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*Le Ministre de Grande-Bretagne à Berne, G. Warner,
au Ministre de Suisse à Londres, Ch. R. Paravicini*

Copie

L 21/25/38 Private and Confidential

Berne, 29th January 1938

Very many thanks for your letter of the 27th instant¹. I was very sorry not to be able to be at Colonel de la Forest-Divonne's party to meet you, but was afraid of losing my voice, and as we had an important lunch the following day I was, greatly to my regret, obliged to stay away.

I, of course, entirely share your hope that the problem of Article 16 will not have any undesirable effect on Anglo-Swiss cordiality. As I am writing entirely privately and confidentially, I should like to say that I am somewhat afraid that an impression may be created in England that Switzerland is thinking too much of herself at a time when the world is in such a very difficult state. I have suggested this quite privately to Bonna. For what my opinion may be worth, I should have thought Switzerland would have been very well advised to be satisfied with the fact that she is at present in no danger from the point of view of sanctions arising out of Article 16. I understand that particularly in German Switzerland there is a strong desire for a clear-cut juridical solution of this matter, but I need hardly say that the British public would themselves be very glad if their many difficulties and dangers could be similarly dealt with. The man in the street in England is as anxious as the man in the street in Switzerland not to be dragged into war. I am of course aware of the «initiative» aspect of this matter.

With regard to M. de Jenner's interview at the Foreign Office on the 15th December, I think that some misunderstanding has arisen from the fact that what he was told by the Foreign Office official was of a somewhat negative character. I told M. Motta that the position had been fully explained to M. de Jenner at the Foreign Office. According to the report which reached me, M. de Jenner was told of the present position of the discussions in regard to Article 16 and that His Majesty's Government had not expressed any opinion on this subject at all. I can quite understand that you may have considered this to be too inconclusive to report to M. Motta, or M. de Jenner may even have considered that it was too inconclusive to mention in detail to you, but it represented the point of view of His Majesty's Government at the time, and I referred to the conversation at my interview with M. Motta as showing the attitude of His Majesty's Government at the time as known to myself. The fact that His Majesty's Government had not come to any definite decision in regard to Article 16, was of course in itself a matter of considerable interest. I shall certainly take the opportunity of saying something to M. Motta in the sense that

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in the circumstances of the case what M. de Jenner was told appeared more important to me than to him, as he was not unnaturally disappointed at not being able to get more definite information. The last thing in the world I should desire would be to cause any misunderstanding between your Legation and the Département Politique.