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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

SWISS AND THE LEAGUE.

A proposal is being circulated in Switzerland to amend the Swiss Constitution in the direction of restoring the complete neutrality of the Confederation as it existed in 1914. To this end it is proposed to launch an appeal to the country in the form of an "initiative." Support for this is being canvassed by a group of influential politicians, apparently with some success. In the event of its being adopted Switzerland would be absolved from participation in any kind of "sanctions," whether military or economic, against a country violating the Covenant of the League.

The position of Switzerland in the League is already peculiar. In 1920, when the question arose whether Switzerland should or should not join the League, a strong minority was opposed to this step, as being a break with the age-long Swiss tradition of neutrality. Membership of the League was finally accepted only under conditions and with great reluctance. Switzerland recognized the duties of solidarity imposed by membership of the League, including co-operation in economic and financial "sanctions" against a Covenant-breaking State, and undertook to make every sacrifice to defend her own territory in every circumstance. But she was absolved from taking part in any military action or from allowing the passage of foreign troops or the preparation of military operations within her territory. It implied that Switzerland had abandoned her economic but not her military neutrality.

At the time the view prevailed that in practice the distinction would prove purely theoretical, because the imposition of "sanctions" was certain to bring military action in its train. It was realized, when the economic "sanctions" were imposed during the Italo-Abyssinian war, that the situation in Switzerland had become extremely delicate. The Swiss Federal Council then took occasion to declare that the fulfilment of obligations under the Covenant must be understood to be within its own sovereignty and within the limits of its own neutrality. Switzerland escaped then being drawn into a conflict, but those who are promoting the present "initiative" consider that the distinction between economic and military "sanctions" is based on a fallacy and threatens to draw Switzerland into conflicts between other States.

The amendment, if adopted, would be inconsistent with Switzerland's obligations under the Covenant and would almost certainly involve withdrawal from the League. A considerable body of opinion is opposed to the change on the ground that on balance Switzerland stands to gain by League membership.

** By an "initiative" a person or persons outside the Legislature may introduce legislation.

SWISS BAN MEMORIAL.

The Parliament of the Canton of St. Gall has refused to allow the German Government to erect a war memorial above the town in honour of 23 German soldiers who died in Swiss internment camps during the war. The monument was to have been a colossal figure which, it was claimed, would dominate the whole countryside.

SIMPLON PASS BLOCKED.

The road over the Simplon Pass has been blocked in the Gondo Gorge by a landslide of over 3,000 cubic feet of rock, which fell on the road just after the postal coach had passed. The rocks are to be blown up, and it is expected that the road will be reopened in a few days' time.

PRO JUVENTUTE.

The "Stiftungsrat" of the *Pro Juventute* has elected Federal-Councillor Pilet-Golaz as President in succession to late Federal-Councillor Häberlin, who has resigned his office.

SWISS KEEPING OUT.

Dr. Giuseppe Motta, the President of the Swiss Confederation, has flatly denied in a speech to the competent Committee of the Swiss Second Chamber that the Swiss Government contemplated adhering to the anti-Communist pact formed by Germany, Italy, and Japan.

His denial was a reply to suggestions made in some Italian newspapers, and repeated in Swiss Communist and Socialist papers.

ARRESTS IN SWITZERLAND.

The Swiss Federal Police have arrested eight persons, including a Socialist Deputy and the secretary of the Basle Communist Party, on charges of having organized the enlistment of Swiss citizens in the Spanish Republican Army and of having facilitated their departure from Switzerland.

NOBEL PRIZE FOR PROFESSOR KARRER.

Professor, Dr. Paul Karrer of the University of Zurich, has received the 1937 Nobel Prize for Chemistry.

Professor Karrer is a citizen of Teufenthal and Oberentfelden (Aargau), he was appointed Professor of Chemistry at the University of Zurich in 1913. In 1932 he was the recipient of the Marcel-Benoist prize, and a year later the University of Breslau honoured him with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*.

RESIGNATION OF MINISTER GERTSCH.

Minister Albert Gertsch, who is shortly celebrating the 30th anniversary of his appointment as Swiss Minister to Brazil, has tendered his resignation to the Federal Council.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

M. Rudolf Streuli, a member of the cantonal government has resigned his office, he has been a member since 1926.

In Kilchberg near Zurich, died at the age of 45, Dr. Guido Looser, teacher at the cantonal commercial school in Zurich. The deceased was well-known as a writer of novels.

BERNE.

The town of Bieme has reached a population of 40,000.

LUCERNE.

With a large majority M. H. Felber from Ettiswil, a member of the Conservative Party has been elected a member of the government of the canton of Lucerne, in succession to Dr. H. Walther, who has recently resigned.

ZUG.

The new catholic church "Bon Berger" in Zug, was inaugurated last Sunday by Mgr. von Streng, bishop of Basle and Lugano.

FRIBOURG.

Dr. Alfred Siegwart, Professor of Law at the University of Fribourg, has celebrated his 25th anniversary as a teacher at the University.

He was appointed in 1912, in succession to Dr. Hugo Oser., who was elected to a Judgeship at the Federal Court. Professor Siegwart hails from the canton of Uri.

BASEL.

Several American buffaloes and yaks from Tibet were shot because of an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease at Basle Zoological Gardens. The zoo will be closed for three months.

CITY SWISS CLUB

PLEASE RESERVE

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 26th

for the

ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL

at the

Grosvenor House, Park Lane W.1.

Admission by ticket only obtainable from Members of the Committee.

AARGAU.

In Bünzen, died at the age of 84, Heinrich Abt, late National-Councillor. The deceased was for a considerable time a member of the Board of the Swiss Federal Railways.

New barracks will be built at Aarau at the cost of 700,000 frs.

THURGAU.

A large fire partly destroyed the building of the "Mostereigenossenschaft" in Bischofszell. The damage caused is estimated to be about 800,000 frs.

ST. GALL.

Dr. Hermann Becker, President of the Cantonal Tribunal and M. Joh. Koller, Vice-President have resigned their posts on reaching the age limit. Dr. Becker has been a member of the Tribunal since 1910 and its President since 1925.

M. Koller has been a cantonal judge since 1915 and was appointed Vice-President in 1925.

VALAIS.

M. Joseph Kuntschen, Mayor of the town of Sitten, is entering Parliament (National Council) in succession to M. André Germaniers.

TICINO.

National Councillor Tarchini, President of the Conservative Party of the canton of Ticino, has celebrated his 40th anniversary as a member of the Grand Council.

FOOTBALL.

14th November, 1937.

INTERNATIONAL MATCH.

Hungary 2 Switzerland 0

This match was played at Budapest before a mere 10,000 spectators, the poor attendance being due to inclement weather, snow falling continuously throughout the day. Once again we find ourselves on the losing side. Our team was the same as against Italy in Geneva, with the exception of the two wing forwards, where the injured Bickel and Amado were replaced by G. Aebi and Weber. Considering the present playing strength of Hungary who defeated a few weeks ago Czechoslovakia by no less than 8 goals to 3, the result does not disgrace little Switzerland. In fact, the team played quite well. The chief trouble remains the forward line, where we have quite a number of clever players available whose chief fault, however, is, lack of confidence to apply the final touch! They one and all seem to shirk that final responsibility for "having a go" at goal and instead of shooting prefer to pass the ball to a colleague who, in turn, seems to say "thank you very much, but I would rather not either." Once they get rid of this inferiority complex we really should have a team of which to be proud.

The first goal fell in the 3rd minute, scored by Dr. Sarosi, Hungary's renowned centre forward, the other in the 30th minute of the second half, when a corner led to a scramble in front of our goal and Toldi, inside left, shot past Bizzozzero. Our eleven had their best moments after the interval.

Are we downhearted? Not a bit of it!

M.G.

REPORT ON SWISS TRADE AND INDUSTRY IN 1936.

The "Swiss Federation of Commerce and Industry" has just published its annual *Report on Swiss Trade and Industry during the year 1936*. The abundance of economic facts and figures will enable any foreign reader to obtain an insight into Swiss economic conditions.

As formerly, the General part of the Report contains a succinct statement about certain important questions concerning prices, depreciation of currency, commercial policy and political economy.

Then follows a statistical part, giving all the most important data about the different branches of Swiss economics, such as: population, water-power, factories, labour questions, cost of living, banking, foreign trade and finance.

The greater part of the volume is devoted to special reports in the individual branches of trade and industry, on traffic, insurance and banking, on production and distribution of electric energy and on technical and commercial education.

The Report which is some 190 pages long, appears in a French and in a German edition and may be obtained at the reduced price of Swiss francs 5.— (plus postage) from the "Secretariat of the Swiss Federation of Commerce and Industry," Zurich, Börsenstrasse 17.