

London, October 23, 1914. - On Wednesday we had things pretty well settled, and had also succeeded in raising from official sources about one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. I took a fair amount of satisfaction in gloating over those who had croaked. Then some helpful soul came along and threw a monkey wrench into the machinery, so that a good part of the work has to be done over again. At any rate, we hope to get, some time to-day, permission to export enough food to serve as a stop gap until the general question can be settled.

Monsieur Francqui and Baron Lambert had to start back this morning to organise the Belgian local committees into one central national affair, and I am to stay on until things are settled one way or the other. That may mean not getting back to Belgium for a week or two more.

For some time I have been threatening to get a dog and yesterday, feeling the need of intelligent canine sympathy, I succumbed. At the Army and Navy Stores, I found a hideous brindle bull that some officer had left on going to the front. He was promptly acquired, and given the name of Max in honour of our Burgomaster. The Stores are to take care of him for me until I return to Belgium.

When I got back to the Embassy, from my visit to the Stores, I found Shaler waiting for me with the news that I was expected at a meeting at Mr. Hoover's office in fifteen minutes, to discuss matters with the committee which is being formed to handle the feeding of the Belgian civil population.

I was surprised to find that I had been made a member of this committee, and was expected to attend. It was a comfort to talk with men who know what they are about and who can make up their minds right the first time. Hoover is a wonder and has the faculty of getting big-calibre men about him. We were not in session more than

an hour, but in that time we went over the needs of the Belgian civil population, the means of meeting immediate needs, the broader question of finding food from other parts of the world to continue the work, the problem of getting money from public and private sources to pay expenses, and finally the organisation to be set up in Belgium, England, America and Holland, to handle the work. Before we left a tentative organisation had been established and people despatched on various duties with orders to get things started without loss of time, so that food could be pushed across the line into Belgium at the first possible moment.

It is going to be up-hill work for many reasons, but it would be hard to find a group of men who inspire as much confidence as these that everything possible will be done, and occasionally a little that is impossible.

GIBSON, Hugh (Secretary of the American Legation in Brussels, 1914) ; *A journal from our Legation in Belgium* ; New York ; Doubleday, Page & Company Garden City; 1917 :

<http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/memoir/Legation/GibsonTC.htm>

Footnotes.

It would be interesting compare with what **Roberto J. Payró** told about the same day in his *Diario de un testigo* (*La guerra vista desde Bruselas*) :

Original Spanish version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19141022%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19141023%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf>

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19141022-1102%20PAYRO%20EN%20HOLANDA.pdf>

French version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19141022%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO%20FR.pdf>

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<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19141022-1102%20PAYRO%20EN%20HOLANDA%20FR.pdf>

It would be also interesting compare with what **Paul MAX** (cousin of the *bourgmestre Adolphe MAX*) told about the same day in his *Journal de guerre* (*Notes d'un Bruxellois pendant l'Occupation 1914-1918*) :

http://www.museedelavilledebruxelles.be/fileadmin/user_upload/publications/Fichier_PDF/Fonte/Journal_de%20guerre_de_Paul_Max_bdef.pdf