

Eckhardt's proposal to ask for an impartial investigation by a League Commission on the spot.

The main Hungarian attitude, however, in regard to bilateral agreements embodying the principle of "reciprocity" may be outlined as follows: it is hardly to be expected that reciprocity could be enforced in law where there is no reciprocity in fact. The particular difficulties to be overcome will at once be realised if it is borne in mind that disarmed Hungary has to face the full strength of the Little Entente, that she could never dream of resorting to war in support of a legal grievance, and that the uneven distribution of minorities between Hungary on the one hand and the Little Entente States on the other, deprives Hungary of the possibility of enforcing her rights by retaliation.

Let us consult statistics. According to official results of the various Censuses held in the years 1930—31, there were:<sup>1)</sup>

691.923 Magyars (4.78%) in Czecho-Slovakia, as against.

104.819 Slovaks (1.2%) in Hungary;

465.800 Magyars (3.34%) in Yugoslavia, as against

60.742 Yugoslavs (0.7%) in Hungary; and

1,378.668 Magyars (7.7%) in Rumania, as against.

16.221 Rumanians (0.2%) in Hungary.

The Hungarians believe, therefore, that a system of reciprocal agreements could be expected to lead

<sup>1)</sup> We have quoted the official figures, not as if we believed them to be correct. It has in fact been repeatedly proved that nationality statistics in the Little Entente States are off the mark by hundreds of thousands. However, we have used their estimates in order to avoid a controversy on this point. The discrepancy in respective minority strengths in any case remains sufficiently obvious.

to satisfactory results only after this striking discrepancy in the respective strengths of national minorities has been corrected by way of a reasonable measure of treaty revision effected by common consent. Such a prelude to the conclusion of bilateral minority treaties, creating a balance in minority strengths, would be well calculated to lead to a final solution of this baffling problem, all parties to such agreements being equally interested in the granting of maximum minority rights. In no other way (that is at least the Hungarian opinion) can conflicting interests in this question be effectively reconciled to each other.

However, even if such a fundamental solution could not be attempted in present circumstances, it should not be inferred that Hungary is determined to decline to consider the proposed bilateral agreements. She is certainly prepared to grant to minorities under her control and to strictly respect all rights the granting and maintenance of which she proposed to demand from the Little Entente States. Failing treaty revision, however, she cannot and will not agree with the suggestion to abandon the present system of international protection. So long as the present state of things continues, Hungary will consider a system of bilateral agreements only on the condition that the new treaties proposed to supersede the old ones, should also be put under the guarantee of the League of Nations. In her present position of practical helplessness Hungary will not surrender the only weapon left to her, — the possibility of invoking the moral conscience of the civilised world embodied in the Covenant of the League and of the principles which it was meant to uphold.

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## SIR ROBERT GOWER ON SITUATION OF MINORITIES

In an Open Letter addressed to the Editor of the "Military and Naval Chronicle" (Chatham) which was published in the September 25th. issue of that journal, Sir Robert Gower, M. P., Hon. D. C. L. made a very interesting statement concerning the minorities debate at the Assembly of the League of Nations from which we quote the following passages:

"Sir, — I have received more than one letter asking me to state what my views are regarding the attitude of Poland towards the League of Nations on the "minority" question.

In reply, I desire to say that I regret Poland's action very much indeed. I am not, however, surprised at the position that has arisen, as, speaking generally, the record of the League of Nations on questions relating to racial "minorities" is indeed most lamentable. The rights of these "minorities" were expressly guaranteed to them in the post-War Treaties by the Allied and Associated Powers, and the "minorities" themselves were placed under the protection of the League of Nations. Each year a number of "minorities" petitions have been presented to the League. It is obvious that "minorities" would not take the extreme step of judicially accusing the countries in

which they live of illegality and oppression, save with great hesitation. In no case, however, so far as I am aware, has the League accepted fully any simple petition, nor has it taken any energetic "moral" or other steps against the countries which have violated the Treaties they have signed. The petitions are discussed and adjudicated upon in secrecy, and usually the League accepts "with thanks" the ex parte replies given to the petitions by the treaty-violating governments. There have been exceptions, such as in the case of "minorities" in Poland.

There is consequently a feeling of despairing helplessness and hopelessness amongst the "minorities" of Europe. The situation is prillions ofith danger, as, without doubt, the existence of megnant 'w'minority" subjects suffering from an intolerable sense of injustice and oppression cannot tend to make the peace of the world anything but insecure.

The League should carry out the duties which it has accepted under the Treaties and without fear or hesitation use all the powers it possesses to secure for racial "minorities" their Treaty rights.

I appreciate that what I have said has no direct t beala upon the Polish questiofromsave that it does goo exprin the loss of influence wihgue ch the Leaf N ngationsi is, unfortunately, suffering."