

Low Countries. This charge against French "intervention" would seem to substantiate the suspicion that Belgium and Holland actually received some form of warning from French sources, which in their turn may have obtained information from Italy.

7. Against this interpretation may be quoted the following excerpts from the London TIMES of January 16th and 17th:

" The claim that it was a French, or mainly French, scare carries no conviction at all, particularly in Belgium, where the alarm was first sounded on information that came solely from Belgian sources, according to an explicit statement made officially in Brussels yesterday."

(Jan. 17th)

" A statement by the German News Agency insinuating that the Belgian and Dutch precautions had been prompted by British and French suggestions was commented on as follows by authoritative quarters at The Hague: 'Nothing is known in Holland about the alleged divulgence of information of this nature from British or French sources'. The "Algemeen Handelsblad" said: 'We have eyes ourselves and a sufficient quantity of common sense We do not need any whispering campaign to be on the alert'. It is learned that, contrary to the German allegations, the visit of the Netherlands Minister to President Lebrun on Saturday had no connexion whatever with the international tension."

(Jan. 17th)

" There seems to be no foundation for the report that the military precautions taken by Belgium and Holland were due to a direct Italian warning, which would presuppose a 'double-crossing' by Italy of her German ally quite inconsistent with all recent official declarations of the relations between the two partners to the Rome-Berlin axis."

(Rome. Jan. 16th)

" The talks which the former Prime Minister, Dr. Colijn, had in Rome, where he met Count Ciano and Signor Bottai, naturally attracted attention (in Holland). It is believed that these talks included more than the avowed discussions about the work of the League of Nations Economic Committee but it is regarded as going too far to conclude that Dr. Colijn received positive warnings, about alleged German invasion plans. It is likely, however, that Dr. Colijn inquired what the Italian attitude would be if such an attack was directed against the Low Countries by either belligerent party."

(Jan. 16th)