Mr. President: In your note of May 13th you state that Germany, while 'accepting' in November 1918 'the obligation to make reparation' did not understand such an acceptance to mean that her responsibility was involved either for the war or for the acts of the former German Government.

It is only possible to conceive of such an obligation if its origin and cause is the responsibility of the author of the damage.

You add that the German people would never have undertaken a war of aggression. Yet, in the note from Secretary of State Lansing of November 5th, 1919, which you approve of and adduce in favor of your contention, it is stated that the obligation to make reparation arises out of 'Germany's aggression by land, sea and air'.

As the German Government did not at the time make any protest against this allegation, it thereby recognized it as well-founded.

Therefore Germany recognized in 1918 implicitly but clearly, both the aggression and her responsibility.

It is too late to seek to deny them today. It would be impossible, you state further, that the German people should be regarded as the accomplices of the faults committed by the 'former German Government'. However, Germany has never claimed, and such a declaration would have been contrary to all principles of international law that a modification of its political regime or a change in the governing personalities would be sufficient to extinguish an obligation already undertaken by any nation.

She did not act upon the principle she now contends for either in 1871 as regards France, after the proclamation of the Republic, nor in 1917, in regard to Russia after the revolution which abolished the Tsarist regime.
Finally, you ask that the report of the Commission on Responsibility may be communicated to you. In reply we beg to say that the Allied and Associated Powers consider the reports of the Commissions set up by the Peace Conference as documents of an internal character which cannot be transmitted to you.

Accept, Mr. President, etc.

G. CLEMENCEAU