

## DENOUNCES TAX ON BELGIUM

Minister Havenith Says Fines on Refugees Are Confiscatory.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 8.—The Belgian Legation issued a statement today denouncing a tax imposed by Germany upon Belgian refugees who fail to return to the country by March 1, as a confiscation in violation of The Hague Convention. The statement was issued after Minister Havenith had called at the State Department. It follows:

"A great number of Belgians, amounting nearly to 1,000,000, fled from their country to save their lives and safeguard their honor, after the burning of many houses, the slaughter of many harmless citizens, and the devastation of the country by the German troops.

"Now the German Government imposes a tax equal to ten times the usual personal tax, on all Belgians who went from their country who shall not be back in Belgium before March 1, 1915.

"The German Government, after having imposed an enormous war levy of 450,000,000 francs (\$90,000,000) upon Belgium, already ruined by war and numerous exactions, made on Dec. 14, 1914, the formal promise that no further taxes would be imposed upon the country.

"The new taxation laid upon the absent Belgians is, therefore, not only a violation of The Hague Conventions, but constitutes the breach of a most solemn pledge.

"It has not the character of a taxation, but in fact it amounts to a real confiscation."

## CAN'T ADOPT LITTLE BELGIANS

Would-Be Protectors Unable to Learn if They Are Orphans.

So many letters and requests have been received by the officials in charge of various Belgian charities in New York, in which the writers offer to adopt Belgian orphans, that the Commission for Relief in Belgium yesterday asked Dr. P. H. Williams of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, for a statement dealing with the question. Dr. Williams returned a few days ago from a sojourn of several months in Belgium, where he had charge of relief work affecting nearly 1,000,000 people in the Province of Liège.

"Even if it was possible," said Dr. Williams, "to bring these children to the United States, there would be no way of telling in the great majority of cases whether they were fatherless. Besides, the matter is complicated by the announced intention of the Belgian Government, when the war is ended, to bring all its homeless children back to their native land.

"The situation of the children in Belgium is pitiful in the extreme. If somebody in this country were to adopt a Belgian child now, the child would have to be given up later if the parents turned up. The British and French newspapers are already full of advertisements, the object of which is to reunite Belgian families whose members have been separated because of conditions due to the war."