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FEDERAL COUNCIL.

Motta speaks at the League of Nations
Assembly.

In the discussion of sanctions at the League Assembly, the leader of the Swiss Foreign Affairs, said :

"Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, please allow me to make a short declaration to the League in an endeavour to explain the policy of the Swiss Confederation in the present conflict. The Swiss Delegation has silently accepted the procedure which the Bureau of the League has submitted deciding to introduce sanctions according to article 16 of the Covenant. Until now no country has asked for forced sanctions with the exception of one of the belligerents. The Swiss Delegation takes note of that. The other category of sanctions extends to the economical and financial side. We are taking the view that in their character they are not supposed to be a hostile act. They aim to put a moral and economical pressure on one of the belligerent parties in an endeavour to re-establish peace.

"The Swiss Confederation will not withdraw herself from the obligation of solidarity with the other members of the League. The esteem towards accepted obligations and the faithfulness to voluntary contracted pacts, are principles which we do not even discuss. Our politic has always been and will further be loyal, clear and straight. The status of the Swiss Confederation in regard to her foreign relations is based on the principle of neutrality. This has resulted from the historical development, from tradition, written constitution and the national structure of the country. This neutrality has become part of the law of nations and was first recognised as in the interest of Europe and later of the whole World. The declaration of the League of Nations on the 13th February 1920 in London has solemnly acknowledged it. The Swiss Confederation would never have joined the League of Nations if her membership had to be bought at the cost of her century old constitution.

"Everything that we have seen, observed and experienced in Geneva since 1920 has convinced us that our decision was absolutely clear. Therefore, our general duty to take part in applying economical and financial sanctions is not positive, not even to mention military sanctions. The reserves of our obligations are fixed by our neutrality which means for us the fundamental rule of our very existence. We do not feel ourselves obliged to apply sanctions through which our neutrality is endangered and which we have to safeguard on the first hand.

"We will not withdraw from our participation on the Co-ordination Committee established by the Assembly if our presence is desired, but I wish in the very beginning to eliminate every doubt in regard to the meaning and extent of our participation."

With this declaration the Federal Council has explained in the name of the Swiss Confederation to the World, that it is its firm intention to find in the sanction policy the necessary middle way to remain faithful to the Covenant of neutrality as granted to Switzerland and her obligations to the League as a member. The Federal Council has the support of the whole country for this politic and it is also understood that all the leading statesmen at the League Meeting have fully realised this special position of Switzerland and have agreed to the view taken by Mr. Motta.

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