

DUTCHMAN APOSTLE OF EMPIRE

"The Empire has a heart and it has limbs. The heart and the limbs are complementary to each other. The heart of the Empire does not beat in the leg of the All Black or the leg of the Springbok, nor in the tail of the Kangaroo. It throbs in England, and while we in England are very proud to see how the leg and the tail are growing in strength we must realise that the heart and only the heart makes it possible. We must see that the heart is not weakened at the expense of the limbs."

MARRIED to a soft-voiced, blue-eyed, typically English cousin of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, Mr. B. O. Schonegevel, South African Dutchman, spoke to the "Record" in these words last week. He is devoted to the cause of the Empire with a fervour greater, or at least more outspoken, than most born British people.

Says Mr. Schonegevel: "I regard a united Empire as the greatest force for good in the world."

For that reason he is the honorary chairman of the executive council of the Empire Unity League, travels the world as its apostle, has spoken over the air from NBS stations in New Zealand on the virtue of Imperial thought.

Born of Dutch parents in South Africa, he fought for the British against his own people in the Boer War.

"I realised then," he says, "that the welfare of my own country lay within and not outside the fold of the Union Jack."

Though South Africa, unlike Australia and New Zealand, took advantage of the Statute of Westminster, Mr. Schonegevel has no fears of separation.

There were some who said then that the silken cord binding the Empire had been further frayed. These people were wrong. As far as South Africa was concerned, that silken cord bound that country more closely to the throne and Empire than the stoutest chain.

South Africa, as a democracy, would have to decide in the democratic manner what part it would play if England and the other parts of the Empire were menaced, but Smuts had definitely stated in South Africa less than one month ago that when England was at war South Africa would be at war also.

"There is not the slightest chance of Germany getting back

manner which we can regard as being neighbourly."

Summed up Mr. Schonegevel: "After all, 25 per cent. of the earth's land surface belongs to the British Empire. The Union Jack, with some slight variations, flies over 25 per cent. of the peoples of the earth. These peoples are of all colours and creeds, but they enjoy



—S. P. Andrew Photo.

EMPIRE-MINDED SOUTH AFRICAN B. O. SCHONEGEVEL.—Who would not be, married to a charming English woman, first cousin to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain?

her former colonies in South West Africa or East Africa," said Mr. Schonegevel, "not because of any particular value of those countries, but because Germany has not yet behaved in a

that which today is becoming less and less in the world—freedom. On that rock rests the foundation of the British Empire, and on that rock every man of the Empire will stand to the last."

ADVENTURE CALLS TO A NEW ZEALANDER

WHEN a man has wings to his feet you just cannot keep him down to the ground. That observation is called forth by the news, received in Auckland on Wednesday, that two New Zealand airmen, E. N. Griffiths and L. A. Willicombe, had arrived in Hong Kong with the idea of joining Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's fighting squadrons. Griffiths, at any rate, has had so many adventures to date that he might well be described as New Zealand's Adventurer No. 1.

It is not so many weeks since Eric Griffiths was in the employ of Union Airways of New Zealand, Ltd., and many New Zealand air travellers knew him as a second officer on the Palmerston North—Dunedin run.

He joined that service in June of last year but the thrills of safe commercial flying were apparently not enough for his adventurous soul. The urge to wander, to adventure and to fight had entered into him again—and he resigned.

No one knew why he did... and his comrades dismissed it with the remark, "Eric's got the wander-bug again." They thought he was headed for the Philippines and some freight service venture. But now, Griffiths, with an aviator friend, Willicombe, has sailed for China.

They are the first from this part of the world to join General Chiang's war birds since the New Zealander, Lieutenant Ray Whitehead, was shot down by Japanese pursuit planes over Shanghai in the early days of the present war.

There is one thing about the adventure as far as Griffiths is concerned. He knows something of flying in the East, for he has been there before in the past five years. It is just five years since he first left Wellington seeking adventure and finding it.

He ferried aeroplanes for Chinese warlords and acted as mechanic for the Byrd Antarctic Expedition. Then a new adventurous call—plus some financial reward—came to him. The Spanish conflict had begun, so Mr. Griffiths went to England, and for a time engaged successfully in flights between England and Spain, taking over fighting planes for the Spanish Government.

He joined the Spanish Government's International Brigade as a fighting pilot for eight months and saw fighting in plenty. His official tally of insurgent planes brought down was four.

His career in that field was brought to an end when he was hit in a dog-fight while acting as an escort to several Government bombers. He was able to bring his plane back to the base and so escape capture.

The "one" he "stopped" was an expanding bullet, and he has still an ugly scar in his right shoulder as a reminder of the incident.

Griffith's return to New Zealand in 1937 was of the same "front page" brand as the rest of his career.

He became engaged to Miss Fay Robinson of New Zealand by cable from Valencia. She met him at the boat in Auckland on his return, and they were married shortly afterwards.

And now he is in China once more. Something says it will not be long before he is in the news again.

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