

THE REGENT OF HUNGARY SUGGESTS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE BE CONVENED BY THE POPE

On 14th June the new Hungarian Parliament was opened with impressive ceremony by the Regent, Admiral *Horthy*. The following are some of the most significant passages of the Regent's speech: —

"With faith in the ancient virtues of the nation, I greet the members of the new Parliament. In this solemn hour I thank the Almighty that it has been granted this Parliament to be the legislative body of a Hungary enlarged in territory and in population. After twenty years of trials borne by the nation with exemplary discipline and unswerving faith, Providence has granted that some of the territories wrested from Hungary should return to her without the horrors of war, simply as an act of justice." ...

The Regent then continued:

"Our first task will be to draw up for Subcarpathia, the population of which is chiefly Magyar-Russian, an autonomy organically dovetailing into our ancient Constitution ..."

Amongst other things the Regent said: —

"Unity, work, growth of strength at home, independence and self-reliance in dealings with foreign countries, must be the fundamental principles on which this Parliament's activity must rest. It must in the first place frame laws calculated to promote social peace and understanding and to strengthen the family, the nucleus of a sound and Christian social order. It must therefore see that agricultural and industrial workers and all who lack the warmth of a hearth of their own shall be provided with good and healthy homes. It is very important that as many families as possible should become independent units of national production and consumption. Special funds must also be found for the

solution of social problems, in particular for measures calculated to improve the material situation of the villagers and raise their cultural level. This implies the protection of the family and the subsidizing of large families. Social welfare work and public hygiene must be adjusted, and to make this work more effective, those engaged in it must receive special training.

"An important condition upon which increased production and the prosperity of our agricultural population depends, is a more exhaustive study and knowledge alike of the possibilities of development in the various parts of the country and of their needs. We must assist the producer, not only by providing him with a home, with land, and with work, but also by making administration better and simpler."

Speaking of Hungary's foreign policy, Admiral Horthy said: —

"It is with gratitude and satisfaction that we think of the great results achieved as a result of the friendship of Italy, who was the first to side with Hungary, and of our old and loyal comrade-in-arms, Germany. In the future, as in the past, we desire to progress together with these two mighty allied friends of ours towards the ultimate goal: justice and peace.

"To Poland, who after centuries of separation has again become our neighbour, we are linked by the unwritten laws of a friendship based on historical traditions. With the keenest attention we are watching for whatever is calculated to create an atmosphere of reciprocal trust between ourselves and Yugoslavia. Always and everywhere on guard to defend our own rights and with due respect for the indisputable rights of others, we offer the hand of friendship to every nation that gives proof of similar goodwill. Bearing in view the historical rôle, the historical greatness, of our nation, we are anxious to carefully cultivate contacts of a cultural and economic nature in every direction. We always hope that we are contributing to the establishment of peace among the nations and countries, within the framework of which peace our independence will find its own niche and the question of our growth and prosperity will be solved.

This Parliament will have to work in a particularly difficult period of the world's history. Europe is in a state of great tension. The reason unquestionably lies in the Paris Peace Treaties, which for several States created an impossible situation out of which, naturally, they are endeavouring to escape.

"The League of Nations merely served to maintain that situation. Had it once — only once — boldly attempted to redress some of the injustices, men would not have lost faith in its impartiality. Disarmament ended in a fiasco, and a feverish race in armaments set in everywhere. Europe appears to be divided into two camps confronting each other with their arms at their feet. That the most terrible war in the world — in which every country would be involved — has not yet commenced, is due solely to the fact that those who hold the fate of the nations in their hands are fully aware that it could not end except in the destruction of the civilized world. There are no problems that cannot be settled somehow in a peaceful way. People have only to sit down to it, and every question that contains the seeds of discord can be discussed with goodwill and calm. Negotiations between two interested States, however, are not likely to lead to results, since to induce public opinion to agree to even the most reasonable concessions usually presents difficulties of a wellnigh insuperable nature. After composing their own differences, the Great Powers might, having listened to all the interested parties, establish a new and equitable situation among the rest of the nations, and — if necessary — could force the countries concerned to accept it. The time for negotiations has perhaps arrived, but it is difficult to take the initial steps. *Therefore, in my opinion, the happiest solution would be if the highest and most disinterested moral forum. His Holiness the Pope, were to suggest the convening of a meeting of the Great Powers to discuss concrete problems . . .*"

The Regent concluded his speech with the following words: —

"The continuity of our constitutional life has always been the chief strength of our national life. It was our strength in the time of the national Kings, whose reigns

were welded into an organic whole by the different phases of constitutional development. It was our strength in later centuries in our great struggles against alien Powers for the independence of the country and the nation. It was our strength during the reign of the Habsburgs of Austria, when in the spirit of that Constitution our fathers succeeded in vindicating the independence of the countries of the Holy Crown in face of the might of the Austro-German Empire. It was our strength in the years of collapse and dismemberment following the Great War, and it is our strength today in the dawn of our renaissance and our growth.

"Amidst the turmoil of this period of transition, too, when throughout the world new ideas and new forms of life are being sought, this continuity of our constitutional life and the elasticity of our Constitution that allows of the adoption of every beneficial innovation, is our strength in the effort to adapt the principles of St. Stephen to modern life and fulfil our new tasks in St. Stephen's spirit. As the supreme guardian of the Constitution and of legal order, I appeal to this Parliament to do its legislative work in conformity with our historical Constitution, the ancient virtues of our people and the lofty Hungarian conception of law, and to continue the building of the edifice of the Hungarian State, which has withstood so many storms, in the spirit of our ancient national traditions and of modern social aims."