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# The Swiss Observer

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Council, the Board of Directors, the Managing Director and his committees and the Trustees.

The Board of Directors is the policy-making body. On it sit the Chairman, six executive directors, two outside, part-time directors and two employee directors. The Managing Director and his committees implement the policy laid down by the Board. The Community Council is an elected body of sixteen representing all sections of the company. Members are chosen by secret ballot. The Council approves the appointment of the chairman and any company directors, elects from its members the two Scott Bader Commonwealth directors who sit on the operating company Board, has the power to discuss any matter and make recommendations to the Board and is the final arbiter in all disputes or disciplinary matters. It meets every two weeks.

The Trustees are the trustees of the constitution, although they have

lost most of the powers of veto which they held formerly. One of their main functions now is to arbitrate between the Council and the Board on fundamental policy matters.

The Scott Bader Commonwealth was started as an experiment and has proved itself successful by the criteria of the capitalist system it rejects—money. Since its inception, the size of its staff has more than doubled, but organic growth is not its goal. It wants to remain small enough for each employee to comprehend, for it believes that this ability on the part of each of its members to view the organisation as a whole is vital for its continued success. Ironically, this ingredient necessary for its success automatically imposes a limitation upon its scope. The Scott Bader revolution would be difficult to pull off within a giant capitalist group. But, as Ernest Bader says, "We wish to cut ourselves adrift from the snares of capitalism."

*Martyn Drayton*

The Scott Bader Company is profitable. Last year it made a net profit of six per cent on sales over eight times greater than in 1951, and it has never made a loss. But it distributes its profits very differently from conventional companies, and even its sales policy is governed by the same Christian principles which inspired its foundation. Says Bader: "The State cannot be allowed to force us to do what we consider a crime, namely to participate in war and the 'rat race'. In any case, we detest the idea of making profits out of the misery of others, and while supplying goods which also have a peacetime purpose, we refuse orders for the manufacture of weapons of war."

The distribution of the company's profits is decided by the whole staff in General Meeting. Before the meeting, all members are shown the company's Balance Sheet. The current arrangement is that 60 per cent at least of the profit after tax is ploughed back into the company, and the balance is split equally between the employees in the form of cash bonuses and charitable objects chosen by the Meeting. The founders maintain "that it is wrong to exploit the possession of money by demanding interest or dividends." Last year, 8 per cent of after tax profit was distributed as cash bonus, another 8 per cent allotted for charitable purposes and 49 per cent ploughed back.

The current organisation of Scott Bader is complex, but it bears examination. The Scott Bader Commonwealth is the co-ownership body, and holds all the shares communally. Its Board of Management controls the distribution of money to charity, the acceptance of new co-owners and long-term development policy. The operating company comprises four main executive centres: the Community

## COMMENT

### NO TO THE SPEED BAN

On 1st January, 1973, a speed limit of 100 k.p.h. will take effect on all Swiss roads, with the exception of motorways. These new regulations will last for a trial period of three years.

The decision was taken by the Federal Council earlier this year and seems to have faced little opposition from Parliament. On the other hand, all motoring organisations complained that they had not been consulted and deplored the principle of a speed limit. A petition organised by the Swiss Touring Club gathered several hundred thousand signatures expressing overwhelming opposition to the speed ban.

It would thus appear that the federal decision, which being taken as a Decree did not have to be submitted to the people, went precisely against their will. It is surprising that the population will be consulted on, say, adding a sentence to the Constitution, with minor effects on the lives of the common man, whereas something as important as speed limits on roads should be decided without popular consent. It must also be noted that the future limit of 100 k.p.h. is equivalent to 62.5 m.p.h., which is considerably lower than the 70 m.p.h. limit enforced in Britain.

Many will argue that imposing a general speed limit will not have a great impact on everyday life. It seems clear however that, considering the importance of the motor car in our existence, the speed ban will spoil an important element of the life of count-

less people. The millions of motorists who enjoy driving, and this usually means driving with zest, will be deprived of a pleasure which is psychologically and mentally invaluable. Driving eases off the tensions which build up in modern life. Who knows—a man who comes home after a 100 m.p.h. jaunt will perhaps be kinder to his wife than if he were made to crawl at an intolerable legally enforced snail's pace.

What will arguably be worse for the mental health of the population will be the rising rate of licence confiscation and denunciations among motorists that can be expected from the new regulations. A 70 m.p.h. ban has been applied on British roads. It is more tolerable, not only because it allows an extra 12 k.p.h., but also because the law is not implemented with the same general thoroughness as in Switzerland. Although fines and sanctions meted out to offending motorists are at least as heavy in Britain as they are in Switzerland, if not more so, the chances of being caught are actually much smaller. Once a driver has passed his test and obtained a licence in Britain, he can then abide by the 30 m.p.h. limit with some degree of slackness without taking an undue risk. Non-observance of the 60 k.p.h. law in Swiss towns and villages will lead to a much more probable retribution by the police.

This means that the impact of the new regulations will be stronger in Switzerland than they are at present in Britain. Drivers will be haunted by the hidden presence of radar traps and prowling police cars.

A foretaste of how the police intend to implement the new law was given earlier this month when police

heavily fined motorists driving at 140 k.p.h. (86 m.p.h.) at night on the Geneva-Lausanne motorway. The police referred to the federal law on traffic which states that speed should always be "adapted to circumstances". In this case, it was claimed that the driver was going too fast at 140 k.p.h. to stop within the 75 metres visibility range. The police also warned that all motorists driving at 100 m.p.h. at night would have their licences suspended.

A 100 k.p.h. limit on ordinary roads, 140 k.p.h. on motorways—where is this all going to stop? In truth, the initiators of the new regulations consider cars as a means of displacing oneself from a to b, and not as an instrument of modern pleasure. In so doing they are spoiling the quality of life (a term which doesn't apply only to the environment) in the hope of very hypothetical results.

It is obvious enough that the number of accidents should be reduced, yet one wonders whether speed bans are the answer. They were applied in Britain and France with fairly quick results. The number of killed and injured dropped sharply the following year, but rose steadily with the growing number of cars and caught up with the original statistics after a two year time lag. In France, the number of killed is now higher than before the introduction of speed limits and we're back to square one. What is particularly impressive is that the French casualty list should have topped the 16,000 mark despite massive invest-

ments in improving crossings and road signalling.

Swiss accident statistics tend to be on the high side. In 1970, there were 1,405 killed on Swiss roads compared with 6,810 on British roads. Remembering that there are approximately ten times more vehicles in Britain, one sees that the chances of getting killed are double in Switzerland. In fact, the chances of being killed on Swiss roads are equal to those of getting killed on French roads, whose death toll reached 15,087 in 1970. Crude calculations will show that a driver will normally be injured in an accident within 37 years in Switzerland, 36 years in Britain and 39 years in France, and that he should normally be killed after driving for 850 years in Switzerland and France, and after 1,800 years in Britain. This is still not as bad as Morocco, which holds the world record and where drivers can expect to be involved in a fatal accident after driving two million miles. (The UN figure for France is seven million miles).

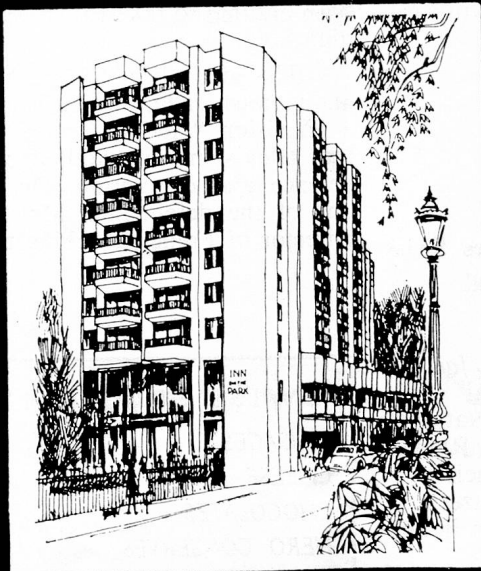
Naturally, one can't blame the Government for wanting to do something about these figures. When about 1,500 people get killed and 35,000 injured every year on Swiss roads, not counting the billions lost in insurance and industrial output, then the normal reaction is to do something about it. The Federal Council had a look at what the neighbours were doing, saw that many of them had resorted to speed bans and dutifully followed suit.

Admittedly, there was not much scope for imagination in this field. The control of car worthiness is already quite strict, great efforts have been made on improving road safety and a battery of laws and regulations covering all possible driving offences has long been implemented.

Now that a speed ban is to be enforced, there will be little scope for new legislation. All the possible laws have pretty well been exhausted. One wonders what our masters will resort to when the accident figures rise again in a few years time, as I am sure they will, and show that the speed ban is only a superficial and temporary measure that, far from ending death on the roads, will kill one of the small pleasures of our technological civilisation.

Motoring will always carry a risk of accident and death, just as skiing carries with it the risk of broken legs. However well descents are prepared, bumps evened out, bindings modernised, signalling improved, the number of broken legs will grow as skiing becomes a popular sport. The authorities can call for skiing permits and ski speed limits, which they may perhaps do one day, but they would kill a sport. The same goes for rock climbing. Mountaineers scale rock walls while taking a high risk but this risk is worth taking otherwise there would be no rock climbing.

It is unrealistic to expect the elimination of road accidents, just as it is impossible to ask of a skier never



## Vintage Room

Standing at the Piccadilly end of Park Lane, the Inn on the Park was recently named 'Hotel of the Year' by Egon Ronay. The Vintage Room, on its first floor, could equally be said to be deserving of the title 'Restaurant of the Year'. It specializes in presenting succulent steaks and traditional Ribs of Scotch Beef . . . the meat faultless . . . the service impeccable. Its subdued and intimate decor, continuous dancing from

9-0 until 3-0 a.m., and easy parking, make it an ideal after-theatre rendezvous. While at lunchtime, it is rapidly becoming a 'club' for those who appreciate good food luxurious surroundings and today's greatest rarity – personal service.

### *Inn on the Park*

Hamilton Place, Park Lane, London W.1. Tel: 01-499 0888

to fall. Elimination of accidents would require perfect drivers, both in their technique and in their sense of responsibility. This has nothing to do with driving slowly. Fast and able drivers are probably less of a menace than sluggish and hesitant grandpas. Driving fast need not mean driving recklessly. Basically, it all hinges on being responsible and aware of one's abilities. This can be taught and instilled in driving lessons. Driving correctly is equivalent to behaving decently in society, be it in the underground, the theatre, the restaurant or anywhere else. Therefore, learning to drive responsibly is the same thing as learning to live responsibly. These things are taught in the family and at school, which is where the prevention of accidents must begin.

About speed: It seems wiser to evolve some kind of test allowing a driver to know at what speed he can safely drive in well defined circumstances, rather than to compel good drivers to submit to speed limits which they could safely surpass.

We shall now have to wait and see the results of the 100 k.p.h. speed limit. If the code and the rules of driving reduce accidents (in the same way as penal law reduces crime) it cannot eliminate them completely. If one accepts the motor car, then one also has to accept the prospect of accidents. The institution of a speed ban may not yet mean a rejection of cars, but it certainly involves a denial of driving.

(PMB)

## National Highway Network

The Federal Council has approved the recommendations of the "Hurlimann Commission" set up to introduce the necessary alterations to the original national highway schedule. According to the Commission, the planned yearly expenditure will increase by 350 million francs for the three years 1971, 1972 and 1973 and will reach 800 million francs a year. It has been decided to complete the national highway N12 linking Vevey to Berne via Chatel-Saint-Denis, Bulle and Flamatt by 1978, before the completion of the N1, which will link Lausanne to the capital via Yverdon and Chevres. This should be completed by 1982. The Commission had published its Report in March last year and had reached its conclusions after considering 35 alternatives.

# SWISS EVENTS

## FEDERAL

### The Constitution won't be anti-Semite

The Government is obviously concerned in updating the Constitution in every detail. One Article which wouldn't immediately come to an ordinary mind in connection with the Constitution, but which was nonetheless the first, and one of the only articles to be introduced in this federal body of rules by a popular initiative, is Article 25bis, which forbids the bleeding of animals without first stunning them.

This provision was included in the Constitution in 1893, at a time when there was an underlying current of anti-Semitism in Switzerland. The Government has now recommended that this Article should be replaced by another one relating not only to the blood-letting of animals, but also to their care, use, commercialisation, transport and slaughter. The killing of animals according to the Jewish rite wouldn't be authorised at this stage but would be governed by a new law outside the Constitution. But first, the usual speaking partners—Canons, Organisations and Parties—will be consulted, and the Swiss people will probably not be called to the polls on this matter before one or two years time.

The Department of Justice and Police is presently submitting another amendment to the Constitution to the Cantons and political parties: It plans to alter the federal voting procedure. The Department wants to change the rule that no two Federal Councillors may hail from the same canton, and recommends that the minimum number of signatures necessary for a constitu-

tional initiative and for a referendum (actually 50,000 and 30,000 should be increased. Finally, it is planned to review the law in order to create more than one National Council constituency in any canton, with particular reference to the Jura.

The increased signature collection should take into account the growth of the electorate from 1.5 million, when the initiative was introduced to 3.5 million today. Today, a call for a referendum need only be backed by 0.8 per cent of the voting population, which tends to make this procedure too easy.

## ANGLO-SWISS

### A National Councillor proposes Swiss good offices in Northern Ireland

Obviously not entirely *au fait* on Ulster's peculiar constitutional position, a Christian Democrat National Councillor from Aarau, Mr. C. Ruettimann, asked the Federal Council in a written question whether Switzerland could not offer its good offices in the Northern Ireland conflict.

With nearly two months delay, the Government replied stating that it was deeply concerned by the deteriorating situation in Ulster and expressed the hope that the communities in the province would soon reach a peaceful settlement. The Federal Council added that the situation in Ulster was an internal British affair, excluding all possible intervention from a third party.

## CANTONAL

### Television trial

Five television journalists and producers who had brought an action for slander against the two television chiefs who had sacked them for allegedly distributing leaflets attacking French-Swiss TV for its "corruption and incompetence" were non suited by a Geneva court. Although the evidence gathered by the defendants as to the guilt of the five plaintiffs could not be regarded as "proof", the court decided that the former had no grounds to disbelieve this evidence and had therefore been entitled to take the measures they did.

The affair began last June, when anonymous leaflets were distributed by a television "Action Group" claiming that television was saddled by incompetence and corruption. On 1st July, one of the defendants, Mr. Schenker, Director of French-speaking television,

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