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W A R C A B I N E T.

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REPARATION FOR ACTS OF DEVASTATION.

Translation of a letter addressed to the British
Ambassador in Paris endorsing a declaration of
the National Executive Committee for the complete
reparation of damage caused by the War.

PARIS.

24th September, 1918.

Nouveau siège social,
23, Avenue de Messine,
Paris 8^e

His Excellency, The Ambassador,

We have the honour to transmit to you a declaration drawn up by the Board of Management of the National Executive Committee for the complete Reparation of Damage caused by the War, at its Meeting of 13th September, 1918, concerning steps for stopping the destruction of property by the Germans in the occupied territories.

We beg you to bring this declaration to the notice of your Government, as it seems to us that its publication by the Allied Governments would have the requisite effect on our enemies, and would put an end to their vandalism.

We have, etc.,

The "Secrétaire-General".

(Signed)

His Excellency,
The British Ambassador,
PARIS.

DECLARATION OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE
COMPLETE REPARATION OF DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE WAR.

(Comité National d'Action pour la Réparation
des dommages causés par la Guerre)

(Session of the Board 13th Sept. 1918.)

The attention of the above Committee in accordance with its instructions has been directed since the beginning of the War to the acts of destruction, devastation, confiscation, pillage, requisitions and forced contributions which had been carried on without any reasons of military necessity, in the invaded territories and which, in spite of the universal horror and condemnation aroused thereby in the whole civilised world, continue to increase and become intensified.

These iniquitous proceedings which revive the memory of ages long forgotten; and which are contrary to the most elemental conceptions of international law; this Economic exploitation of War, as the Germans themselves dare to term their military operations which transform warfare into a detestable system of Burglary (Cambriolage), having for its aim the agricultural, industrial and commercial ruin of the invaded country; all these must have had official sanction. The sanction of crimes and acts of violence carefully premeditated and minutely thought out in all their details, and carried out cruelly and in cold blood are no less monstrous than the crimes themselves.

The ancient principle of the lex talionis, however repugnant it may seem to nations fighting for the supremacy of Justice, Right and Liberty, is nevertheless the only one that in the present circumstances can appeal to a nation which has deliberately placed itself outside the pale of civilisation and which is admittedly in a state of retrogression. On the other hand this principle will leave unprejudiced, for action at the proper time, all political and legal obligations, pecuniary and penal, collective and individual, which Governments and private citizens may desire to put into force.

In these circumstances, and considering the unwarrantable aggravation of this scientific savagery, the old law of an Eye for an Eye and a Tooth for a Tooth is the only law which can put an end to the abominable conception of War entertained by the Germans.

The National Committee, on behalf of the interests which it is defending, therefore calls upon the Governments whose peoples are engaged in this Modern Crusade, to announce their solemn and formal resolve to put into practice the modernised lex Talionis Town for Town, Village for Village, Church for Church, Chateau for Chateau, Estate for Estate. It is a retaliation which the modern barbarians have brought upon themselves, and is the only formula which can make any impression on hearts and minds impervious to any other sentiment than that inspired by the fear of a terrible and swift punishment.