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RB

Vienna, September 20, 1935.

No. 583.

Subject: AUSTRIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD ITALIAN-ETHIOPIAN
DISPUTE.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

1/ With reference to my despatch No549 , of
September 19, 1935, I have the honor to submit here-
with, in translation, an editorial which has now
appeared in the NEUE WIENER ZEITUNG of September
19, entitled "London against Rome". This article
throws an interesting light on the anxiety which
the increasing tension between Italy and England

is . .

is causing among those Austrian circles which have been staking so much on Italy and have been openly supporting the Italian cause since the outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopian conflict.*

The gist of the enclosed article is summed up in the following sentences which it contains:

"As a result of England's hesitating tactics, the war of 1935 has become almost as inevitable as that of 1914 If the British statesmen who were in a responsible position during the first months of the development of the conflict in Ethiopia . . . had told the Italian Government the unvarnished truth regarding England's attitude toward the Italian aspirations and their achievement, Mussolini would possibly have put on the brakes, and the armed conflict which has today become almost a sad certainty, and which for many reasons no power can desire less than England, would not have taken place."

It requires little psychological acumen to perceive the thought underlying these statements: namely, if England had only made her position clearer some months ago, leading circles in Austria might have been more careful in giving unreserved support to Italy. The formal attempt to place the blame for this misunderstanding on England is unimportant, since the author, or authors, of this editorial are doubtless very well aware of the inability of any statesman of a government as dependent on public opinion as that of England to declare months in advance what their policy would be in hypothetical conditions. In actuality, the article

expresses . .

* It must be borne in mind that while the NEUBER WIRTSCHAFTSZEITUNG, as stated in my despatch under reference, ran the article by ex-Foreign Minister Mataja warning Austria against taking sides in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict, the paper in its own editorial comment has followed - voluntarily or involuntarily - the pro-Italian line taken by the Government.

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expresses a pang of conscience experienced by certain Austrian circles for their misjudgment of British public opinion, and it reflects a very definite anxiety over the results of Austria's present attitude.

Respectfully yours,

George B. Messersmith.

Enclosure:

Translation of editorial
from NEUE WIRTSCHAFTSZEITUNG,
September 19, 1935.

GFE/LGW
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