

LITERARY DIGEST

July 25, 1936

p. 11

SCRAP OF PAPER: Germany, Rearming Helgoland, Crumples More of Versailles Treaty

No such uproar as marked the marching of Hitler's troops into the Rhineland accompanied a similar "reassertion of German sovereignty" over the Island of Helgoland and eight other islands supposedly demilitarized forever under the same ill-omened document.

Probably because fiery Anthony Eden was absent because of illness, the announcement of the rearming of the one mile-by-three rock once called "a pistol pointed at Britain's heart" caused hardly a murmur in the House of Commons last week.

"The fortifications, military establishments and harbors of the Island of Helgoland . . . shall be destroyed (they were, under the eyes of British officers) . . . by German labor and at the expense of Germany," reads Article 115 of the Treaty of Versailles. "These fortifications shall not be reconstructed, nor shall any similar works be constructed in future."

Infraction Record—The Treaty said that Germany should have no troops in the Rhineland. On March 7 of this year, they marched in.

The Treaty said that Germany should never have a conscript army. On March 16, conscription was announced by Chancellor Hitler.

It said that Germany should have no military aviation. She has it.

It said that the Great German General Staff should be abolished. It was never disbanded.

Violation of the Versailles Treaty began, in fact, a week before it was signed.

The German fleet lay, under the terms of the Armistice, interned at Scapa Flow off the Orkney Islands. Article 185, in the hands of the German Government but not to be signed until June 28, 1919, stipulated that:

"Within two months . . . German surface war-ships enumerated below will be surrendered . . ."

On June 20, the officers and crews on board scuttled nine dreadnoughts, five battle-cruisers, seven light cruisers and fifty destroyers, a total of 410,000 tons.

First important violation after the signing was the refusal to surrender, as provided in Article 228, "all persons accused of having committed an act in violation of the laws and customs of war," for trial by the Allies.

Ignored Provision—The article providing for the surrender and trial of the Kaiser, who, Lloyd George roared, should "hang as high as Haman," was never tested.

Article 181 specified that Germany shall have no submarines. British observers flying over a German naval review last week, offered, quixotically, to step back from the windows of the air-ship in which they were guests, that they might not be suspected of counting the submarines below. German officers politely told them not to bother.

Reparations, from the beginning a cause of permanent dispute, dragged through the occupation of the Ruhr by the French (forcible collection), through the Dawes Plan and the Young Plan (successive scalings downward), to their cessation after the Hoover moratorium on international payments proposed June 20, 1930. Payments have never been resumed.

Surviving fragments of the treaty awaiting Hitler's pleasure are those depriving Germany of her Colonies; of Danzig, made a Free City; of the "Corridor," ceded to Poland as an exit to the sea; of Upper Silesia, divided with Poland after a plebiscite; of a strip containing 3,000,000 Germans allotted to Czechoslovakia; of Eupen and Malmedy, given to Belgium, and of Upper Schleswig, divided, after a plebiscite, with Denmark.

Alsace-Lorraine, restored to France, Hitler has formally renounced; but of the rest he has written in "Mein Kampf" (My Struggle) that "demanding merely the boundaries of 1914 is nonsense. They are large enough neither to hold all the people of German blood, nor to permit of their geographical-military exploitation."

Helgoland, only 200 years ago, was five times its present size. For centuries in ancient times, it was a battle-ground for Vikings and other raiding sea-rovers. Early in the seventeenth century it became a Danish possession; and in 1807 it was occupied by the British, to whom, in 1814, Denmark formally surrendered it.