

March 16, 1917.—Gregory and I talked about Hoover's constant changes, constant vacillation, conflicting orders. I urged him to some action and he said that unless Van Vollenhoven and Villalobar agreed on men for northern France now, he would appoint them himself. He is disgusted, as I am, with the conflict at Washington and here, disgusted with this incessant change and conflict in orders, and had telegraphed to know something definite. Has not yet received the passports for the men who are ready to go, and I doubt whether we ever, any of us, will receive now any permission to leave. He had a telegram from Rotterdam saying that all delegates for northern France should be Dutch, that the Spanish Government had agreed, and so on. (Hoover's inveterate hatred of Villalobar.)

At the meeting Francqui reported several abuses—arbitrary acts on the part of the Germans; and Gregory reported that while the small frauds on the frontier had ceased, the shipment of cattle by the hundreds, in ever-increasing quantities, went on daily, and that he was privately informed that they were powerless to stop it. It is, of course, a flagrant breach of the guarantees. No imported foodstuffs have been taken. He said he had sent men to feed the refugees from northern France, of which about 50,000 have come into Belgium. The C.R.B. is feeding them the Belgian ration and they are receiving in addition one franc each per day. The Belgians are Belgians there: with the facility and the beautiful calm with which the poor do their charity, villages of 500 souls are caring for a thousand refugees. There will be a large exodus from northern France.

The German newspapers say that Congress commences today in extraordinary session, and that war will probably be declared.¹

¹ An error: Congress had been called by Wilson in special session for *April 16th*.