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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

SWISS FRONTIER GUARD STRENGTHENED.

The Swiss Federal Council authorized the Military Department to form four new companies of volunteers for the permanent watching of the frontier. The permanent frontier guard will thus consist of fourteen companies. As the Swiss Constitution does not allow for the maintenance of a permanent army, these units of volunteers were formed two years ago, with a view to maintaining the newly erected fortifications.

NEW ALUMINIUM FACTORY.

Negotiations have been completed for the erection of a new aluminium works at Resolven, Glamorgan, for the South Wales Aluminium Co., recently registered with a capital of £500,000 and allied to the British Aluminium Co. and Industrie Aluminium Switzerland.

Work will be started immediately, and when completed the factory will provide regular employment for 600 men.

SWISS COMPANY'S REORGANIZATION.

The eight ordinary general meeting and an extraordinary general meeting of shareholders of the Société Continentale pour Valeurs Bancaires et Industrielles was held in Basle, on October 31st, and shareholders duly approved the reorganization scheme proposed by the board. The capital, now reduced from 30,000,000fr. to 16,000,000fr., will be divided into 10,000,000fr. of Ordinary and 6,000,000fr. of Preference shares.

Following this reorganization the company will take over all the assets and liabilities of the Société Continentale de Gestion (Geseco) of Monaco with the exception of the shares of the Basle company and the amount required by the Geseco to complete its liquidation. The bondholders of the Société Continentale de Gestion will become the sole shareholders of the reorganized company. The articles of the company have been amended accordingly, and the initial balance-sheet showing an approximate total of 28,600,000fr. has also been approved.

The old directors having resigned, a new board has been elected composed of the following:— Messrs. Armand Dreyfus, Zurich (chairman); Michael Terestchenko, Monaco (vice-chairman); Maurice Golay, Basle; François Madimier, Paris; Dr. Edward Nüscheler, Basle; Dr. Rodolphe Speich, Basle; and Mr. Granville Tysler, London.

GERMAN FIGHTERS FOR SWISS AIR FORCE.

The Swiss Federal Government have ordered from Germany a number of fighter aeroplanes, which, it is said, will be delivered within a very short time. The machines are to have 1,100 h.p. engines giving them a speed of about 334 m.p.h. and enabling them to reach 15,000ft. in five minutes. Each machine is to cost about £13,000.

SWISS MEASURES AGAINST NAZI PROPAGANDA.

The Swiss Federal Government convened in Basle a meeting of the chiefs of police of the border Cantons which are most exposed to foreign propaganda. The Government are examining with them the means to be employed to check propaganda and reassure Swiss public opinion, since undue importance, it is said in official quarters, should not be ascribed to Nazi propaganda.

GENEVA'S GRATITUDE TO MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

An illuminated address of thanks to Mr. Chamberlain, printed in French and English on Holland paper and enclosed in a red leather cover adorned with the Geneva coat of arms, was handed over in Basle to the British Minister, Sir George Warner.

SWISS ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY.

The value of the exports of electrical machinery and apparatus from Switzerland increased from 38,804,000 Swiss fr. in 1936 to 52,051,000 fr. last year, all classes of manufactures contributing towards the improvement. The quantities exported, however, did not advance in the same proportion as the value owing to the devaluation of the Swiss franc and the increase in works prices.

The imports of electrical manufactures in 1937 were valued at 25,020,000 fr., as compared with 16,350,000 fr. in 1936. The growth in imports principally concerned electrodes (60 per cent. from Germany), radio apparatus, dynamos, incandescent lamps and accumulators. The chief supplier of electric carbons last year was France, which was second, after Germany, in the supply of accumulators.

MINISTER K. EGGER TRANSFERRED.

Dr. Karl Egger, Swiss Minister in Madrid-Barcelona has been appointed Swiss Minister to Finland, Latvia and Estonia.

LOCAL.

ZÜRICH.

Pending the completion of measures for counteracting foreign propaganda, the Canton of Zürich has decided to submit to censorship before publication three pro-Nazi newspapers published in Zürich.

Dr. Karl Hescheler, Professor of Botany at the University of Zurich and the Technical University in Zurich, has celebrated his 70th birthday.

BERNE.

M. Ernst Zingg, a partner of the well-known firm, Zingg and Co., cheese exporters, has died in Berne at the age of 80.

Dr. W. Meyer, at present librarian at the "Schweiz. Landesbibliothek" in Berne, has been appointed Vice-Director of the "Schweiz. Landesbibliothek," in succession to M. H. Bernus who recently resigned his post.

M. Amstutz, Mayor of Thun, is shortly relinquishing his post for reasons of health.

BASLE.

Lieutenant-colonel G. Däniker has been appointed lecturer of Military science at the University of Basle.

ST. GALL.

The St. Gallen section of the Swiss Alpine Club has celebrated the seventieth birthday of one of its members, Herr Karl Egloff, the "discoverer" of the Saentis, the group of mountains stretching south of St. Gallen and north of the Toggenburg Valley. Herr Egloff made nearly all the first ascents of the Saentis peaks and ridges, having climbed 70 times the difficult Kreuzberg V and 240 times the Saentis.

TICINO.

The new broadcasting studio in Lugano was inaugurated on the 8th of this month.

GENEVA.

A sports machine belonging to the Aero-Club of Geneva crashed near Les Crêts, the pilot, M. J. P. Courvoisier, from Geneva, and his passenger, M. F. Raemy also from Geneva, were killed.

FOOTBALL.

6th November, 1938.

International Match.

SWITZERLAND 1 PORTUGAL 0

15,000 spectators witnessed this second encounter between Swiss and Portuguese national teams, this time at "La Pontaise" in Lausanne. Portugal were determined to wipe out that definitely unlucky defeat suffered at Milan last May, when Switzerland's 2:1 victory meant elimination from the "World Soccer Championship" staged in France. Their loss was our gain. Memories being short, in these hectic days, let me remind you that three weeks later Switzerland scored their memorable victory over England's might at Zurich, thence to proceed to Paris as one of the last sixteen nations in the aforementioned competition. Drawn against Greater Germany in the first round we knocked them out at the second attempt by 4 goals to 2.

At the start of this season Switzerland suffered a crushing defeat by four clear goals in the first international, played against Eire in Dublin. A rough crossing of the Irish Sea had played havoc with our team of landlubbers and that this was no empty excuse was proved by the great display of practically the identical team, some days later, under the nom de guerre "Swiss Wanderers" against the Arsenal at Highbury. This is recent history and may be taken to be remembered still by the readers of the S.O.

As to the match at Lausanne, Switzerland lined up as follows: Huber; Minelli, Lehmann; Springer, Vernati, Rauch; Bickel (all Grasshoppers), Trello (Servette), P. Aebi (Young Boys), Walacek and G. Aebi (both Servette). The defence was therefore taken en bloc from Grasshoppers, Minelli — being fit again — displacing Stelzer (Lausanne). Illness prevented Amado from playing and brought in P. Aebi at centre-forward, Bickel switching over to the right-wing position, the other three remaining as at Highbury. The Portuguese failed to reach their high standard of proficiency displayed at Milan. The Swiss defence never lost their grip on the game so that P. Aebi's goal scored in the third minute of the second half sufficed to gain the day.

M.G.

LA POLITIQUE

Le budget de 1939.

Le Conseil fédéral vient de publier son message accompagnant le projet de budget pour 1939.

Il prévoit un déficit de 56 millions. Il est juste de dire d'emblée que dans les dépenses apparentes figurent des amortissements, pour un total considérable, soit un peu plus de 43 millions, auxquels s'ajoutent les réserves constituées pour le désendettement des C. F. F. et des chemins de fer privés.

On enregistre une augmentation des dépenses militaires; et c'est à peine s'il est besoin d'insister sur leur nécessité. Mais peut-être ne messied-il pas de noter également qu'il ne faut point aller, dans ce domaine, jusqu'aux dernières limites, et que, de l'avis de gens compétents, la fièvre de prodigalité qui s'empare de certains chefs doit être modérée.

En matière de finances, les éléments d'ordre psychologique jouent un rôle considérable. C'est justement pourquoi les financiers qui ne sont pas un peu intelligents, un peu capables de comprendre les mouvements des foules et des individus, agissent comme des imbéciles, ainsi qu'il se voit, malheureusement, plus souvent qu'on ne voudrait.

Actuellement, l'opinion publique est orientée vers le dogme de la défense nationale, — ce dont, en soi, il convient de se réjouir. Les socialistes ne rêvent que fortifications, canons anti-aériens, tanks, mitrailleuses et avions de bombardement. Si on les écoutait, les épiceries deviendraient des forteresses, et les promenades publiques, des bastions. Parmi les bourgeois, jadis convaincus que rien ne troublerait jamais leur digestion heureuse, que la civilisation européenne devait être sauvée par cette raison seule qu'ils en faisaient partie (ou pensaient en faire partie), et

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que, par conséquent, le budget militaire pouvait être réduit à un strict minimum, les événements récents ont semé une panique qui, de l'intestin, a gravi la pente et monté au cerveau. Le temps n'est plus où un John Roehaich saisissait toute occasion pour demander qu'on limitât les dépenses de l'armée, et où un Walther, de Lucerne, président du parti conservateur-catholique, et par conséquent peu suspect d'antimilitarisme, proposait que le budget militaire fût arrêté une fois pour toutes à 80 millions. Profondément remuées par les émotions que l'on sait, les tripes de ces messieurs postulent présentement des armes et des armes encore. On exigerait d'eux un demi-milliard par an qu'ils marcheraient probablement.

Ce qui est nécessaire est nécessaire; et les modérés d'hier, qui sont les modérés d'aujourd'hui, ne veulent rien refuser à la défense nationale de ce qui paraît indispensable à son action efficace. N'oublions cependant pas que, dans ce domaine particulier, rien n'est engagé pour un an seulement, ou pour deux. Les mesures coûteuses que l'on est amené à prendre, peut-être sous l'empire de circonstances éphémères, veulent être continuées, à peine de nullité.

Pour le personnel fédéral, le projet de budget comporte des augmentations, dues principalement au département militaire. Il s'agit notamment des fortifications, du nombre plus grand des instructeurs, etc. Le personnel est augmenté de 9 unités au département politique, de 25 à l'intérieur (Ecole polytechnique et chambre du cinéma), de 20 à la justice et police (police fédérale, application du code pénal suisse), de 250 au département militaire. En revanche — le croiriez-vous? — il y a diminution d'une unité au département des finances et de 14 au département tertiaire de l'économie publique.

Bien entendu, le projet de budget que nous avons sous les yeux peut être remis en question par le vote populaire du 27 novembre, au sujet duquel les augures ne cachent pas leur anxiété. Il est basé sur le maintien du plan financier en vigueur jusqu'à la fin de l'année. L'acceptation du plan soumis au peuple en modifierait aussi certaines données.

Léon Savary.
(La Tribune de Genève.)

REPORT ON SWISS TRADE AND INDUSTRY IN 1937.

The "Swiss Federation of Commerce and Industry" has just published its annual *Report on Swiss Trade and Industry during the year 1937*. 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, waterpower, 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 appears like last year 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," ZÜRICH, Börsenstrasse 17.

WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK OF US. Switzerland Rallies Again for Freedom.

By T. R. YARRA.

(The New York Times Magazine.)

(Continuation).

When the Swiss army engages in manoeuvres it somehow never seems really warlike. One day, shortly after Hitler's invasion of Austria, when shivers of apprehension were running through the Swiss lest he might next turn his attention in their direction, I saw a company of soldiers pass through Zurich on their way to some field of sham battle near by. Having an hour or so between trains, they checked their martial equipment at the station check-room and went off for a stroll.

The sight of all those trench helmets and knapsacks and arms neatly stacked, each with its numbered tag, in the midst of suitcases and peaceful parcels, somehow robbed them of every vestige of the pomp and circumstance of war.

In the cities and towns of Switzerland everything is modern and progressive; they have universities and technical schools teeming with learned professors and industrious students, with signs of culture and sophistication abounding on every hand. Likewise, along the main railways and roads of the country, those busy arteries of tourist traffic, all is modernity and activity.

But stray a bit from the beaten track, into some silent little valley winding its way upward toward deep mountain solitudes, and you will find yourself flung back into rough and primitive conditions — into the midst of a peasantry whose tiny chalets seem about to tumble down the steep mountain-sides to which they precariously cling — who spend long, bitter Winters entirely cut off from the world by huge snowdrifts.

"What do you do when you get ill in mid-Winter?" I asked the landlady of a little road-house in the Maderanertal, on the slope of a mountain fringing the great St. Gotthard railroad across the heart of Switzerland.

"Oh, the doctor from down there" — she motioned to a village on the railroad line, a mere speck in the depths below — "now and then manages to get through to us."

"And if he does not?"

"Oh, then, we just die without a doctor!"

She said this with one of the big viaducts of one of Europe's busiest trans-Alpine railroads in plain sight!

The Swiss have made it perfectly clear that their resumption of absolute neutrality is not based in the slightest on a desire to curry favour with Hitler or Mussolini. They have been consistent in their disapproval of those two dictators and to the infiltration of Nazi and fascist ideas into Switzerland. They know only too well how suddenly dictators can act, and they have made it quite apparent in which direction their apprehensions lie by strongly fortifying their German and Italian frontiers, while leaving practically unguarded their frontier bordering on France.

"All that German troops need do is to cross the Rhine bridge at Basle in order to be deep in Swiss territory," a Swiss reminded an American friend the other day, "and you must not forget what is practically a suburb of our town of Lugano belongs to Italy."

So Switzerland is getting what protection she can out of side-stepping documents idealistically signed years ago, when international prospects were brighter and tempers less ugly than nowadays — and, meanwhile, keeping her powder dry.

Swiss history is the account of a struggle covering seven centuries, to achieve and defend union and independence under democracy. Ever since 1291, when three Swiss cantons, along the shores of the lovely lake of Lucerne, banded together to resist Habsburg encroachments, these valiant mountaineers have consistently upheld the banner of freedom.

First, they rid themselves of interference from the Habsburgs, who for many years made themselves an unbearable nuisance by stubbornly seeking to dominate the hardy folk of the Swiss valleys — now as local robber barons, now as dukes of Austria, and, on several occasions, in their august quality of Holy Roman Emperors. Then the cantons — as more and more of them sought strength in union — defeated the Burgundians; and, though they subsequently almost lost their liberty to the French, they always managed, somewhere in their mountains, to keep the torch of freedom burning. Napoleon Bonaparte nearly killed Switzerland's independence, but even he could not break her indomitable spirit.

Switzerland emerged into the nineteenth century as a union not of three but of twenty-two cantons, and such she remains. Each canton enjoys a large measure of autonomy (each is, indeed, practically a sovereign State, which has merely delegated certain of its powers, like our own States) and jealously prevents the acquisition of too great power by the Federal Government which the twenty-two partners have set up at Berne.

Love of democracy in Switzerland has been forged not only in the ordeal of foreign war but in internecine strife. Religious discord, trouble between townsfolk and peasantry, and bickerings of aristocracy with bourgeoisie have again and again threatened to disrupt the Confederation. In fact, it is less than a century ago that the Swiss were actually lined up against each other, in the last of their civil wars, with seven cantons seeking to secede. They failed. Ever since, the various factions have composed their differences without resort to arms.

Though more than two-thirds of the Swiss are Germanic in race and language, and the rest belong to three widely differing groups — French, Italian and the "Romansch" element in the Engadine — all sources of discord disappear in the realization, by every one of these people, that

they are, first and foremost, citizens of Switzerland.

"We may talk German or French, Italian or Romansch," said a patriotic resident of German Switzerland, "but we think Swiss." And he proudly added: "Only in Switzerland do French and Germans live together in perfect harmony. Is not that alone proof that, though little, we are great?"

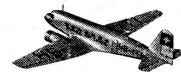
EINST UND JETZT.

Einst waren die Schweizer von hartem Begriff, Jetzt aber haben wir weltmännischen Schliff.
Einst hat man viel aufs Innere gehalten, Jetzt sieht man mehr auf die Bügelfalten.
Einst waren wir ein Volk von Bauern, Jetzt heisst's: wer will auf dem Lande versauern?
Einst suchte man sich ein wackres Weib, Jetzt poussiert man so zum Zeitvertreib.
Einst haben die Frauen Kinder bekommen, Jetzt haben viele einen Schosshund genommen.
Einst wurden die Kinder von den Eltern erzogen, Jetzt werden sie verwöhnt und verbogen.
Einst suchte man bei sich selber Rat, Jetzt sorgt für alles der Wohlfahrtsrat.
Einst hat man fest auf den Herrgott vertraut, Jetzt aber wird meistens auf Sand gebaut.
Einst hatten wir Sinn für Heldenmut, Jetzt trachten wir nur nach Geld und Gut.
Einst wurden die Geschäfte vernünftig geführt, Jetzt werden sie in den Boden rationalisiert.
Einst regierten unsere Väter in Hirtenhemden, Jetzt regieren bei uns dann bald die Fremden.
Einst haben wir unser Blut gewagt, Jetzt wird nur über schlechte Zeiten geklagt.
Einst hat man die Burgen fremder Vögte geschlissen, Jetzt werden wir selber bald rausgeschmissen.

Hans-Ueli us em Chappelletob.
(Das Aufgebot.)

PERSONAL

We extend heartiest congratulations to M. Gustave Jenne and to Mademoiselle Helena Simmen on the occasion of their engagement.



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