

Wednesday Bulletin, January 3

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before taking up the discussion of this evening's topic, I would like to ask the privilege of expressing, before this microphone, my best wishes for 1940. These wishes for the new year are of a personal character to the many overseas listeners with whom I have had the opportunity and the pleasure of forming a contact during the past year. I would like to thank each and everyone for his indulgence and kindness in listening to me so attentively from week to week. Whether you are a fellow countryman abroad desirous of communing with me in a like love for the far-away fatherland, or one of the innumerable friends on whom we can count in both the Americas, and whose affection and friendship are particularly precious to the Swiss people, my personal wishes are for you. May 1940 bring your hearts' desire.

Many times in the past I have attempted to explain to you the real meaning of Swiss neutrality. I have tried to show you how this political doctrine involves, first of all, the state, and how it touches only in a much more reduced and remote sense, individuals and their personal opinions.

And if I refer again this evening to this subject it is because this truth can be well illustrated by a recent example. You already know that, during the last session of the League of Nations when the expulsion of Russia from this great international body at Geneva was the issue, the Swiss delegates abstained from taking any part. They could not have taken a different attitude. The status which Switzerland occupies in the League is unique, without precedent or comparison. She is a member of this organization, but her membership is different from that of all other members - different in the sense that she is not bound by all the articles of the pact. Since 1920 Switzerland has been free from participating in any military sanctions; and since last year, when we had our integral neutrality restored and re-acknowledged, she has been freed from even any obligation in the application of economic sanctions. Naturally it is easily understood that since Switzerland is no longer held to the application of sanctions, she can not take part in any decision as to how these sanctions should be applied to a state under ban of the League - to a state which has



been found guilty of aggression. And it is really more a question of tact than that of a juridical status.

This abstention on our part was criticized by some; and, furthermore, our public opinion was somewhat stirred when our delegation in Geneva, in sending the greetings of the Helvetic Confederation to Finland, expressed themselves in terms that, by prudence, seemed to lack warmth and affection. In fact, we were all generally relieved on learning that a recent Federal Council, when deciding to send an important sum of money to the Finnish Red Cross, laid stress on the idea that this gift could be considered as the homage and respectful gratitude another small country, determined, also, to guard her independence, feels toward heroic Finland, struggling as she is in behalf of the highest spiritual values, and fully willing to shed her blood in defence of her freedom and the cause of mankind. The Swiss people all feel that these words were rightly spoken because neutrality will never mean for us moral resignation, nor the silencing of conscience.

I do not believe I can do better, in order to have you understand the sentiments of our people, than to quote certain passages from an article which appeared in the "Journal de Genève" the first day of January. The editor of this daily newspaper expressed himself thus:

"Neutrality is only one of the elements of our national policy, and it does not imply neither silence nor excessive liberty in the expression of opinions; but a critical and objective examination of all that interests civilization. We would diminish our chances to live if neutrality were to be interpreted as meaning a state of indifference for all that which takes place in the world. For we must finally realize that if we continue to exist, it is because the principles upon which our state is based are championed by other countries in Europe.

"If we give up the idea of defending these principles the moment they are attacked, no matter from what point of the globe the attack may come, in that moment we are preparing our own shroud."

And a little further on in his article, the editor adds: "The constant struggle for moral and political values, for international honesty, constitutes



one of the most important aspects of our spiritual defense ... If we wish to coöperate in the reconstruction of Europe, by bringing to this common effort the capital of our experience, it is necessary, during these difficult times through which we are passing, that we possess the courage and the audacity to uphold in all circumstances the principles we are desirous to see triumph."

Ladies and Gentlemen, I shall not add anything to these remarks. Such a language is pleasing to our ears; and the article from which I have quoted expresses well our national conscience and our moral conceptions. And I would leave it, without comment, for your meditation.