

Register für 8^{te} September 1914

GERMAN AUSTRALIANS.

To the Editor.

Sir—A short time ago I wrote deploring the want of tact and the non-wisdom of so loudly denouncing the German nation in the presence of the naturalized German. Evidently there are more rancour and more of the pro-German element around us than we are aware of—probably incurred by hearing our side injudiciously giving vent to rejoicing at the enemy's expense, not at our victories. In one large township there are a few who lately have become very bitter, and are sowing bad seed by inciting others to rebellion, and traducing the measures taken by Britain in sending help to fight the enemy. They are even annoying business people. Drastic measures should be meted out to save the situation. In the first place nothing should be done or said to stir up racial feeling—nothing to irritate, and no jeering; and those who are found doing these things should be punished. On the other side, pro-Germans should also be treated in the same way, for the Germans here have been well treated, are on equality in every way, and have more liberty than they would have in their own land; and it ill becomes them to rebel against anything the Britons have done. But we must not provoke any one.

I am, Sir, &c.,

BRITANNIA F. DALWOOD.

Sir—Mr. Elkan says "That love for his old home (Germany) is one thing, and an oath of allegiance is another." The meaning of "allegiance" is "loyalty"—faithfulness to a Government, and "loyalist" means one who adheres to his "Sovereign," so that any German or foreigner who takes the oath of allegiance to the British Crown is a subject of the King of England. What, then, does Mr. Elkan mean by "love for home is one thing, and an oath of allegiance is another." Surely not that the scrap of paper on which a German testifies his allegiance to the British Crown, and which bears his signature, may be torn up now that Germany is at war with his adopted country! Mr. Elkan adds that German-Australians appreciate the way in which Britons are treating their fellow German colonists, and that the German-Australians will more than ever adhere to the solemn obligations of their oath of allegiance. He admits that he came to Australia to be under the free British flag for freedom, more so than from a financial point of view, and to enjoy all the privileges of a British subject. Yet his own words are, "If there were a call to arms against any enemy but Germany you would find every one (German-Australians) respond heartily in the defence of Australia." He would (he says) offer his services as one of the first, but before he would take up arms against the country of his birth (Germany) he would put a bullet through his head, and so would many more German-Australians. He states that his wife is an Australian, that his children and grandchildren are Australians, that he has lived here for 30 years, dearly loves Australia, and would not live in any other land; and, yet, are we to understand that if Germany conquered England and took Australia, Mr. Elkan would put a bullet through his head rather than defend his adopted country. Such an admission would be very serious if other German-Australian colonists take the same view as Mr. Elkan.

I am, Sir, &c.,

BRITISH BORN.

Sir—While many of our German fellow-colonists may be loyal, it is an open secret that others are not. I ask my fellow-Britons and the powers that rule us not to close their eyes but to be ever on the alert. Germans who have done well under the old Union Jack should remember that such talk as we have heard lately is out of place in a British community. The shortest way out of their difficulty, if they are not satisfied, is to take steps to go to their German home, or have the grace to hold their tongues. They say they have built up homes and help to push along the State, but British tolerance, good nature, free laws, good government, and religious liberty have given them all they possess. Has it ever been possible for any alien to receive the same treatment in their beloved Fatherland? While I cannot ask them to love their country less (as blood is thicker than water), I remind them that we did not seek this war; and if they have such love for their native country, let them go away from this land of liberty. So long as they comport themselves as law-abiding subjects they need have no fear of any Briton wishing to deprive them of what they lawfully hold. I would like to see those who have most to protect (I mean Britons) also prepared, not only with money, but with their hands and hearts, and their very lives, by all lawful means to keep the hands of any enemy off their country. If you build up great commerce, you must build up strong means to protect it, and all should be willing to act in a patriotic way to keep the hands of any marauder off. Lord Roberts has been hammering this policy into the stubborn heads of us Britons, but—much to our shame—we have hardly heeded him. Other writers have written pages on the menace of the German ruling party, and we have gone on without making adequate preparations, especially so far as land forces are concerned. But now, Britons all, let us up and at 'em!

I am, Sir, &c.,

LOYALTY.

Sir—Recognising to the full the painful position in which German-Australians find themselves, may I remind Mr. Elkan that Britons are in a painful position too, and that it was forced upon them by Germany. Public men, both here and in England, are warning us daily that if Germany is not beaten we go down for ever, and there is an end of all that freedom which Mr. Elkan so fully appreciates, and for which he came here. He is, I am sure, quite familiar with this aspect of the case. He says that German-Australians will fight any enemy of the Empire "except Germany." It follows, then, if he is correct, that not only will they not help us now, but that they would not raise a hand to oppose the German occupation of Australia if the old land were forced to cede it, as France was forced to cede Alsace-Lorraine. Are we to draw the conclusion that German-Australians are not prepared to make any sacrifice to preserve the freedom they enjoy, but are content to accept it at the expense of the "other fellow," and to lose it if the "other fellow" fails to maintain it for them? Surely not; but will Mr. Elkan kindly enlighten us on this point?

I am, Sir, &c.

T. SCOTT.

Murray Bridge.