were Samuel R. Turner and J. Calvin Strayer, candidates for the Congress-man-at-Large nominations. J. Washington Logie, Democratic candidate for Lieutenant Governor, joined the party at York last night. County Commissioner D. F. Magee, master of ceremonies, introduced the visitors to Mr. Guffey and his associates.

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See Menace to Country is the morale of the army alone is involved. The morale of the nation is equally at stake. The course the Government for months past has led in the mind of the public a conviction of disquiet and distrust which is being increased by the uncertainty of the situation and all the misera of doubt and disbelief are the breath of our nostrils.

Times Parliamentary correspondent this morning says: "Mr. Asquith's motion will be resisted by the Government with all the strength of their command. The ministry last sent telegrams all to their supporters except those on active service. They summoned them to attend to the Prime Minister will be in his place to make a full reply in open session to the specific points raised by Mr. Asquith."

Threaten to Resign Daily Mail's parliamentary correspondent says this morning: "The situation is regarded as one of the most gravely, as the Government

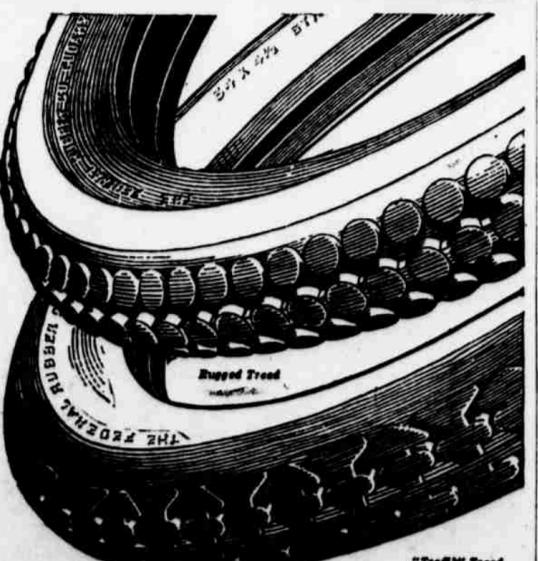
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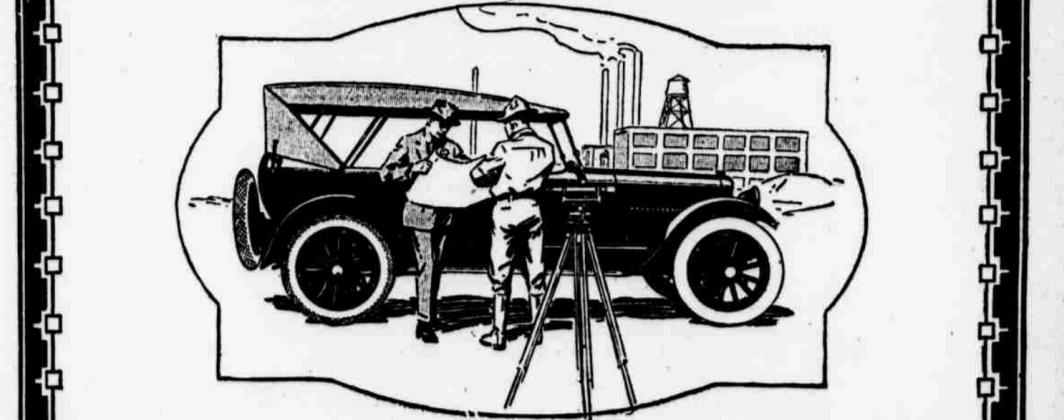
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