

March 7, 1917.—Last night, at Gregory's quarters, we had a long discussion, only four of us present—Nell, Gregory, Kellogg, and I. Kellogg had received secretly, by the courier, a dispatch from Hoover, in which he changes his plan again, says to abandon the idea of the Inter-Allied Commission (because of insistence of French and Belgian Governments that the Americans continue to direct the C.R.B. outside), and ranges himself squarely, though without saying so, with my original plan to have Dutch and Spanish delegates replace our men in Belgium and for the work otherwise to go on as before.

I was pleased, and Gregory in the clearest of lawyer-like statements recommended that we get the Dutchmen at once, and gradually, little by little, withdraw the Americans. Thus we were, he and I at least, ranged together for my original idea, which seemed now to have Hoover's sanction. But Kellogg hesitated; he had from Hoover some romantic idea of the Americans, including me, staying in here. "Don't be quixotic," said Gregory. Kellogg was still unconvinced; thought the Government had certain ideas. "The Government has no ideas," I said, "on the revictualing that Hoover doesn't give it." Kellogg thought that impossible. I made a long speech, citing the many changing varying dispatches we had received—go, stay, don't go, don't stay, take our courier, keep the courier; and finally quoted the phrase in one of the dispatches—"doubtless this plan"—my original plan, once, long ago, Hoover's, and now by this latest advice, his once more—"would gratify the Germans and certain Belgians." What did the Government know of our internal quarrels, of the significance of those words "certain Belgians" which expressed Hoover's old, unchanging dislike and distrust of Francqui? Both Gregory and Kellogg laughed, were convinced, and Nell repeated: "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau."

We decided to obtain, if possible, the guarantees from the Germans that the men can go out, but I had no hope, and so told them, and still have no hope, that the Germans will give any such guarantees. They talk about it, and von der Lancken and Brohn promise it. . . . But I have no idea that we shall ever secure such assurances, and little they would respect them even if they were given.

¹ The Armed Ship Bill passed the House March 1, but was held up in the Senate until the session ended March 4 by the "little group of wilful men."