



IE DCUA C1/5

Seán Lester Diary - PDF

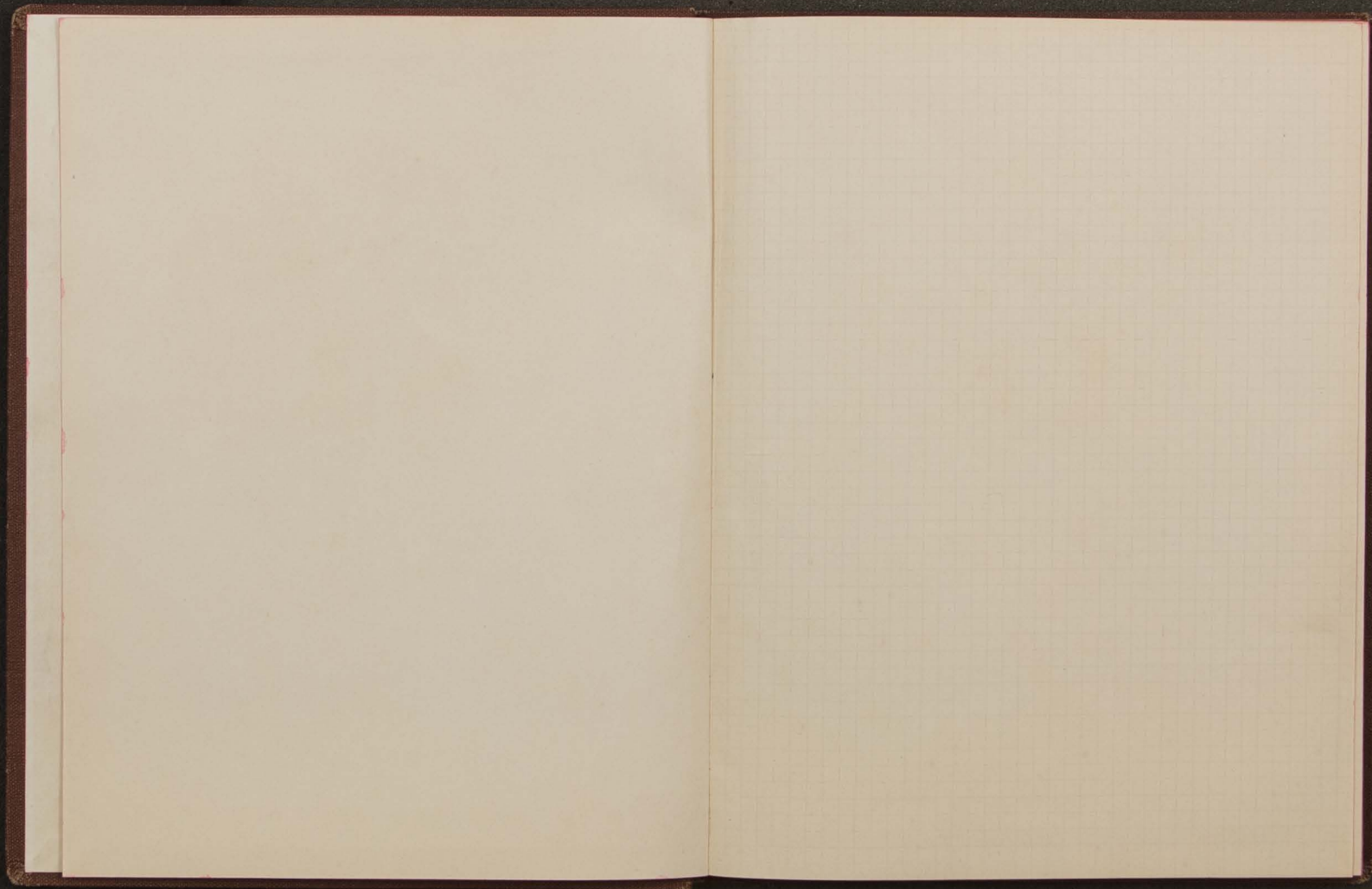
January - July 1938

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1/5/36 - 61.250 kils
5/6/36 - 60.600 "
23/6/36 - 59.700 "
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(10 days leave on 7/8/36)



28th January 1938 H.C.

Saw Burkhhardt of Danzig yesterday and discussed the situation.

Later he telephoned to me saying Böttcher (of the Senate) wanted to call on me & would I receive him.

I said "Yes" & he came this morning. Stupid & rather silly, and ^{unreliable!} and his cunning is no "great shakes".

But we talked polite nothings for ten minutes & said au revoir.

I don't believe it was a generous impulse.

Burkhhardt had told me that a month ago he noticed some uneasiness in Senate quarters (his version!) and eventually they came out with a report from Berlin that I might become the Head of the Dan State & were much perturbed & injured if I held ill-fellings towards Germany & Danzig.

B. had replied he thought there might be something in the rumour.

(as he said he wanted the
'come-back') but that I held
no grudges over my time
there. When I said to Burkhardt
that there was nothing in it
he asked me not to
discuss the Danzigew !!

The hundredth session of the Council
is in full swing, having been
inaugurated with a series of
declarations of "modified & qualified
loyalty & aforesight" that
things are not what they might
have been.

France torpedoed sanctions in
1935-36 & G.B. has since declared
she accepts definite commitment
only where vital interests are
involved - France Belgium &
the Mediterranean. It is little
wonder the small states have
been asking themselves where
they are between the two blocks
of Big Powers and are anxious
to avoid obligations to act
when Big Powers' (& only then)
are interested.

The Italian hostility to the
League & finally departure
of the German "never!" have
aided in the demoralisation.

But it is mainly the vacillation of
England, the internal situation in France
value all the fact that both these
great powers think of the League in terms
of purely immediate national interests

tial and personal

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I hear that Sr. Spechel, the Italian
Consul General in Geneva, is being nominated to
the post at Danzig. This is probably of interest,
both from the Geneva and the Danzig points of view.
In Geneva it may possibly enable the Government to
leave Bova Scoppa here as observer with the rank of
Consul General and a first-class man will also be
sent to Danzig. Spechel has, I believe, the rank
of Minister Plenipotentiary and it is interesting
to see him chosen for Danzig which is an excellent
observation post for Germany, as well as an addi-
tional point of contact with Poland and a point
which affects League relations and perhaps even
Anglo-German and Franco-Polish relations.

For your information.

W.D. Jellicoe
y 1st 1938

February 1st 1938.

A good story has come out of the Council. Mr. Micesco, the new Foreign Minister of Roumania, is an old Professor representing the new anti-semitic Government of Roumania; he has been in the opposition practically all his life and has not got the familiar touch in international affairs. He has been here for a fortnight and showed a certain amount of timidity and hesitation while in the spheres of influence of Geneva, but he did his best to avoid any action under the "urgent procedure" regarding the Jewish petition and got reasonable satisfaction, partly because many people believed anything else would only have made the anti-jewish campaign in Roumania even more violent. He left Geneva yesterday ostensibly satisfied, but as his train brought him further away from Geneva and nearer home his courage grew as also his fear of his reception in Bucharest. From nearly every railway station came to his Delegation telegrams to stiffen their attitude and from Belgrade came a message instructing Pella, the Minister at The Hague, who is the leader of the Delegation, to make an announcement at the Committee of 28 this morning, more or less to the effect that Roumania was going to leave Geneva and to announce her departure. Pella, very much embarrassed, first because he is the last of the Titulesco nominees in the foreign circles, and to gain time, did not know what to do. Any sort of diplomatic sickness would hardly sound a good enough excuse, so he telegraphed to his Foreign Minister reporting a complete loss of voice!!! No announcement has therefore been made yet to the Committee of 28.

19th February 1938

The events of the last fortnight in Germany have thrown Europe again into a period of anxiety and grave doubt as to the future, even the immediate future. The fight between the Army and the Party resulting in the resignation of about 18 Generals turned out to be a complete victory for the Nazi Party and the extremists combined with the appointment of von Ribbentrop as Foreign Minister replacing old von Neurath. The Army Headquarters have been a sort of brake on the more violent elements in so far as Foreign Policy is concerned, but it seems that this brake has now been very largely removed. The disclosure of this schism in the totalitarian unity gave the impression of weakening Germany in Central Europe, but it was followed within a comparatively few days by a sudden command from Hitler for Schuschnigg to appear at Berchtesgaden. Thinking that things would not go too badly, Schuschnigg arrived and was treated, as himself said to a diplomat subsequently, in a way which he believed was impossible between two Heads of Governments in modern Europe. It appears that he was not even offered a seat during the interview but was treated like a domestic servant and was given his orders. He was told that German military action could now be carried out with much less risk to Germany than the occupation of Rhineland and that England and France would not move to help him. In the ante-room were waiting 3 Generals, the Commander in Chief and the Corps Commander from the frontier, mechanized and air-force troops were concentrated. Incidentally Hitler said to him that he had learned from Halifax that England was in complete accord with Hitler on the

Central European policy which, I have reason to believe, was a flat lie. The wretched Schuschnigg returned to Vienna, but was told he must give a definite answer to the ultimatum within 3 days. He tried to get in touch with Mussolini, his aforetime defender, but Mussolini had gone to ski and could not be found; he was deserted and although the President of the Austrian Federation at first refused to agree to the conditions, they eventually conceded. They placed a sudeten dutch "Austrian" in charge of the Ministry of the Interior with full control of the police; another pro-nazi pro-German was also placed in the Cabinet and all political prisoners were freed, mostly nazis for subversive action and the patriotic Front, the unique party allowed in Austria, is opened to Nazi elements. The Trojan horse has been admitted. For the moment Austria is not leaving the League, nor joining the Anti-Komintern Pact, but her foreign policy, as well as her internal policy seems to have passed completely under German domination and it would seem only a matter of a short time before Germany is strengthened in a strategical way by swallowing Austria. There is a certain parallel with Danzig and Hitler who is to speak to-morrow, will probably draw the parallel.

London and Paris have been much disturbed; there have been Cabinet meetings in London and exchanges with the French Government. A mild request for information from the British and French Ambassadors in Berlin was badly received; François Poncet was in fact told that it was a family matter which did not concern the outsiders. It is possible a further démarche will be made.

It is clearer than ever that Italy is sacrificing her interests in Central Europe in the hope of her new Empire in the Mediterranean; this in itself is serious. If England yielded control of the Mediterranean it would be in my view the beginning of the decline and fall of the British Empire, but, I am certain that there would be war before that; and French interests are at least as great with her Mediterranean possessions.

And Czechoslovakia: they are clearly next on the list; the position of Czechoslovakia with "synchronized" Austria will be weaker than ever. The Spanish method may be used there and if demands are not complied with, an insurrection provoked.

A point to which I attach some significance is the announcement of a 100 Conservative Members of the House of Commons meeting in Committee to discuss Foreign Affairs and announcing their support for the Government in a more positive policy in Europe.

The outlook is somewhat gloomy.

When the occupation of Austria was completed Adolph telegraphed to Benito - "I shall never forget this of you" - referring to Mussolini's absence from opposition etc.

The story goes that the big man in Rome remarked, when he read the telegram - "Heil Hitler shall I!"

February 22nd 1938.

Hitler in his speech, referring to Danzig said: "I may say that since the League of Nations has abandoned its continuous attempts of disturbance in Danzig and since the advent of the new commissioner this most dangerous place for European peace has entirely lost its menace" (ça, c'est un compliment - commentaire de la secrétaire). I would feel somewhat unhappy in the circumstances if I had earned praise from Hitler. - The Manchester Guardian says in a telegram from Warsaw: The reference to Danzig received only a partial welcome, as the new situation in which the Free City became a matter for Berlin and Warsaw is resented by most people in Poland. The majority of Poles would prefer the Danzig problem taken again to Geneva. This feeling is stronger here to-day than a little while ago, because in Poland as elsewhere, the example of Hitler's method with Austria has caused increased apprehension.

qu'est-ce
qu'homme
dangereux

Not sent in quite this form.

22/4/38

My dear Eden,

All my sympathy and admiration and congratulations.

When I think of the circumstances in which you took up the Foreign Secretaryship after Simon and Hoare had been there long enough to be the causes of international disasters and that you have been holding on during the most difficult period in Europe probably for the past century, the feeling of admiration is alone, but I would like to say how much also I sympathize with you in the difficult choice you had to make and congratulate you on your courage.

Looking for consolation in the situation, the only scrap I can imagine is your action will concentrate so much critical observation on the developments that the older generation, while endeavouring to bring their policy to success (and all good luck to them), will have to be much more careful than if they were acting under cover of your name. I do hope their method will bring real results, but I most sceptical as to the real value of short-sighted ~~mishandled~~ ^{foreign} policy

To Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden,
London

Geneva, February 25th, 1938.

Dear Cummings,

Thank you for sending me direct copies of your reports; it has meant that they came to me somewhat more quickly. I have been extremely interested; in view of their day--o-day nature, may I compliment you on the quality of your dispatches.

In your last note you ask for indications as to how the situation appears in Geneva and no doubt the Secretary-General will be sending you a note. My personal view is that such an event, and more particularly the declaration of the Prime Minister as to the position of the League will affect, I hope not too gravely, the future of general international collaboration in Europe. Of course what he said about collective security during the past year or so would not find either of us in violent disagreement with his estimate, but if collective security no longer exists, it is overwhelmingly due to the policy of Britain and France. And, as you point out yourself, an open declaration that small States in difficulties need not expect British co-operation is a different policy to the previous public announcements that action in certain geographical areas would be certain and that other areas would be decided as they appeared.

Before the last Council meeting, when we were discussing the initiative of the small Powers, I held the view that the small Powers were justified because it was perfectly clear to me that neither England nor France were prepared to fulfill the Covenant but would like to hold the machinery intact to be used exclusively when their national interests required it, thus leaving commitment on the small Powers without any corresponding insurance for themselves.

The worse aspect of the Eden affair is that it seems to so much of the world another success for the Axis who have held the diplomatic initiative almost without challenge for the past three years and although

on the one hand this public impression may render the Government more cautious and prudent, especially as they will be without the cover of Eden's name and reputation, there is the temptation for a Party on a political point of view to secure immediate results without sufficient regard to their value in maintaining peace two years hence. Chamberlain's personal political prestige would seem to stand or fall by the results. A pro-League policy is an idealist factor, but I deplore certain aspects of British and French policy as being neither realist nor idealist; and in any case the moral factor in certain emergencies is of tremendous military and political importance; and from a political point of

view alone, foreign policy based on the League has a Hundred per cent more possibilities of winning and holding the Commonwealth co-operation, and to a certain measure also that of the U.S.A., than a policy exclusively based on immediate national interests. Short-sightedness is almost criminal in foreign policy, especially for countries which have to face a combination of the Have-nots who do not like law and order because they have so much to gain by their absence.

One hears again here and there the words "Perfidious Albion" but I cannot estimate yet whether the disillusionment in other countries will measure up to anything like that which followed the Hoare-Laval disclosures; the more balanced people I imagine have been expecting so much less since then. As for the League, one has to keep in mind that the attacks and campaign, while ostensibly directed against this Institution and while concerned with breaking down any system which would make for a united front against aggression, are in reality concerned more vitally with the influence, power and ^{position} ~~position~~ of France and England. If the British Empire could be divided amongst the Have-nots, they would probably agree quite easily to any kind of a League. Our convictions and outlook here are not incompatible with hard-headed realism, on the contrary. For some time I myself have been convinced that the League had to mark time, principally because I did not expect its chief elements to hold a different view.

When there is something to be done within one's power, I believe in doing it with such judgment and tenacity and courage as we may possess. The machinery here as you know, is good; even from a German and Italian point of view. I don't think they are justified in imagining theological or national prejudices as affecting the impartiality and integrity of the staff, but the machinery is not being used for major political purposes and it seems likely to remain so for at any rate some time. On the other hand, the idea which is enshrined in our Institution remains I am convinced, Humanity's only hope and any other course for the world will bring another catastrophe. We may need a new spirit on the side of the Haves - I am sure we do - and of course we need a new spirit clearly on the other side, but civilisation, especially in Europe, has reached the point where, even at the price of another catastrophe, man must find his way back to a system under which there will be law and of course justice.

One meets pessimists here and there - a considerable sprinkling these days - but in the Headquarters at any rate, I find as I said, realism, courage and initiative (so far as that is open to an international Civil service). There are many amongst the Delegates and staff who support Chamberlain's action pretending to appreciate his motives and lauding his judgment; they are counter-balanced by those who regard him as a short-sighted blunderer hastening to disaster. There has been a pall of gloom and anxiety throughout Europe for some time and although it is possible that in some quarters the future may be regarded with more acute doubt, it seems possible that a deal made by Chamberlain with Italy would render the immediate prospects easier. As we have not the responsibility of decision, I am inclined to let it go at that and get on with such work as we have to do with confidence that though the League may be crippled, it cannot be killed.

March 1st 1938.

I spent 3/4 of an hour yesterday morning with President Hoover who preceded Roosevelt at the Head of the United States. He is on a semi-private tour in Europe. He is rather a charming man of about 65, widely travelled and has had an interesting career beginning work on a farm as a boy and having spent many years in China, England, Russia and Europe generally; during the war he organized relief work in Belgium and later in Russia. This shrewd white-haired, square-faced old American told me that he was of mixed Swiss, Swedish, English and Irish descent. After we had talked for a time, he said that he found more explosive material laying about in Europe than there was in 1914, but the great difference was that now every one could at any rate imagine the consequences of war and that was a safeguard.

I sat beside him also in Consul Bucknell's house and found he was an enthusiastic fisherman. The conversation became rather interesting at the table with Avenol, Stoppani, Agnides and Governor Winant (of the Labour Office). He said that American opinion was now as it had been, very keen on economic collaboration and willing to participate in allsorts of humanitarian work, but that on the political side he believed the isolation feeling was growing; the people inclined to shrink within their frontiers. This confirms the view of some other shrewd observers. He believed that the right approach of world problems at the moment was through stabilisation of currencies

and when he found Avenol and Stoppani in complete agreement, mentioned he had proposed in 1933 that the war debts due to America from most of the European countries should be allocated to a special fund to be held in their own currencies for the purpose of stabilisation and that the United States should contribute a gold "pot" of about 500 million dollars. The control of this currency-deposit and the backing of the gold together with a promise not to inflate, would bring most countries great relief and would also check the disturbing manipulations of international commerce by the German method. Stoppani believed that Italy would be glad to join in such an arrangement, which would greatly strengthen it.

Hoover has spent the afternoon with Paderewski, near Lausanne and remarked to me that he believed Poland would be driven by the presence of two hostile dictatorships on her frontiers to develop a system based on a political philosophy of liberalism. His visit and this remark were probably associated and I am somewhat doubtful: the threat on the two frontiers is just as likely eventually to create another dictatorship.

March 10th 1938.

Frank Walters has had a talk with Lord Halifax, the new Foreign Secretary, in London, on the question of the British attitude towards the League. Halifax said that Chamberlain's speech of the 22nd of February had been greatly misinterpreted but that that misinterpretation was general; he added that a paragraph would appear in the speech to be made on the 7th of March in the House of Commons, which would restate the position more clearly. Walters pointed out that since 36 when the sanctions policy was declared to have failed, the British were supposed to be endeavouring to maintain and rebuild the League taking into account the change which might be necessary in connection with the theory and practice of sanctions; they argued that British armament was a contribution to collective security and since that time the League position had been somewhat improved. Walters said to Halifax that the Prime Minister's speech had upset all that patient work and it would be difficult to convince Members of the League that its maintainance was still a cardinal point of British policy; if in the British conversations with Italy the attitude of Italy towards the League was left out of consideration, that would be regarded as confirming the view that London was indifferent to the fate of the League or looked at it, if not with indifference, at any rate with nothing more than inactive benevolence and now they were proposing to ask the Council at the next session - if agreement with Italy has been reached - flatly to approve of British recognition of Abyssinia. Several members of the League

had recognised Abyssinia without insisting that the League should give its blessing. The feeling would be, said Walters, that they were now being asked to approve an action taken at this moment because it was of British interest to take it and that was merely the convenience of His Majesty's Government in connection with its own internal position. That would be extremely difficult; in the meantime, Italy would be encouraged to intensify her attacks on the League.

Walters spoke very well and very frankly and Halifax said he would give the difficulties a great deal of thought.

Saturday, March 12th 1938.

Another land mark in European history: Austria disappeared as an independent State. After the ultimatum and demands made at Berchtesgaden, Schuschnigg on his return to Vienna tried to hold what was left: "Thus far and no farther" he declared. But he had had to accept a nazi Minister in charge of the police and of the Interior. A few days ago he announced that a plebiscit would be held to-morrow on the question whether the people wanted Austria to remain a catholic independent State. Germany was wildly indignant and alarmed, because it was clear that Schuschnigg would have had a very large and impressive majority. So yesterday, Austria received an ultimatum that at 7 o'clock Schuschnigg must be kicked out and a nazi Chancellor put in his place. German troops were massed on the frontier; von Schuschnigg and the helpless President of the Confederation accepted the ultimatum, announced the abandonment of the plebiscit and announced on the radio that they were yielding to force and to avoid bloodshed ordered the Army not to oppose the German troops. Seyss-Inquart became the Chancellor and the German troops marched in. English and French protests at Berlin were of course without the slightest success and the French appeal at Rome as to whether they were willing to take some action apparently led to the answer that Austria was a closed question. Von Schuschnigg's desperate appeal to Italy before he surrendered, was without response. Thus the League lost another State Member.

There are of course the gravest anxiety and rumours of protective measures being taken in Czechoslovakia and even Yugoslavia which now gets a large and somewhat uncomfortable neighbour. And the Germans are on the Brenner.

Last night the Permanent Delegates, about 25 in number, gave a dinner to the Secretary-General and his Headquarters staff. I sat beside old Baron von Pflügl, Austria's Minister for many years and a relic of the old Austro-Hungarian diplomacy. It was very pathetic: he said that he did not think he would have to be killed more than once and he had suffered that when Austria was reduced to a small province encircling an imperial capital. He had expected nothing in his complete disillusionment in recent years, but said that it would at least have been humane if the Great Powers had asked Germany to allow the older generation to die before seeing their country englobed in the new Empire. His outlook on Europe was naturally gloomy and he remarked that for the future he had hopes that Ireland could stay outside the chaos of European civilization until the time to rebuild came, as has happened after the collapse of the Roman Empire. He was a heart-broken old man, but still holding something of the gay and brave spirit of the

Austrian. I took a couple of extra glasses of wine.

I hope the so-called realist politicians are feeling satisfied.

(Baron Pflügl talking to me a week ago mentioned the Crown of the old German Empire which was at Vienna & had long been coveted by Berlin - Kaiser Wilhelm II, e.g. He said that if Austria was ever in danger he would advocate that the Crown be sent to Dublin to be held there as a hope & emblem of Austria's ^{future} liberty while she remained under German control.)

25th March 1938

With a Polish army corps on the frontiers, Lithuania has accepted the Polish ultimatum to restore normal diplomatic relations which have not existed since the seizure of Vilna. It sounds a little bit comic, but the acceptance of the ultimatum has perhaps averted a European war, though one can never tell these days how far such action could be localised. I myself have not felt too much alarmed about it because I had been certain that if Poland invaded Lithuania troops from East Prussia would promptly occupy Memel "to protect the German people there".

London and Paris exerted all their influence to have a settlement made. The question arose on the pretext of the shooting of a Polish soldier who had crossed the frontier.

Chamberlain is to make a statement on British foreign policy to-morrow and will probably deal with Czechoslovakia and Spain. It is practically certain the policy will be more or less one of non-intervention in both cases.

All the results which I have first seen in consequence of the continuous retrieving and weakening of the League by French and English policy, are coming about, although there may still remain some shred of hope. It seems to me that all Central and Eastern Europe has now been definitely abandoned to Germany. The annexation of Austria will give Germany a tremendous strategic and economic strangle-hold. An effort will no doubt be made to keep the balance of power, but at most it will be for the protection of the fringe of Europe and if a war is avoided in the near future, it will probably be because Germany is getting all she wants without war, 5 or 10 years hence, master of Europe, she will be in a position to deal with the rest. The maintenance of sea-power and comparatively perhaps, air-power may constitute useful containing elements. I believe that Chamberlain had precipitated the rapidity of the developments by his policy and more recently by his declarations about the League on the 22nd of February, together with the dropping of Eden.

April 1938.

I write little and in
snatches. Events of big import follow
so quickly in Europe. And elements
change.

Theodoli, former of German Section,
now Italian Consul General in Cyprus
called. Says "leave it to the
Germans. Stupid as always, they
will isolate themselves. They will
have against them the same
combination as before."

In spite of all Austria was a
big blow for Italy. And Trieste is
now so near the German frontier.

The Anglo-Italian agreement
has been signed. A debate.

But neither British nor Germans have
really much confidence in Italy.

She will (naturally, perhaps) go with
the stronger.

Extract from a book by
Major General A. C. Temperley
"The Whispering Gallery of Europe"

"The Irish Free State, like many other small Powers, had a permanent representative at Geneva, and Mr. Sean Lester held the post for several years on behalf, first, of the Cosgrave and then of the de Valera Governments. He is a man of great sincerity and moral courage and he did much to shape the course of the Manchuria discussions. He showed to very great advantage as a member of the Council, during the Irish tenure of the seat reserved for the Dominions, and this procured for him nomination to the uneasy post of High Commissioner of Danzig. He is now an Under-Secretary General in the Secretariat. The League is the richer for Dominion statesmen like Lester and de Water, who have believed that "somehow the right is the right" and have not failed through good and ill to be its champions."

page 113 - May 1938 -

England has secretly bought
3 months' supplies of wheat &
oil! And has doubled her
air force plan of last year.

Two recent books contain
personal references.

"The Wild Geese" by Gerald Griffin
(Garrahd, London) has an accurate
but uninspired dozen of pages.

"The Whispering Gallery of Europe"
by Major General A. C. Temperley, has
a friendly paragraph or two worth
during the Disarmament Conference.

April 29th 1938.

I have been in Ireland for Easter just prior to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the selection of Douglas Hyde as an agreed candidate for the Presidency.

De Valera has secured a very good agreement and the British have been very wise, especially in handing over the ports (reserved under the 1921 Treaty) without conditions. De Valera has declared that these will be modernized and put into a state for defence and has again declared no foreign country will be allowed to use Ireland as a base for attack against England. Ten million Pounds is being paid to England as a lump sum in settlement of all debts and a good trade agreement is established which will help both countries.

Undoubtedly the international situation ^{had a part in} ~~is~~ the hand of the British. Malcolm MacDonald, Dominion Secretary, being congratulated by Dulanty said that Jimmy Thomas would have personally been prepared to make as good a settlement if Cabinet policy has permitted. A very decent remark of MacDonald's.

De Valera lunched a couple of times alone with Neville Chamberlain and very good personal relations seem to have been established. After the agreement has been signed I broke my rule about speaking to the press to say the agreement would be welcome in Europe and in America and would result in material and ~~psychological~~ ^{psychic} benefits to both countries.

A great doubt in my mind about de Valera has been whether he was statesman enough to know when to make a bargain. He has shown it. If war were to break out, we might get a little more, but on the other hand we might lose a great deal when soldiers took command. The British are not taking so great a risk as it would seem; it is certain the Admiralty have plans both for

a friendly and for a hostile Ireland and whatever guns we put into the coastal forts, a British battleship could from a couple of miles out of range, blow them to smithereens. I don't believe the second eventuality is at all likely; by recognizing fundamentally Irish independence and acting on it, the British will I believe have Irish support; as to what extent will depend upon circumstances and the Government of the day. Britain has secretly laid in 3 months supply of wheat and oil and the development of the Irish cattle industry for the English market will also be a sound British war measure.

There remains partition. De Valera says it is the last barrier to complete reconciliation. British opinion has been impressed and the North has had "a bad press" on the whole, but progress towards unity will be slow. I told Paddy Little, Parliamentary Secretary to the President, who was I thought far too optimistic, that the foundations only had been laid in good London-Dublin relations. 5 years may see some possible advance, but not sooner and probably later.

While in Dublin I had interviews with Sean McEntee, Minister for Finance, Sean Lemass, Minister for Industry and Commerce, Sean T. O'Kelly, Minister for Local Government, Jim Ryan, Minister for Agriculture and de Valera amongst others. De Valera was nearly my last interview and it was on the eve of his departure for London to sign the Treaty and I felt it to be in some ways the least effective. He confessed that he has been following international affairs very little during recent months; he is the Minister for External Affairs and we have been passing through grave crises, but of course he was absolutely absorbed in his Anglo-Irish settlement. I tried to sow some seed in Little's mind about the need for a separate Minister, or Parliamentary Secretary, especially now that settlement has been arrived at with London.

Some ~~kind~~ people said that as Hyde cannot last very long, de Valera is keeping the seat warm for himself. I am not so sure. Sean T. O'Kelly had been offered the ~~Presidency~~ twice and told me he had consistently refused. De Valera may have been pushed to a compromise by the candidature of ~~Alfi Coyne~~ Lord Mayor of Dublin, who is extremely popular and deservedly so, but he is a man who would have brought absolutely no dignity to the post. And in any case an election would have been a purely party fight.

I saw Sean T. O'Kelly a fortnight before the Treaty was signed and he told me he had a printed copy of it in his desk with all the names attached; the public announcement was being held up until some satisfaction could be given to Lord Cravaigon who felt that Northern interests had been damaged by concessions to Dublin. He eventually got some things, but the secret of the terms were marvellously well kept during weeks and the transfer of the ports came as a pleasant surprise to the public.

After the selection of Douglas Hyde as President, I met Mc Dunphy, Secretary of the President, who told me he had expected that I would be his new Chief at one time. Coyne and one or two others also thought I had been in the running, but I had no ideas of the same myself. In the end they chose a man with great national service to the language and 78 years of age; something to be said for this, instead of ~~a~~ man still in his forties! Blythe was on the whole pleased with the solution. J. M. O'Sullivan was not; he regards Hyde, who by the way is a Protestant, as a stage Irishman and not particularly cultivated in spite of his reputation as a scholar. Blythe remarked that they were staging a play in Irish by Hyde and that he had had to correct the grammar!

I lunched with the Nuncio, Pascal Robinson, a great old man, born in Dublin, but who has served the Vatican in many parts of the world. There was no one at the luncheon, except a young Jesuit Father McMahon, son of the former Under-Secretary for Ireland; Paddy Little came in half-way through the luncheon. The Nuncio was in good form and talked a great deal; he seemed genuinely pleased with having some one to talk to who knew a little at any rate of the world. I remarked at one point how sad it was Ireland took so little interest in international affairs; they still could not see past ~~past~~ England and this was truer of the more violent nationalists. The Nuncio slapped the

table in his enthusiastic concurrence. He had had a bad motor accident while in a taxi in London and he said this was the first conversation he had enjoyed for months. Telling O'Sullivan and Blythe afterwards how much the old man had talked, they remarked that this was the entire opposite of his reputation in Dublin.

We went West for Easter week and I tried to fish Lough Corrib from Oughterard. The weather was brilliant sunshine, cloudless sky and windless days, so I did not catch a single trout in the Corrib on the fly; troling produced some results, but not very satisfying. A day on Ballyhoun Lough, near Spiddal, was excellent as I got 8 fish of about 7 lb. in one afternoon on the wet fly.

In ~~Sweeney's~~ Hotel one night I was called out of the room and found below the new Attorney General, Patrick Lynch, who was staying in a neighbouring hotel and had heard I was there. I walked up to his hotel with him and he brought in and introduced the French Minister who was also there, Gurllet; he seemed to be a likeable man. Lynch was an old Redmondite who ~~thinks~~ ^{thinks} to de Valera a few years ago. I have no very high idea of his character and know nothing much of his legal qualification, but he is a pleasant and agreeable person.

Motoring one day through Cong, I stopped to ask a young country man the way when the thought came to me that when I was last there in 1914 I had a young friend named Paddy Carney; I questioned him if he knew anything about him as he had gone to the United States the same year. He answered at first with a countryman's reserve, then admitted he knew of this man who was indeed a relative of his. Carney had written to me in the early years, (1914) but I had lost track of him and had affectionate memory of him. I asked the boy if he would

tell one of his sisters still there to recall me to Paddy and tell him to write to me. I had no card but asked the boy if he could remember the name. He looked at me a moment and then said "I have heard the name about the League of Nations" and promised to do it; curious incident after 24 years.

We looked for a house to buy in Connemara and Elsie nearly forced me to take a big XVIIIth century mansion, called "Lemonsfield House", the home of the last ^{2nd} O'Flaherties with 36 acres on the shore of Lough Corrib; its architecture is classic and beautiful and the rooms magnificent; it is emb~~ell~~^{owed} in century-old trees. It was sold by auction for the amazing sum of £400, but it would have taken probably a couple of thousands to put it into order. Arthur Cox to whom Elsie confided her regrets, said I had been foolish. If I had been living near the place with time to exploit it, it might have been a good speculation, but I was afraid of the commitments. Elsie visited nearly every possible house within a radius of 5 miles; some of the houses were occupied but every one welcomed her.

15/6/38

A month's crisis over Czechoslovakia & the Sudeten Deutsch party. It looked so grave one week-end that the British Ambassador called twice at Wilhelmstrasse to inquire into German troop concentrations. Benes called up a lot of reservists - "to be trained in new weapons" - and Britain & France gave solemn warnings to Berlin.

Again, a display of firmness won the day. The Germans, continuing a very violent Press campaign against the Czechs, drew back & denied the mobilisation at the frontier.

A story is told that Berlin took the British seriously when it was reported that preliminary arrangements had been made for the departure of the families of the Embassy staff.

Chile & Venezuela have given notice to leave the League & to continue technical collaboration. Chile had the way, - real causes not apparent. Edwards, Ambassador in London, made it a personal policy to "solve" some so-called "German & Italian influence".

Karol Butler, (who has resigned as Director of the I.L.O.) told me that when the British Minister at Venezuela hinted at the displeasure of London on the possibility of Venezuela following Chile, he was met with a quotation from Neville Chamberlain's fatuous February speech.

Our Latin-American mission continues its rather sad itinerary - now omitting Venezuela.

Our old friend
Count Edward Morske
has resigned the Bishopric
of Danzig.

20/6/38

Some long letters from Buchhardt
in Danzig; he has the
mind of a novelist and
writes well. It is true that
he sees himself (discreetly) in
a romantic & dramatic
"scene", but his observations
& reported conversations are
pointed as well as thrilling.

His letters will some
day make a fascinating book.

No reference to Morske's
resignation but an account of
his plots & battles to prevent
"the Aryan clause" being formally
applied in Danzig — most of
it is in fact in operation.

Graiser & Forster are on loving
terms again.

Have got twelve trout in
the Versain this year - longest 3 lbs.
Alex Loveday 4; Frank Walter 3 or 4.

Mostly on may fly.

Taught a little Burgins neeshman
one day, how to tie a fly, length
of cast, hints on casting etc.

After that nearly every day I met
him he had two or three.

~~one~~ Then once he told me had
taken 4 on Thursday, 5 on Friday
or 7 on Saturday !!!

28/6

We have bought Ardagh Lodge
near Clifden, Galway, with
sea trout fishing rights in part
of Ballinaboy Lough - at the door -
on the river, & on ^{adjacent} ~~the~~ little
brown trout loughs. Electric light,
hot water in bedrooms etc.
also, the place is furnished
and we have never
seen it!

Wm. Allen, Galway, wrote
to me about it.

It is intended as an investment
& perhaps one day to retire to
I hope it's not a gamble
& not going to be too expensive.
£2,250 plus £112 auctioneer's fees.

12/7/38

George VI & his lady in Paris - striking
confirmation of Anglo. French Entente.

French Govt. under Daladier has
seemed more solid & serious for some
time.

People say Czechoslovak crisis will
come in the Spring now, but August
is also thought to be a danger month.

I feel more tranquil about it.

A.H. has not given up but
the Czech in May still counts

Don Binchy, in Geneva after
five months in Rome, is writing
a book on Church & State relations.
Much concerned & anxious about
the future. Says the "old hands"
in the Vatican are really
anti-fascist; Father Le Roy (S.O.)

agrees with him that future
staffing of the Vatican by Italians
only will present material for
a crisis as all young Italians
are now reared as Fascists.

I ~~see~~ more confidence, I believe, in
the long-sighted sagacity of "the
Church".

Dan says Italy will be
driven to war - a war of
economic desperation - if she
doesn't get a big loan.

Hungary shows signs of going
Nazi, too. Many Hs are
afraid of their new neighbors
but the young, & landless, are
affected by propaganda & hope
Italian conversations with Hungary
suggest an attempt to substitute

Hungary for the "late" Austria.

Query: an anti-German block
Italo-Hungarian - Hungarian?

a somewhat pathetic
letter from Bishop O'Rourke
this morning. Boles gave
him a good send-off from
Danzig: the German clergy
were glad to see him go
as they have now a German
Bishop, & did not encourage
the city to make much of it.

He would like to settle in
Ireland but has not enough
means. And says his English
is not good enough to preach
in.

Gambetta's first has been in London.
I haven't got the "inside" of his
visit yet.

