

August 19 1916

Courtney

Dear Noel Buxton,

You will have concluded we are out of London; we came down here ten days ago for a stay of six weeks. I should have been delighted to have had a talk with you over your memo which I return. I have read it twice over and took the liberty of showing it to your cousin M de Bunsen who is here. I yield to the audacity of not accepting two conclusions to which you seem to incline (1) That America will be drawn into the War and (2) that Hughes will be elected President. I do not ~~xxx~~ at all believe in the first. As to the second I only doubt hoping it will not happen. I agree largely with the view you report of the official people that our reception of the Wilson advances has been unwisely chilling; but the Government will probably have to turn back to them. The President is strong as neutral and can and must both sets of belligerents, since both under his mediation could accept terms which showed, I will not say, that both have been beaten but that both have been unsuccessful. A little further experience may convince the Allies and it is at least probable that the Germans have something more than an inkling of it.

[How did you get the notion that the Germans might be prepared to give up Metz. I have seen nothing to indicate this. If it were true and if we on our part were prepared to set up again the Declaration of London or something like it as the future code of International Law I should think peace near ~~xxx~~ at hand; but these are two very great ifs.]

I dont know how far you will kepp this memo private. If you have spare copies and felt so disposed you might send one back to me to show L. Hobhouse and you might send another to Lord Morley with the statement that I suggested it.

Courtney