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## THE "SWISS OBSERVER" THIRTY YEARS AGO

The first issue in 1936 carried an announcement that the German Government had prohibited Germans to spend their holidays in Switzerland, and that Prof. Karl Barth had made an impassionate appeal on behalf of the suffering Church in Germany. In order to attract more tourists, all-in terms in Swiss hotels and *pensions* had been reduced by a further 10%. It was possible to spend nine days in Switzerland for £9.5.0 *including* the journey! The first issue of the year also had a report of a charity ball of the Swiss Culinary Society, now extinct.

A week later, a large part of the copy was taken up by an article (illustrated) "A Yorkshirewoman in Switzerland a Hundred Years Ago".

On 18th January, unemployment figures published were 118,775, fifty per cent of these in the building trade; the figure was nearly 26,000 more than twelve months previously.

The next issue brought reports of Memorial Services all over Switzerland for H.M. King George V. The text (in German) was also published of a telegram sent by King Edward VIII to the Federal Council, thanking them for their condolences. Another report covered the Swiss Colony's Memorial Service at the Eglise Suisse. In the National Council, the Government's policy regarding sanctions to Italy was approved by 112 to 1 votes. Exports of arms and war materials had been stopped to both Italy and Ethiopia. In London, an exhibition of paintings by Felix Vallotton was being held. "Wagner in Exile" was the title of a new article, and the report of the A.G.M. of the Unione Ticinese was in Italian.

The whole issue of 8th February is missing from the bound volume, and in the following one the new Swiss Finance Bill is described, an emergency measure accepted by both Chambers. It enabled the Government to take drastic steps to reduce expenditure. The crisis tax was increased by 25%, industrial subsidies were cut by as much as 40%, federal salaries were reduced by 15% and pensions by 5%. The price of beer was raised, customs duties increased, and petrol had to be mixed with alcohol, a measure to bring in two million francs. More letters to the Editor were published dealing with various subjects, such as sanctions and Swiss economy. There was also a short story "Intermezzo" signed *Mariann*.

On 22nd February, a report was published on restricted Nazi activities in Switzerland. Prof. Arnold Heim, the famous geologist, had given a lecture in Newcastle. The figure of unemployment in Switzerland

reached a new high record of 124,000. Dr. Armin Daeniker had been appointed as *Chargé d'Affaires* in Teheran. A report on the "New Home for the League" in Geneva was reprinted from the "Observer".

1936 being a leap year, the last issue in February was published on 29th. It began with "Swiss Action Against the Nazis" and a warning about reprisals by the German authorities. The Initiative for re-uniting the two Half Cantons of Basle had been accepted, and the National Exhibition was postponed from 1938 to 1939. Finally, a report by "St." appeared on the opening of the Home for Aged Swiss at 31 Southampton (now Conway) Street, W.1. The Swiss Minister Monsieur Paravicini had performed the official ceremony on 22nd February. The Home had been possible thanks to the generosity of Mr. Georges Dimier.

The issue of 7th March carried a report on a successful film show arranged by the Nouvelle Société Helvétique; *two* showings were given the same afternoon! The Swiss Industries Fair in Basle had just reached twenty years.

The second March issue displayed a large photo of the "Wilhelm Tell" Yodling Choir of the Swiss Federal Railways, Berne, who had taken part in the Annual Reunion of the Polytechnic Tours at the Albert Hall — a great success. "Is Switzerland to defend the Steward's Cup and the Diamond Sculls" was the title of an appeal for funds to enable the Swiss team to come to Henley.

On 28th March, a report was published of the Football Match Switzerland *versus* Ireland in Dublin — the Irish team winning by one goal to nil. A whole page (twice today's size) was given over to "Passing" in the "Snipe Sports Saloon", a motoring feat in the Swiss mountains. A report on the "Schweizerbund's" Annual Dinner appeared in the same issue — one hundred members present at their Charlotte Street Club premises. *Tempi passati!*

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