

**Zeitschrift:** The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK  
**Herausgeber:** Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom  
**Band:** - (1938)  
**Heft:** 862  
  
**Artikel:** What others think of us [to be continued]  
**Autor:** Muller, Edwin  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-691499>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

**Download PDF:** 30.03.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## WHAT OTHERS THINK OF US. THE PARADOX OF THE SATISFIED SWISS. Condensed from The Forum. (U.S.A.)

Edwin Muller.

For 500 years no Swiss army has crossed its frontiers to seek aggrandizement. Switzerland lives at peace with the world, not coveting the possessions of its neighbours.

And yet, of all the "have-not" nations, Switzerland seems to have the least.

It has a small territory and a high density of population, with not nearly enough arable land to feed itself. It has no iron, coal, or oil. It lacks the raw materials its industries need. It has neither colonies nor access to the sea.

A nation with such handicaps should be in a poor way, according to the dictators of the other "have-not" nations — Germany, Italy and Japan — the ones that are giving up butter for guns with which to improve their positions. Surely the Swiss must live a bare and meagre life.

What are the facts?

Well, we consider the United States the wealthiest nation on earth. In prosperous 1928 our per capita wealth was \$2098. But that of Switzerland was \$3126. We boast that the American even to-day has the highest standard of living in the world. But the Swiss has just as high. In the food, housing, clothing and pleasure that he gets for his day's work, he is probably better off than we are.

And unemployment in Switzerland is under two per cent. of the total population.

How do they do it?

Fundamentally, the reason lies in the paradoxical traits of the Swiss character. They are a race of fighters but they are not aggressive. They have an ardent patriotism but no "nationalism." They are individualists but are able to co-operate, among themselves and with others.

For centuries the Swiss have been faced with certain hard facts — that their land is ill-equipped to furnish a living, that they must import three fourths of their food and practically all their raw materials. They have conditioned themselves to those facts. They work hard — too hard according to modern standards. There are only two national holidays. One falls on Sunday; the other is a holiday in the sense that people work all day and celebrate in the evening.

Since the Swiss must live by export, and cannot compete with their neighbours in mass production, their only weapon is *quality*. The workers have had to develop superior technical skills.

They have made a workshop of their country. That's something that the tourist doesn't see. He has eyes only for the picture postcard Switzerland — the vast snow fields and glaciers, the army of peaks that crowd the horizon. If he really looked, he'd see quite another Switzerland. Baden, for example, and the spreading factories of Brown-Boveri. On it are converging long train-loads of coal from Sweden, iron ore from Lorraine. From it go out the great turbines and generators that serve the power industries of the world. He'd see factories making for export lace, artificial silk, chemical products, glass, chocolate, cheese, earthenware, dyes — manifold products of a high quality that is based on the specialized skill of individual workmen.

Each industry is localized by districts. In the Jura, for example, everybody talks watches, lives watches. The hills are dotted with small factories. One factory makes nothing but watch springs, another only cases. Much of the production is still homework. A man goes to the factory on Monday and brings home the week's quota. He and his sons work at the same bench. Fifty years from now his grandson will probably be working at the same bench with his sons, their skill a little further refined.

Artisan skill alone isn't enough. To live by export the Swiss must keep always a little ahead of their neighbours by inventing new things and new processes that are better than the old. We Americans consider ourselves a nation of inventors. For every million of our population we grant annually 160 new patents. In Switzerland the figure is 930 per million. The Swiss have taken the lead in many fields. Cellophane, artificial silk, the typewriter — scores of modern products have been pioneered by them.

There's another factor in their economy. The Swiss must save. An unfavourable trade balance has been forced on them for a hundred years. The only way to meet it has been for each Swiss, every year, to spend a little less than he earned. In a population of 4,000,000 there are 2,800,000 savings bank accounts. They hold more insurance per capita than any other nation.

(To be continued).

## SOME OF THE FORTHCOMING SWISS EVENTS, 1938.

- May 26th,  
Historical Ascension Day Cavalcade at Bero-münster near Lucerne.
- May 28th-June 6th,  
Camellia Festival and second Exhibition of Ticino handicrafts at Locarno.
- May 29th,  
Horse Jumping Contests and Equestrian Fête at Brunnen, lake of Lucerne.
- Golf, 18 holes, handicap at Davos.
- End of May-September,  
"Berne in Flowers" — Artistic floral adornment of Swiss Capital.
- June,  
International Exposition "The Art of Urbanism," at Geneva.
- June-October,  
Cathedral Organ recitals on Thursdays and Saturdays at 2 p.m., and on Sundays and Feast Days at 4 p.m. Throughout the year, Organ recitals on Sundays and Feast Days, at Fribourg.
- June 2nd,  
International Labor Conference, International Labor Office, at Geneva.
- June 5th, 12th-13th, 26th,  
Golf events at Davos.
- June 12th,  
Fribourg Costumes Festival at Bulle.
- International Aviation Meeting at Cointrin, Geneva.
- June 16th,  
Corpus Christi Procession at Fribourg.
- Corpus Christi Procession at Einsiedeln.
- Corpus Christi Procession at Appenzell.
- June 28th-31st,  
Singing Festival at Geneva.
- June 18th-August 14th,  
Municipal Beaux-Arts Exhibition, Musée Rath, Geneva.
- June 19th,  
Traditional Religious Processions in Ancient Costumes in the Lötschen Valley.
- Geneva Cantonal Gymnastic Championships, Frontenex Stadium, Geneva.
- June 20th-26th,  
International Tennis Tournament at Berne.
- June 25th-26th,  
Flower Festival at Geneva.
- National Horse Show at Thun.
- International Congress for Music Education at Berne.
- June 26th,  
Swiss 25 KM. Walking Championship at Lucerne.
- June 27th,  
Bicycle contest, Marquis de Soriano Prize, Davos.
- July,  
Course of Journalism (International Student Service) at Geneva.
- July-August,  
Students International Union: Institute of World Affairs, at Geneva.
- Geneva School of International Studies (under direction of Professor A. Zimmern) at Geneva.
- July 1st-10th,  
IV International Sailing and Rowing Week at Lausanne; Lido Week, Contest, Fashion Show, etc.
- July 2nd-3rd,  
Narcissus Festival at Montreux.
- Market and Fair at Bienne.
- Swiss Championship for Clay Pigeon Shooting at Geneva.
- July 2nd-10th,  
International Horse Show and Jumping Competitions at Lucerne.
- July 3rd, 10th, 14th-17th, 21st,  
Golf events at Davos.

## SWISSAIR-FLUG NACH ALEXANDRIA.

Während der Ostertage führte ein Douglas-Flugzeug der Swissair unter der Führung von Flugkapitän Franz Zimmermann einen Sonderflug nach Alexandria in Aegypten durch. An einem einzigen Tage wurde die 300 km lange Strecke Brindisi-Alexandria-Brindisi, in insgesamt 48 Stunden die Gesamtstrecke Dübendorf-Alexandria-Dübendorf von total 5240 km in einer reinen Flugzeit von 20 Stunden 12 Minuten zurückgelegt. Zweck des Fluges war eine Sendung von 116 Gepäckstücken im Gewichte von 1500 kg im Auftrage einer italienischen Schiffahrtsgesellschaft auf dem schnellsten Wege von Alexandria nach Venedig zu bringen. Dieser Flug ist auch im Ausland stark beachtet worden, da es dabei der Fluggesellschaft eines reinen Binnenlandes gelang, einen überaus wichtigen Auftrag für einen Überseeflug zu erhalten — es wurden 3200 km über offenes Meer zurückgelegt — und ihn auch zur vollen Zufriedenheit des Auftraggebers innerhalb Rekordzeit durchzuführen.

### LECTURE: DR. G. P. GOOCH, M.A.

A report of the Lecture of Dr. G. P. Gooch, on "The European Situation" held on Wednesday, May 11th at "Swiss House," will be published in next week's issue.

## COSMOS FREIGHTWAYS AGENCY LIMITED.

43/45, Great Tower Street, E.C.3.

Directors: W. BECKMANN & K. A. NUNNENMACHER (Swiss)

Offer a reliable, complete transport & customs service for

**HOUSEHOLD REMOVALS**  
and private effects, to and from Switzerland.

LOWEST QUOTATIONS AND FULL INFORMATION GIVEN ON APPLICATION.

## Peaceful SWITZERLAND

£ now buys over 21 Swiss francs yet—

- no bother at the frontier
- prices to suit every pocket
- short and inexpensive journey
- direct rail and air services
- customs facilities for cars
- petrol 1/3 gallon to visitors
- holiday centres for all seasons

Best value in Holiday Travel

INFORMATION from the Swiss Railways & State Travel Bureau, 11-B Regent Street, London, S.W.1

## If you want a SUIT to WEAR

wear a

**PRITCHETT Suit**

Suits, Overcoats & Ladies Costumes from 3 Gns. to 7 Gns. and you get **VALUE** for every penny you pay.

Agent for BURBERRY  
Weatherproofs.

**W. PRITCHETT**

183 & 184, TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, W.1.  
2 mins. from S.M.S. School. 'Phone: MUSEUM 0428

"Sorry we can't come round—we've arranged to dine at the 'Millet' with two of our friends—but perhaps you'll join us. . . . Yes! the place you admired so much when we passed it in the car. I know you're both almost epicures, but I can safely recommend the 'Millet.' It's impossible to find fault with either the food or the service." The Millet, Western Avenue, Perivale—opposite the Hoover Building.

Proprietor: A. Widmer (Swiss).