Vienna, September 19, 1935.

No. 452.

Subject: AUSTRIA AT GENEVA.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that on September 18, 1935, the Austrian cabinet met to consider, among other things, the report of the Foreign Minister on his work at Geneva during the recent session of the Assembly of the League of Nations, and published a statement expressing its full support of the Foreign Minister's efforts and its satisfaction at their favorable . . .
favorable reception in League circles.

The principal task of the Austrian Foreign Minister at Geneva was doubtless one which has not been mentioned in any way in the press, namely, the task of sounding out the French and British statesmen with respect to the extent to which they would be willing to guarantee the independence and integrity of Austria in case Italy, through her absorption in the Ethiopian adventure, should become too weak a read for Austria to lean on. It is too early to report in full on the results of the Austrian Foreign Minister's inquiries in this regard, and this will be made the subject of a separate despatch in the near future.

Publicly, there were two other purposes of the Foreign Minister's visit to Geneva. The first of these was to urge once more from the tribune of the League of Nations the necessity of granting to Austria equality of rights in armament matters. While Austria has been advancing this appeal for many years, it is doubtful if it has ever been advanced more energetically than at this time. A copy of the speech made by the Foreign Minister on this matter before the Assembly of the League of Nations is submitted herewith, in translation. Special interest attaches to the passage in which the Foreign Minister stated that full equality of rights "is the preliminary condition for any further step on the road of the organization of peace" and "the indispensable condition for the creation of general security". This is generally taken here as an indication that the Austrian Government now considers the question...
question of equality of rights as one of such importance that it is determined to make the granting of such equality a condition for Austria's adherence to the proposed Danube Pact. On the other hand, the statement that Austria has "proven that it is ready to postpone contemplated measures in order to preserve the principle of collective cooperation", can mean little less than that the postponement of the restoration of the Monarchy in Austria was agreed to by the present Austrian Government in order to facilitate the passage of the Danube Pact. (This is interesting in connection with the rumors that one of the purposes of the Yugoslav Prime Minister's recent visit to Paris was to demand French opposition to a restoration of the Hapsburgs as a quid pro quo for Yugoslav cooperation in the Danubian Pact system). Thus it would appear from the Foreign Minister's speech that the Austrian Government is willing to yield temporarily on the Hapsburg question, but not on the question of equality of rights, in order to cooperate in a Central European system of collective security.

There is also submitted in this connection a copy, in translation, of an article which was published by the Austrian Government in the official press release, the CORRESPONDANCE POLITIQUE. This article, while covering in general the same ground as the Foreign Minister's speech, made it even more clear that the extension of equality of rights to the Austrian Government was a condition for Austria's cooperation in preventing German expansion in Central Europe. This
article, however, contains the statement that "the use which Austria may make of this freedom of action when it is finally acquired is a question which concerns solely the will of that country itself". This is apparently intended to indicate that Austria expects equality of rights to be extended to her without any conditions.

This same article, in its reference to the speech of Sir Samuel Hoare at Geneva on September 11, gives a certain expression to the anxiety, if not bitterness, with which the progress of the Ethiopian conflict is observed by Austrian Government circles. The article remarks in a tone of scarcely concealed aggravation that "Austria refuses to believe that this consideration for the independence and the freedom of the members of the League . . . would apply to all the countries of the universe, including the most distant and those of which the domestic régime and general conditions seem most dubious, but that the same consideration would not prevail when it was a matter of giving to one of the oldest countries in the heart of Europe the ability to safeguard its interior and exterior security through its own resources." It is not clear whether the reproach conveyed by this observation concerns the unwillingness of the powers to recognize Austria's equality of rights or Great Britain's reluctance to undertake more binding guarantees of Austrian independence.

The second question of importance publicly taken up by the Foreign Minister at Geneva was that of the possibility of altering the League statutes in such a way . . .
way that Austria might become admissible for election to the Council of the League.

It is pointed out by the official WIENER NEUZUNG (September 19) that in the sixteen years in which the League has been in existence, Czechoslovakia has had seven years, and Rumania and Yugoslavia three years each as members of the Council, whereas Austria and Hungary have never been members. Numerous South American states had also had their voice for years in the most important body of the Geneva organization. The efforts of the Austrian delegate to Geneva, M. Pflügl, in this direction at the last session of the assembly are reported by the official press here to have been generally appreciated in League circles, but no mention is made of any concrete results.

Respectfully yours,

George S. Keznerwsmith.

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Enclosures:

1. Translation of Foreign Minister's speech.
2. Translation of article in CORRESPONDANCE POLITIQUE.