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SECRET

I.C.-32.

PROCÈS-VERBAL OF A CONFERENCE HELD AT THE ITALIAN HEAD-QUARTERS AT PESCHIERA ON THURSDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 8, 1917, WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF ITALY AND THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH, FRENCH, AND ITALIAN GOVERNMENTS:—

<i>England.</i>	<i>France.</i>	<i>Italy.</i>
The Right Hon. D. LLOYD GEORGE, M.P., Prime Minister.	M. PAINLEVÉ, President of the Council.	Signor ORLANDO, President of the Council.
Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. J. C. SMURTS, K.C.	M. FRANKLIN BOUILLON, Minister of State and Member of the War Committee.	Baron SONNINO, Minister for Foreign Affairs. Signor BISOLLATI.

THE KING OF ITALY, at the outset, expressed his great regret that the advice of Mr. Lloyd George had not been followed and that the Allies had not made use of the Italian campaign to crush Austrian resistance. He had fully shared the view of Mr. Lloyd George, and regretted deeply that, whereas a few months ago Austria was on the point of breaking down, she had had the opportunity, with German assistance, of turning the tables on Italy.

MR LLOYD GEORGE regretted that His Majesty was not present at the Rome Conference, where he had strongly urged his views in favour of a combined move on the Italian front.

THE KING OF ITALY agreed with Mr. Lloyd George's remarks, and added that he did not always have the opportunity of having his own views carried out. The King then went on to give an account from his personal observation of the breakdown of the Italian army under the combined Austro-German attack. The main causes of the Italian failure he attributed to—

- (a.) A very thick fog which prevailed on the day of the attack on the northern flank of the Italian army, and which made the use of the artillery impossible.
- (b.) The absence of highly trained professional officers who could properly manœuvre the Army when the retreat commenced.

He said that the Italian army had lost approximately 30,000 officers during the war, and that the younger officers had not been properly trained and could not handle their men under the difficult conditions which arose with the retreat. The men again were also insufficiently trained, and were really only fit to hold trenches and to make a simple advance. They had not been sufficiently instructed to manœuvre for purposes

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L'inizio del « verbale » di Peschiera.