

Switzerland and santions

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SWITZERLAND AND SANCTIONS.

My article "Switzerland and Sanctions," which appeared in the issue of October 19th, has brought forth a fiery and rather rambling reply from a correspondent who signs himself as A.G.P.

It is, of course, quite impossible for me to answer every statement which he makes in his "article," as it would take columns and columns to do so.

A. G. P. in his introductory remarks pays me a compliment in saying, that he considers me "fully competent to write on a topic different from the above;" and I am most grateful for his consideration. In acknowledging "this compliment" I would like to quote Bacon's famous words: "He that cometh to seek after knowledge with a mind to scorn and censure shall be sure to find matter for his humour." —

What impressed me most in his article were his quotations in Latin, it is a pity, however, that he thought it necessary to translate it for our readers. Why on earth quote Latin to Folks whom you think incapable of understanding it? —

I strongly object against the tone, in which A. G. P. tries to put words into my mouth which I have never uttered, furthermore he says that there are very few who would approve of this kind of Journalism. Frankly speaking, I do not quite follow what he is driving at in making such a statement, because in his covering letter to me, he writes "Please do not consider my remarks about Journalism as having any personal bearing on your good self." This is a flat contradiction which does very little honour to my correspondent, and as, according to his "covering" letter he informs me, that he is "fully conscious of the difficulties of the profession, having once been in the same boat," I can only repeat his words that "there are very few who would approve of this kind of Journalism." —

The fundamental difference between A. G. P. and myself lies undoubtedly in the fact, that I am an ardent supporter of the League of Nations, in which institution I can see at present the only safeguard to bring peace and prosperity to a chaotic world; whilst he can see nothing good in this institution which was founded in order to save mankind from the terrors of war with all its horrors and miseries. I am fully aware that the League of Nations is far from perfect, I am even prepared to say that it has sadly disappointed us at times, but with all its shortcomings and blunders it remains, in my humble opinion, still the only machine to bring at least some security to humanity.

A. G. P. has put a few questions to me, and I will endeavour to reply shortly to these:

Question No. 1: What has size to do with the question of enforcing League Sanctions?

Answer: Nothing, theoretically.

Question No. 2: What does ST. mean when he states that in pre-League days small countries had very little say in international affairs?

Answer: The world not having changed much since the days when Latin was the chief language, A. G. P. presumably equally at home with Roman History as with Latin, ought to know better than ask this question.

Question No. 3: Does the fact that they have a say under the League convey any duty or moral obligation apart from the League Covenant?

Answer: This question somehow reminds me of the other one "have you stopped beating your mother-in-law?"

Question No. 4: When do and when does the Covenant not apply?

Answer: The Covenant does not apply when it suits the big powers to ignore it, and it does apply when it suits the aforesaid powers to make use of the League of Nations. After thought: It is to be hoped that the big powers will really begin to learn that they will find their own safety only by upholding and making full use of the League of Nations, i.e. its Covenant.

Question No. 5: Why was the Covenant not applied to the Sino-Japanese Conflict?

Answer: The Manchurian case is admitted by all friends of the League to be a grave difficulty. They feel that the League followed a mistaken course. They feel that the world's security was badly shaken. But there is a substantial difference between Japan's policy in Manchuria and Italy's attack on Abyssinia. Japan had treaty rights in Manchuria and her troops were entitled to be there. Manchuria had long been in effect a detached, autonomous part of China. The Chinese were attempting to alter existing conditions to Japan's disadvantage. Furthermore, China herself never declared that a state of war existed between herself and Japan and never appealed for the application of sanctions. I cannot remember Switzer-

land at the time pressing for any steps to be taken against Japan. —

Italy has made an armed assault upon a fellow League member with the confessed purpose of conquering her territory and destroying her independence. —

If A. G. P. will read my article again, he will see that I fully appreciate the serious position in which Switzerland is placed, but the fact remains, that Switzerland on entering the League and signing the Covenant, which contains in article 16 the following paragraph:

The Members of the League agree, that they will mutually support one another in the financial and economic measures which are taken under this article

is under a definite obligation. —

Rodo Mahert, the distinguished Swiss writer has written as far back as October 1934, in the "Tribune de Genève," when dealing with the League and Swiss Neutrality:

"Cependant, il ne faudrait pas que, sous prétexte de neutralité, on évitât toutes les contraintes auxquelles se soumettent les autres Etats membres de la S.D.N."

The League has put into force Article 16 of the Covenant, having found after an examination of notorious facts which permitted no other conclusion, that Italy had resorted to war against Abyssinia in disregard of Article 12; Article 16 begins by saying that any Member of the League who so behaves "shall ipso facto be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League." In such circumstances, surely to talk about friendship with Italy, and the maintenance of friendly relations is either to betray ignorance of the foundations on which the League is built, or to treat the clear provisions of the Covenant as mere verbal flourishes of no practical account. —

I can set A. G. P.'s mind at rest at once, I have not the slightest intention to consider myself to be "the chosen interpreter in International questions or International law" nor do I think if he attributes these intentions to the Journalist profession in general (to which apparently he belonged to at one time) he is quite fair, I am fortunate enough to enjoy the friendship of some of these "chosen interpreters," as he terms them, but have never yet found them anxious to claim a super-natural knowledge of matters, of such importance.

When A. G. P. states that the League has no jurisdiction over private enterprise, he is begging the question. Perhaps he will arrange for a shipment of war-stores to leave England now for Italy and thereby find out what "jurisdiction" England, as a Member of the League, has over "private enterprise."

A. G. P. objects that individual Members of the League such as Great Britain and France entered into direct talks away from the League, perhaps he reads apart from the S.O., some other newspapers, where it was reported that Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Eden stated in the House of Commons on the 23rd of October, that Britain would not go behind the League in any settlement. M. Laval has made a similar statement, before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. —

Switzerland stands in an exceptional position amongst the small countries. Whether she can count on her neutrality always being respected by everybody is, by no means certain.

On the point of neutrality, the Covenant and particularly Article 16 has affected, what Sir John Fischer Williams, K.C., the eminent International lawyer, terms a revolutionary change. He says: "It alters completely for Members of the League the whole doctrine of neutrality, which constitutes so important a part of International law, and has played so large a part in history..."

Article 16 goes very far to establish the new doctrine that there are no more neutrals, at any rate within the League. —

I bear, of course, in mind the Resolution of the League of Nations Council of March 1920 exempting Switzerland from military sanctions; but it is nevertheless interesting to hear how our neutrality is viewed in certain quarters.

A. G. P. wants to know what the benefits are which Switzerland derives from the League. It is not easy to assess in material terms the benefits which any nation derives from membership of the League. Many of the disputes which the League has settled in Europe, if allowed to develop, might have threatened Swiss neutrality and interests. There is also the vast volume of social, humanitarian and industrial work done by the League in various spheres of International co-operation which does definitely benefit Switzerland.

The concluding sentence of A. G. P.'s letter is really the key to what he thinks. I should like him to state, however, what Switzerland's position might conceivably be, if the Members of the League, neighbours of Switzerland and others, were to say "alright, you be neutral and we will see that you are really neutral, i.e., we will buy-

cott you altogether," that such a step is not impossible, anyone, knowing how public opinion can be inflamed and distorted very quickly, can see. I can but hope that our Government at Berne is very much alive to any such development, and are trimming their sails accordingly.

ST.

(Switzerland has in the meantime declared its policy with regard to sanctions (see front page), and her view has apparently been accepted by the sanction committee, so that we can leave the matter, for the time being at least, where it stands).

NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE

(London Group) and

SWISS INSTITUTE ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY.

It is a thousand pities that the Literary and Musical Evening arranged by the above Societies on Friday last, did not get a better support from the Colony. One would have thought that the name of Mme. Else Zueblin-Spiller, would have guaranteed a full house, let alone the excellent Swiss Orchestra which has never failed others when their help has been needed.

There must still be a considerable number of "ex soldiers" in London, who at one time or another served at the Frontier during the years 1914-1918; where were they on Friday last? They are decidedly the poorer for not having been at Conway Hall.

The evening's programme was started with the Overture "Il Barbiere di Sevilla" by Rossini, the orchestra under the able conductorship of Mr. P. Dick played with their usual enthusiasm.

Monsieur Paravicini, the Swiss Minister, then introduced Mme. Zueblin-Spiller, the lecturer of the evening to the audience.

The latter received a hearty ovation when making her bow to the company, to many of us, the lecturer, who, during the "Grenzbesetzung" was affectionately called the "Schweizer Soldatmutter" was no stranger. Well do I remember the many happy evenings I spent in one of the "Soldaten Stuben" in the Jura. Countless of our Swiss Tommies have a soft corner in their hearts for this lovable woman, who bravely fought, often against heavy odds, so that our soldiers who served their country, should have a little comfort. —

The lecturer painted an eloquent picture of how these "Soldaten Stuben" or soldiers homes came into life; she related how, in the beginning at least, there was a great animosity against this work simply because it was considered that soldiering was for men, and women had no saying in this matter. But slowly and surely such prejudices melted away and the work received the appreciation it so richly deserved. Mme. Züblin paid a great tribute to General Wille, and Colonels v. Sprecher, Brügger and Wildholz for the support which she received from them in her endeavours.

It might interest our readers to learn that about 180 of these "Soldaten Stuben" were opened during the 4 years of the Frontier occupation, they were principally staffed by Hotel employees who were out of work. Apart from the rent, which the Army authorities paid, these homes were self-supporting. The central organisation had its seat in Zurich, and from there the various homes in the cantons of Berne (Jura), Valais, Grisons, and Ticino, etc., were administered.

In 1915 and 1919 the "Wehrmansfürsorge" was instituted under the same administration, and well over 5 million francs were spent for aiding soldiers families who were in distress, owing to the fact that the bread-winner was at the Frontier.

During the General Strike 1918/19 and the Influenza Epidemic, an amount of 1,378,000 frs. alone was paid out within four months. The different "Soldatenstuben" were transformed into hospital wards and the "Soldatenmütter" acted as nurses. Apart from that, 6 hospital depôts were opened containing over 2,000 beds, the nursing staff consisted of a number of Ladies who gave their services free of charge. The costs of this huge organisation was borne by voluntary contributions.

A number of very interesting lantern slides, portraying the different "Soldaten Stuben" were shown, amongst them the one on the Umbraill which was perhaps the most celebrated one. — After the war the organisation was carried on under the name of "Verband Schweiz. Volksdienst," and they possess to-day 87 institutions employing a trained staff of over 500 workers. This organisation enjoys a great reputation at home, and is a great help to large numbers of people with a small purse.

Mme. Züblin-Spiller received hearty applause on terminating her very interesting lecture, her work, during some of the most difficult times through which our country passed, will always be remembered; we would have wished her a