

COUNT STEPHEN CSÁKY, HUNGARIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, SPEAKS BEFORE PARLIAMENTARY FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Hungarian Parliament met on 26th January. Before the meeting settled down to a discussion of the order of the day, the Chairmann, Count Joseph Takách-Tolvay, addressed a few words of welcome on behalf of the Committee to Count Csáky on the occasion of his first appearance among them as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Count Csáky thanked the Chairman for his cordial words and then proceeded to deliver an exposé discussing all the questions of the moment, in the course of which he precisely defined the salient principles of Hungary's foreign policy and the lines along which it progressed. The Foreign Minister's exposé, it should be remembered, was made subsequently to the exhaustive conversations he had with Count Ciano after his appointment to office and to his visit to Berlin, where he had an opportunity of speaking frankly and openly with Germany's leading statesmen. It was these pourparlers that lent an added significance to what Count Csáky had to say.

Herr Hitler Declares Frontier Between Hungary and Germany Inviolable.

"I was sincerely glad" — said Count Csáky — "to have the chance of speaking frankly and openly in Berlin with the leaders of the Reich. During my stay there, which passed off in an atmosphere of the greatest cordiality, I was able to establish contacts with all Germany's leading statesmen. In

the course of our conversations, we discussed every question of foreign politics that had any bearing on both countries. The Hungarian point of view was met with sympathetic understanding. After a scrupulous and exhaustive discussion of all these problems, the leaders of the German Reich, and I came to the conclusion that our interests, far from being antagonistic, were in many cases identical.

"The aim of Germany's foreign policy in Central Europe and the Balkans is to maintain the best of relations with every State.

"In Berlin people were very pleased to learn that Hungary was desirous to preserve the same friendly relations with both countries of the Axis. This I had also told to Count Ciano at our last meeting, and he fully approved of our attitude.

"When I took leave of the German Foreign Minister, he expressed the conviction that a new account had been opened in the ledger of Hungary's contacts with Germany, and that both countries would probably be satisfied when it came to be balanced.

"In the course of our conversations I mentioned certain undesirable phenomena noticeable among the Germans in Hungary which were calculated to disturb the good relations existing now for centuries between the Hungarians and the German-speaking populations. In reply, I was repeatedly told by those in authority that they would be grateful for concrete data, as they were ready to punish severely any illegal movement directed from Germany against Hungary.

"The question of her minorities is one of the most delicate problems confronting the Third Reich. So long as the legitimate demands of the German minorities as defined in laws and ordinances are satisfied, the German Reich is ready to acknowledge the friendly gesture with a similar measure of courtesy.

"It is perhaps unnecessary to say that in the course of our negotiations Herr Hitler spontaneously declared that he naturally regarded the frontier between Hungary and Germany as inviolable.

"One point I would however emphasize, and that is that no question was broached by any responsible German

which would have signified the slightest measure of interference in Hungary's domestic policy. The leaders of the Reich consider a strong, independent and contented Hungary, able to give support instead of leaning on others for it, important to Germany's interests.

"I have already had an opportunity of stating that our independence is not threatened by the German Reich, either directly or indirectly. I was not asked for anything by Germany, nor did I ask for anything concrete myself. But I think that it has been possible to create an atmosphere in which concrete results may at any moment materialize. In many respects we shall be able to co-operate with Germany to the common benefit of both countries."

*Hungary's Relations with Italy, Yugoslavia,
Poland and Rumania.*

Passing on to the question of Hungary's relations with Italy, the Foreign Minister said that Count Ciano's visit in December had taken place in an atmosphere of sincere and traditional friendship.

"All the questions" — continued Count Csáky — "that affect the two countries, either jointly or separately — and here it is very difficult to make a close distinction — were discussed. It is no mere phrase to say, in the over-familiar language of official documents, that we established the identity of our opinions and views.

"In connection with Count Ciano's Belgrade visit, I wish to stress the point" — said the Foreign Minister — "that our contacts with Yugoslavia, gradually established by the exercise of patience, discretion and reciprocal trust, have increased perceptibly of late.

"Strong ties of tradition and reciprocal sympathy bind us, now as in the past, to Poland. During the past few months attempts to weaken these ties have been made in certain countries. Newspapers claiming to be considered serious press organs first wrote that Hungary, Poland and certain other States proposed to form an anti-German bloc. Then, abandoning this opinion, they went to the other extreme, declaring in connection with my visit to Berlin, that Hungary had turned the cold shoulder on Poland and that relations between those

two countries had become strained. Needless to say, when Hungary's friendship with Poland was spoken of in Berlin, it was always with sympathetic comments on the part of the Germans.

"Nor is it necessary for me to say that I know the sources and aims of these virulent rumours. It would be a pity to waste time discussing them. Our friendship with Poland is a political reality with which, sooner or later, everybody will have to reckon.

"It is with great interest" — continued Count Csáky — that we follow the situation of the Hungarian minority in Rumania. After all, this is the key to our relations with that country.

"Our relations with Czecho-Slovakia have unfortunately been made very uncertain by a series of frontier incidents. We hope that the Munkács incident, in which the Czech artillery participated, was the last of the series. In the strained atmosphere following a major upheaval I can understand minor incidents between the patrols on the new frontier, but not an attack supported by artillery. The Munkács incident has been closed. The Czecho-Slovak Government has expressed regret, and, although it refuses to shoulder the entire responsibility, has nevertheless announced its willingness, in the interests of more normal relations, to pay an indemnity, to be determined jointly, for the damage done and punish the officials whose guilt has been established. The Hungarian Government has expressed itself satisfied with this. The mixed committee formed in terms of the Vienna decision will now resume negotiations, and the Hungarian Minister will be sent back to his post in Prague. I sincerely hope that Hungary's goodwill towards Czecho-Slovakia, of which ample proof has been given more than once since December, will be adequately appreciated in Prague.

"Since the Munich Conference the Western Great Powers have shown but little interest in Central Europe. We, for our part, can do nothing but take cognizance of this fact. We are forced to the conclusion that after the Munich, and in particular the Vienna, decision the Western Powers, for political reasons, decided to leave the task of reconstructing Central Europe to the Axis Powers. And yet, now when many

share the conviction that the anti-Hungarian political and military alliance known as the Little Entente, which was formed under the aegis of the Western Powers, must cease to exist even formally, it may be that on many questions less separates us from the Western Powers than formerly. Undoubtedly Hungary would always welcome a strengthening of the existing cultural and economic ties between this country and the countries of the West.

"I should like to say a few words about our becoming a signatory of the Anti-Comintern Pact. For technical reasons this has not been possible yet, but it will take place in the near future. The Pact is purely one of self-defence against the destructive forces menacing the internal harmony and the independence of certain States.

"The Hungarian Government also wished to give expression to the fact that Hungary shared the view of the three friendly Powers, Germany, Italy and Japan, on this issue. The Pact is not directed against any country."

Count Csáky's exposé dealt with every question with the utmost frankness. There was no beating about the bush. He tells us that Hungary's attitude is understood in Berlin; that Herr Hitler regards the frontier between Hungary and Germany as inviolable; that the responsible German statesmen consider a strong, independent and contented Hungary, able to give support instead of leaning on others for it, important to Germany's interests. The clouds lowering over Hungary's relations with Germany have thus been dispelled, for it is now evident that Hungary's independence is not threatened directly or indirectly by Germany. Count Csáky spoke very warmly of Italy as a State whose friendship and support Hungary has enjoyed for more than a decade. "Hungary", said the Foreign Minister, "is desirous to preserve the same friendly relations with both countries of the Axis."

Our intimate friendship with Italy is of long standing. It was thanks to Italy that Hungary emerged out of its post-war isolation in the field of international politics. It is therefore only natural that after treating of Hungary's relations with Germany, the second longest part of the Foreign Minister's exposé was devoted to the links connecting this country and Italy.

His appreciation of the friendship between Italy and Hungary led him to mention Count Ciano's visit to Bélye and provided Count Csáky with an opportunity of informing the Committee about Hungary's relations with Yugoslavia. Developments — he said — had been very satisfactory of late and Hungarian public opinion might be pleased to see that the Italian Foreign Minister's visit signified a happy milestone in the history of Hungary's relations with Yugoslavia.

Count Csáky's exposé discounted the malevolent rumours, intentionally spread, that Hungary and Poland were no longer on good terms. That this is not so may be gathered from the sentence in which the Foreign Minister said that "the friendship between the two countries is a political reality with which, sooner or later, everybody will have to reckon."

Speaking of Hungary's relations with Rumania, Count Csáky spoke the plain truth when he said that they depended on the situation of the Hungarian minority in that country. He hoped it would be possible to lead Rumania's public opinion to a reasonable understanding of the rights of the Hungarian minority.

Hungarian public opinion was reassured to hear what the Foreign Minister had to say about Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia.

Count Csáky also spoke of the attempts made by Hungarian foreign policy to approach the Western Powers. "Since the Munich Conference the Western Powers have shown but little interest in Central Europe. We, for our part, can do nothing but take cognizance of this fact," he said, and then added that now that the time had come for the Little Entente to cease to exist even formally "it may be that on many questions less separates us from the Western Powers than formerly." He hoped it would be possible to strengthen our cultural and economic contacts with them.

The closing sentence of Count Csáky's exposé contained the gist of the fundamental principles of Hungary's foreign policy: strict adherence to the principle of continuity and a policy of independence and peace. These had been our guiding principles for twenty years and would continue to be Hungary's foreign policy in the future too.