Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 454 of June 13, 1935, from the Legation at Vienna, Austria.

Summary of address delivered in Vienna on June 6, 1935, by Mr. Eduard Ludwig, the Chief of the Press Bureau of the Austrian Government, before the Austrian Association of Catholic Students, on the subject of the situation of the press in Austria.

Mr. Ludwig first mentioned the economic importance to Austria of a press employing 20,000 to 30,000 persons and then referred to the press regulations now in effect and discussed in some detail the question of the practical application of these regulations. He said that much misinformation existed, not only abroad but also in Austria, concerning this question. Many persons, he said, believed that one applied in Austria the principle of preliminary press censorship, permitting the authorities to control the contents of newspapers and periodicals before their publication.

"This view is entirely false, because we can only require such publications which had once been confiscated and have resumed publication to submit their texts to the authorities two hours before public distribution, or in the case of newspapers which have been confiscated several times, to prohibit their sale in the streets or their distribution in the mails, except upon payment of higher postal charges. Thus one sees that there is no legal restrictive measure in Austria against the freedom of the press. As in other countries, we only have means of providing for sanctions in cases of the press's abuse of its privileges. In Vienna there is not a single daily newspaper which is required to present copies of its issues to the authorities before their publication, and in the whole of Austria there are not more than four or five newspapers subject to this exceptional regulation. Thus one can say, briefly, that we have no preliminary press censorship and, furthermore, that in practice the Federal Government is always inspired by a tendency legally to respect the freedom of the press. Confiscation by judicial order is only adopted after fulfilment of a series of judicial and legislative requirements."

The speaker proceeded to discuss the criticism directed at Austria by the Nazi press in Germany respecting the uniformity and "synchronization" of news in the Austrian press, and cited various instances in refutation of such criticism. With respect to official press information, he observed that it was no longer alleged that the official press service gives misleading emphasis to certain portions of public addresses and statements."
"The latter are usually made known to the public in their full text by wireless. Furthermore, even with respect to foreign press information we note a growing tendency towards unification of press information, as a result of the concentration of means of distribution of such information. This is difficult to avoid, but although this is a matter of force majeure, no one in any other country has any idea of speaking of a unification of all the press. It is only amongst ourselves that we have heard such talk for some time, and which is used as a means of propaganda. Under the influence of such propaganda, part of our population seems to believe that one cannot be truly informed as to what happens either in Austria or abroad except by reading foreign newspapers. Thus there has been a great vogue in Austria for foreign newspapers, which today we find very considerably diminished, and the fact that foreign newspapers can be distributed in Austria without any obstacle is a sufficient proof that we have nothing to hide.

I may now say that in Austria, as elsewhere, rumors are in active circulation. The rumors are in two categories: those who lack good will and who are definitely hostile to the work of rehabilitation of our country, and those weak-minded persons who are unable to understand the new age. If it is true that the Austrian press no longer prints, as heretofore, all the rumors heard in the different cafés, we can only see advantages and a healthy evolution of the press in such a development. It is certainly not a loss for the Austrian press if a number of sheets no longer appear, since these existed merely for the purpose of attacking public officials in the performance of their duties, by insinuating that they were actuated by dishonorable motives.

After going on to give details of the press information on Austria made known abroad, the speaker expressed his gratitude to the great majority of foreign press correspondents in Vienna for their sincere efforts to report objectively on recent developments in this country. He then gave some examples of the clandestine press in Austria and referred in this connection to the case of the German journalist, Dr. Hartmeyer.

Mention was then made of the preparatory work for the contemplated establishment of an institute for journalistic science, as well as the plan for the organization of a press corporation in Austria. He said that he would welcome such a development and that it was hoped that the preliminary work for the drafting of the necessary legislation would soon be completed."
The contemplated press corporation would be a forum in which the political and material interests of the Austrian press would be truly represented, and it would also reflect its moral standards. It would represent all who are concerned with press productions, and those include the workers. In the future it should not be possible for an individual with a police record to serve as a newspaper editor and for such an individual to set himself up as a mouthpiece of public opinion. "We cannot prevent such persons from describing themselves as journalists, but the future Austrian press corporation will take steps to keep its house clean. In the creation of such a corporation I see the fulfilment of an important work of political renovation. The cooperative effort in this domain as in all others - in this case uniting newspaper publishers, editors, reporters, press-room and other workers - is a guarantee of the success of all endeavors looking towards the constitutional reconstruction of Austria. "