

Flight-captain Ernest Nyffenegger

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FLIGHT-CAPTAIN ERNEST NYFFENEGGER.



On the recommendation of the *Swissair* (Swiss Air Traffic Co., Ltd.), the Federal Air Office in Berne, has appointed M. Ernest Nyffenegger, chief pilot of the *Swissair*.—

M. Nyffenegger is the senior of the *Swissair* pilots, he has been connected with Swiss Aviation since 1925. At this early stage he was already in the service as a pilot of the firm of Grén, S.A., in Geneva, who had established a passenger service on the route Geneva-Basle.

A year later (1926) he joined the "Balair," where he was at once put on to the staff of their pilots engaged on international passengers and goods traffic. When this concern was taken over by the *Swissair*, M. Nyffenegger joined the latter concern.

In addition to his appointment as chief-pilot of the *Swissair*, he has been entrusted with the task to act as an instructor to the oncoming generation of Swiss pilots, a task which is after his own heart and to which he is eminently fitted, thanks to his long and valuable experiences.

Flight-captain Nyffenegger is no stranger to London, and in particular to the Swiss Colony, having flown for some considerable time on the Zurich-London route. Thousands of passengers, amongst them a great number of our countrymen, have entrusted themselves to him, and have been safely carried to their destination. During his career he has been in charge of the smallest of sports- to the largest of traffic machines, all of which he has handled with great efficiency.

It might interest our readers to learn, that M. Nyffenegger, together with Flight-captain Zimmermann, was the first pilot engaged on the Zurich-Vienna route, then introduced by the *Swissair*.

We extend our heartiest congratulations to Flight-captain Ernest Nyffenegger on his well-merited and important appointment, trusting that he will prove a worthy successor to the late Walter Mittelholzer, who had played such a conspicuous part in Swiss and International Aviation. ST.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD. LECTURE.

(Continued).

Czechoslovakia has military alliances with France and Russia. France and Russia must come to her aid if she is attacked. They are not neighbours. How are the French to get to the help of Czechoslovakia across the Rhine, the new fortifications which Hitler has made since he re-occupied the Rhineland? His aim and his intention are that the German fortifications should be just as strong as the famous Maginot line on the west side. They have to get across the line through Baden, Württemberg and Bavaria. They cannot help Czechoslovakia with their fleet. I do not see how the French can ever get their soldiers there. Their only help could be with their aeroplanes. What I have said of France is equally true of Russia.

Look at the map! They are a long way off. Russia would have to go through Poland or Rumania or through both and nobody imagines that she will receive such permission. How then can Russia help Czechoslovakia? As far as I can see only through the air. If by any chance Hitler attacks Czechoslovakia, and if Russia comes to the aid of Czechoslovakia as she is bound to do by treaty, she will be at war with Germany. What then is to prevent Japan to seize the opportunity of obtaining complete predominance in the Far East. The position of Czechoslovakia is very dangerous, more dangerous than anything else in Europe. What help could they give her in the event of a German attack? As far as I can see help in the air and very little else.

Now before I sit down let me say just one or two words about England, France and Bel-

gium. Much that is new in Europe, the collapse of the Stresa Front, the creation of the German-Italian partnership, the tragic deterioration of Russo-Germano relations as the result of conflicting ideologies, are great novelties.

Now having seen these new developments, in the west of Europe we find one feature of landscape unchanged and that is that the Anglo-French relationship is closer than ever. Why do I say that? For several reasons. In the first place Italy is now in the other camp, is in the German camp and England and France mean more to one another. Secondly, Germany was strong a year ago and is stronger to-day. The German danger as seen in France and England is greater than ever. The third reason is that the Spanish Civil War has raised terrible possibilities from the point of view of France. The control of the Western Mediterranean by Italy and Germany is carrying with it the possibility and the probability of cutting the connection between France and her African Empire and her supply of French troops and black troops in case of war. During the world war France brought the white and black troops across the Straits without difficulty because Spain in those days was neutral. Supposing Franco dominates Spain? Without a written understanding of course he will feel a partner, a member of the Berlin-Rome axis. In time of war I do not suggest for a moment that he will intervene but the French are terribly afraid of his obedience in return for promises, to block the reinforcement of the French front, of the line of French white and black troops from Africa. Since the danger has increased in Germany and Italy, England means more to France than ever before. Now in addition to all that England and France are closer together, officially and not unofficially, because when the Locarno Pact was torn to pieces by Hitler and when Italy went out as a result of the quarrel with France and England on account of Abyssinia, there were only three left, England, France and Belgium. When the Pact was broken by the march into the Rhineland, England immediately renewed the assurance to France of her guarantee of frontiers. There is nothing new about that. Last December, however, the French Foreign Minister, M. Delbos, announced for the first time that France would help us if we were attacked. That promise had not been given in the Locarno Pact and at Locarno we promised to support them. And last December Delbos accepted reciprocity. We, therefore, have now not like with the Locarno system a very one-sided system, but a system of mutual guarantee and support. Another reason why England and France are closer together lies in the fact of their publicly declared obligations.

Well, now one word about Belgium. Last autumn, as you all know, King Leopold made a speech which echoed all round the world. He made it mainly for internal reasons to facilitate the passage for a bill to increase the Belgian army. He asked his countrymen to accept new sacrifices, what they would have to do if called upon to fight, namely to fight if attacked and for nobody else. Germany went out, Italy went out and now Belgium went out of the Locarno system. The southern part of Belgium is pro-French but the northern part is not at all pro-French. It would have been impossible with the Flemish population, they would not have got the sanction of the Flemish. What did we say, what did the French say when Belgium went out? First we felt a little uncomfortable. We know it was the only thing they could do. England and France have both promised to support Belgium if she is attacked by Germany. We have not asked Belgium to support us if we were attacked. It is a one-sided arrangement. Belgium continues to enjoy the military support as under the Locarno Pact but has not got to come to the assistance of France or England if they were attacked. She has voluntarily undertaken two obligations, the first to defend herself if attacked; the second to carry out her obligations under the Covenant of the League of Nations, to defend herself if attacked and carry out her duties under the League.

England, France and Belgium form a block and the obligations of each member of the block to one another are now clearly defined; England and France pledged to help each other. There is a great deal in Europe which is uncertain but as far as written obligations go, the obligations of England, France and Belgium towards one another are now absolutely clear as they have never been before.

I now wish to say a few words about public opinion in this country. There are three thoughts of school, all very powerfully represented:

1. The isolationists who want to keep out of the European entanglements and European obligations, whether under the League of Nations or otherwise, to turn our back on Europe. The isolationists consist of two sharply contrasted groups, the pacifists who want to keep out of war because they refuse to take part in any war. The second the Rothermere-Beaverbrook Imperialists who say that with our mighty world-wide Empire, strong in resources and getting stronger day by day, "Let us look after our

Empire, let us develop it, let us fight as one man for it and otherwise leave Europe alone." There are plenty of them, powerfully represented in the Press and elsewhere.

2. The second school is the League school of collective security; the school powerfully represented by the League of Nations Union, Lord Cecil, Professor Gilbert Murray, etc. They say the only way of stopping aggression is to let the aggressor know beforehand that he will not succeed; but with all the battle strengths of the League is the only way to prevent aggression, to let the aggressor know in advance that he cannot get what he wants. When the seizure of Manchukuo took place, when the Abyssinian campaign took place there was no effective opposition. The leaders say collective security will not act as long as the aggressor knows that he can get what he wants. The only way effectively to stop him is to let him know that he will fail to get what he wants. The supporters of collective security say that wherever aggression raises its ugly side, England shall be on the side of the aggressed party, to resist the aggressor with the aid of all. That is the school of collective security, whether Belgium or France or Czechoslovakia, it is all the same, aggression is aggression and must be met by overwhelming partnership, so that aggression shall not pay.

(To be continued).

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