

Regensburg ⁴ 12. September 1914

Sir—I would like to say a word in behalf of our brothers and sisters who are of German extraction, for they are in a very unfortunate and uncomfortable position, and that by no fault of their own. My blood boiled while I was reading the way Mr. Elkan was scorched by those who ought to know better. I have never met that gentleman, but my heart went out in sympathy to him—yes, real sympathy; and yet I am a patriot, born in the colony, of pure English parents, and I would thank God if I had an opportunity of doing to the Kaiser what Jael did to Sisera (see Judges iv. 21), and so put a stop to this terrible war. But because I am a red-hot patriot I feel deeply for those who are placed in the unfortunate position of Mr. Elkan. Let us imagine ourselves in some such position—could we ever fight against our dear England, even should she be in the wrong?

No, never! never! Very many of us would be in exactly Mr. Elkan's position, and rather put a bullet into our own head; and, if I feel like that, when I have never seen England, how much more so would those feel who had spent 30 years there? It is quite natural for those who have lived for years in the Fatherland to feel so, but those who have been born in Australia would not, and I believe most of them are as patriotic as any of us; but they are being treated in some quarters in such a mean, unkind way, just because of their parentage, that I am ashamed of my fellow-Britons. How can they help it, and where are they to blame? The way in which Mr. Elkan has been treated is enough to make them all disguise their feelings and pretend where they really do not feel. Do our fellow-colonists wish to goad these unfortunates until there will be something like civil war here? Would it not be a great deal better to bind them closer to us by kindness, to say nothing of the Christ Spirit in this professed Christian land? I hope that something may be done to relieve the friction.

I am, Sir, &c.,

A TRUE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN.

Sir—I lived for about 20 years in a district which was peopled with Germans, there being only about four British families in the hundred, which is a large one. At the time of the Boer war the majority of Germans were very hostile to the British Government, and at present the majority of them are rail-sitters, and are prepared to jump down on the winning side and take the same view as Mr. Elkan about defending the country of their adoption against German invasion. To be sure of their help in an invasion, it would be well for the British Government to make all the males of the Commonwealth over the age of 15 years take an oath of allegiance, whether they be of German descent or otherwise, and all failing to take the said oath should be liable to have their property confiscated to the British Crown, and themselves treated as prisoners of war. Also, all schools and churches of all denominations should be compelled to hoist the

British flag, and keep it flying until peace is declared. This, to some minds, may seem to be a species of tyranny, but I have lived in Australia over 50 years, was born here, and have at no time taken an oath of alliegance to the British, or any other Government; and I suppose all Australian-born Germans are in just the same position. But, unlike Mr. Elkan, I am prepared to defend my property and my life, and the lives of my family and fellow-colonists, even to the extent of firing upon any invaders of my native land, be they German or otherwise; and, if an enemy should invade our land, I don't think it would be wrong to adopt the German methods—one of which is to put any doubtful neutrals or disloyalists on the front line of battle.

I am, Sir, &c., ANCIENT BRITON.

Mr. E. Elkan has forwarded copies of the original letters relating to the Insignia of the Order of the Bear which was bestowed upon him, and states:—"Sir George Le Hunte, who requested my presence at Government House, to hand the letters to me, explained that as my services were rendered as much in favour of England and Australia as Germany, His Majesty was pleased to allow me to accept this honour. By making a difference between a naturalized and a born British subject, the conclusion is obvious that the same obligation is not expected of them. At the Convention of Nations in 1872 it was unanimously decided that a naturalized subject and his children should be free from military service against his own country. The reasons given were:—(1) That his services, if compelled, might be a source of danger to the army in which he was serving; (2) that if rendered voluntarily they would always be treated with suspicion; (3) that blood was thicker than water; (4) that it would be inhuman to compel them, and unmanly to render them. I also enclose a certificate of naturalization (copy), which says nothing of service under arms, and refers only to obligations to the Commonwealth and not to Britain. At the time of its issue there was no mention of any established military system in the Commonwealth; therefore the oath of allegiance does not cover it." The documents read:—

Government House, Adelaide, 19th January, 1909.
Sir—I have the honour, by direction of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, to transmit for your information the enclosed copy of a despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, intimating that His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to permit you to accept and wear the Insignia of the Second Class of the Order of the Bear. . . . W. S. Baillie Hamilton, Private Secretary. To E. Elkan, Esq.

Downing street, 17th December, 1908. Sir—With reference to your despatch No. 65 of the 13th October, I have the honour to inform you that His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased, as an exceptional case, to grant permission to Mr. E. Elkan, a naturalized British subject, to accept and wear the Insignia Order of the Bear, which has been conferred upon him. . . . Crewe. To Governor Sir George Le Hunte.

Commonwealth of Australia.—Certificate of Naturalization. By virtue of the Naturalization Act, 1903, I the Governor-General in and over the Commonwealth of Australia, with the advice of the Federal Executive Council, grant to Edmund Elkan, an alien, being a native of Berlin, in Germany, and of the age of 52 years, this certificate of naturalization whereby the said Edmund Elkan becomes entitled to all political and other rights, powers, and privileges, and becomes subject to all obligations to which a natural-born British subject is entitled or subject in the Commonwealth. Provided that whereby any provision of the Constitution or of any Act or State Constitution or Act a distinction is made between the rights, powers, or privileges of natural-born British subjects and those of persons naturalized in the Commonwealth or in a State, the rights, powers, and privileges conferred by the granting of this certificate shall for the purposes of that provision be only those (if any) to which persons so naturalized are therein expressed to be entitled. Given under my hand and the great seal of the Commonwealth of Australia at Melbourne the 24th day of October, one thousand nine hundred and five. (Signed) Northcote, Governor-General.