

The editor's post-bag

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terms: The Allied and associated Powers wish to make it clear that their requirements in regard to German armaments were not made solely with the object of rendering it impossible to resume her policy of military aggression. They are also the first step towards the reduction and limitation of armaments which they seek to bring about as one of the most fruitful preventatives of war and which it would be one of the first duties of the League of Nations to promote. Thus national stability and national honour alike demand that a serious endeavour should now be made to stand by these declarations.

"This, then, is the task of the fateful conference which is to meet next February — to effect a progressive reduction of armaments by general agreement. There is no question of one-sided disarmament. The essence of the problem is a general agreement to disarm. Our own country, we may honestly say, will enter the Conference in a position of strong moral authority. She has already made more substantial reductions than any other country. Indeed, there are many who think she has already reached the lowest point consistent with her safety and obligations. This very fact creates a difficulty which her representatives at Geneva will have to face. It may not be possible for them to accept some general reduction by a fixed common percentage. But within classes of armaments there are possibilities of reduction which she must be willing to offer. What we ask of our representatives — and we ask it most earnestly — is that they will strain every nerve to bring about at least a true and honest beginning in general disarmament.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF FAILURE.

"Assuredly the consequence of failure cannot be contemplated without dismay. It might mean the withdrawal of Germany from the League, even her determination to begin the increase of her own armaments. It would certainly mean a most serious blow to the authority of the League and to all its efforts to hold the world together by an international rule of reason and justice. It would be a setback to all the hopes of a period of settled confidence essential to the recovery of the world from its present confusion and distress. God in His mercy grant that a calamity so grievous may be averted.

"We cannot shut our eyes to the immense difficulties which stand in the way. These difficulties call not only for the patient efforts of statesmen meeting in conference, but even more for the powers which are latent in the public opinion of the peoples of the world themselves. Armaments, as the Secretary for Foreign Affairs has said, are but the symptom of a disease. It is well indeed to attack the symptom, but it is the disease itself which must ultimately be reached and healed. And that disease is fear. The spirit of fear is still haunting the nations. It is this which makes them cling nervously to their armaments.

"Yet since the war a great structure of arbitration treaties, some 300 in number, has been built up. Nay, sixty-one nations, and among them all of the most powerful, have bound themselves by the Pact of Paris to renounce war as an instrument of national policy, and have agreed that the settlement of all disputes, of whatever nature or origin they may be, which may arise among them shall never be sought except by pacific means. Are not such solemn pledges enough to banish fear? If they are not, the question arises whether these States are to be trusted to mean what they have said and to stand by their pledged word.

"If there be any doubt as to the answer the very grave and ominous question remains — has civilisation itself the strength of will, of conviction, of courage, to maintain the ideals on which its very existence depends, or must it still, and always, give way to the old untamed competitive instincts of primitive mankind? These are questions which only the public opinion of the peoples can answer. Here sounds the call to Christian citizens in every land. To them the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy must be a matter not of mere aspiration, but of loyalty to the mind and spirit of the Lord whom they profess to serve. And if fear be banished the reduction of armaments will follow.

WAR DEBTS AND TARIFFS.

"There is another and kindred disease of which armaments are a symptom — the disease of a selfish nationalism which moves one nation to press its own advantage without regard to the needs of others. This is the ultimate cause of the vast economic depression which has come upon the world. All the perplexities, apprehensions, confusions which surround the words reparation, war debts, tariff walls, are growths which spring from this same root of a self-seeking nationalism. Yet the very distress which binds the whole world in bondage is a proof that the world is now one community of nations in which the welfare of one member means the welfare of all and the calamity of one member brings calamity to all.

"It may well be asked whether the time has not come when the state of the world demands that an international conference should be assembled which, accepting this fundamental truth, might endeavour by international co-operation to stay the distress and hasten the recovery of the world's economic life. Assuredly, the only hope of rescuing civilisation from its present plight is to make the fact which that very plight proclaims — namely, the oneness of the whole body of nations — the ruling principle of international life. Then, so far as this problem of disarmament is concerned, the question of each nation would be, not what armaments does it need to maintain its own position, but what contribution can it make to the armaments needed to defend the unity of nations against any aggressor who would try to break it.

"Looking forward to the coming conference, we bid our statesmen enter it with the determination to do their very utmost that its purpose may prevail. Their fellow-countrymen will stand around them in eager expectation and will pray that God's blessing and guidance may be given to the conference so that it may open out the way along which the nations of the world, set free from fear, may find hope and healing and peace."

THE EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

Dear "Kyburg,"

Permit me to thank you deeply for your noble spirited article in the Swiss Observer of January 2nd, breathing human feeling and sympathy. You have given me and, I hope, many serious thinking readers the treat of the Season, words which gladden the hearts of people who believe in Humanity, who are hopeful of the realization of the ultimate aims of the pacifist movement throughout the world.

Such words sound like Christmas bells, words that try to do their share in lifting out of the mud the maxim so much misused in past and present alike: Peace on earth and Goodwill among men.

For eternal peace in this world of ours is the basic principle for the existence of true civilization.

Yours very sincerely,

J.A.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Wednesday, January 20th, at 7.45 p.m., at "Swiss House," 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.1. Monthly Meeting followed by the projection of colour photographs (of England) by Mr. L. D. Talamon, F.R.P.S. and Mr. Lucien Blanc.

Friday, January 29th, at 8 p.m. till 2 a.m. — Swiss Club (Schweizerbund) — Fancy Dress Ball — Special Band, Prizes for best Dresses. Entrance Fee 2/-. at 74, Charlotte Street, W.

Monday, February 1st, at 8.30—Société Culinare Suisse: Annual Dinner and Ball at 1, Gerard Place, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.1.

Wednesday, February 3rd, at 7.30 p.m.—Société de Secours Mutuels—Monthly Meeting, at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

Saturday, February 6th — Swiss Mercantile Society Ltd. — Cinderella Dance — at Midland Hotel. (Further details to follow.)

Friday, February 19th — from 7.30 — 2 a.m. — Swiss Choral Society — Buffet Dance — at the First Avenue Hotel, High Holborn. (Further details to follow.)

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7.30 — Répétition du Choeur.

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Sonntag, den 17. Januar 1932.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst und Sonntagsschule.

7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst.

8 Uhr abends, Chorprobe.

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