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for Sunday 14 September, the venue and full particulars to be circulated in due course.

Following the meeting, Mr S. Baumgartner, Manager of the Swiss Commercial Employment Office in Zurich, who had come to London on one of his periodic visits to the College, gave a talk on "The present Economic Situation in Switzerland and its effects on the professional education and future prospects of our young compatriots".

The speaker dealt at some length with the international crisis, which had affected many trades and industries in Switzerland with unexpected suddenness, bringing the closure of whole departments of old established firms and even bankruptcies in its wake. As a result, the spectre of unemployment was raising its ugly head, a new phenomenon in Switzerland's post-war history.

Those most affected were school leavers, young people returning from military service and others who had

completed their apprenticeship but were unable to find long-term employment.

To assist them in their future careers, various measures were being explored, such as the granting of bursaries for further linguistic and professional education. Government help was being sought in this matter and private, as well as municipal and cantonal assistance might also be forthcoming. In short, everything possible was being done to cushion the effects of the recession on the labour market.

Following his talk, Mr Baumgartner ably answered numerous questions, put to him by an eager audience, on a wide range of subjects, for which his long experience in dealing with both employers and employees stood him in good stead.

A cordial vote of thanks was accorded to Mr Baumgartner at the conclusion of his talk, which had been both informative and constructive.

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neutral states to international security", Dr. Aebi was more than ever qualified to speak on a subject which had, for a long time, not been developed at such length at the N.S.H.

In outlining Swiss security policy, the speaker referred to the 22nd June, 1973, report by the Federal Council on national defence. This important document updated earlier defence options defined in 1966, and set the guidelines for our national defence for the years ahead.

The present concept of "total defence" provides for military and non-military warfare, the latter being related to civil defence and psychological war. The risks of subversion and terrorism, which are taken very seriously by our defence planners, can be considered as a part of a new, non-military warfare calling for non-conventional methods.

Dr. Aebi stressed, however, that the backbone of our total defence system still rested on our traditional militia army. Its task was one of dissuasion. No small country could ever envisage another objective for its militia army. Its task was one of dissuasion. No small country could ever envisage another objective for its aggressor reflect on whether it would be worthwhile, in view of his expected losses, to invade our country. This philosophy would therefore be the same as the one which, it is said among patriotic Swiss, dissuaded Hitler from invading Switzerland in 1940. The Fuhrer eventually stormed through France, as we all know.

To back this dissuasion, Switzerland has a force of 2,000 professional officers and men, plus 36,000 conscripts at any one time in the year. Mobilisation, which can be achieved in 48 hours, would bring the total to 600,000 combat-ready men grouped in 12 divisions and 17 brigades organised within four army corps.

This impressive force, consisting in great part of infantry, would be deployed with an essentially defensive purpose. The controversy which used to divide military circles on whether Switzerland should have a mobile defence system (with much more mechanisation and air power) or rely on a more static system has definitely been resolved in favour of the latter. The degree of sophistication required of a modern, highly mobile, army was considered as incompatible with the short periods of training given to national servicemen.

Switzerland is nevertheless prepared for nuclear warfare and is training its forces accordingly. Although she has signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, her Parliament has not yet ratified it.

The speaker then went on to talk about the political aspects of neutrality. His listeners may have noted the quasi-legal language that was used in this respect. This was not surprising as the Swiss have more interest than any other people to see the concept of neutrality enshrined in the body of international

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

On 1st August, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Wetter will be celebrating their 51st wedding anniversary, and on 11th August, Mr. and Mrs. V. Bataillard will have been married 56 years. Mr. and Mrs. H. Suter will have their 54th anniversary on 22nd August and Mr. and Mrs. A. Kunzler will have been married 51 years the same day. Mr. and Mrs. E. Zwicky's 53rd wedding anniversary will take place on 28th August.

On 2nd August, Mr. V. Bataillard will be 94, and on 4th, Mr. B. Truninger (Zurich) will be 68. Mrs. A. Schmid (Glendower!) will have her birthday on 6th August, the same day as Dr. H. Rast who will be 84. Mrs. T. Senn will have her birthday on 9th of the month, and Mrs. M. Meier will be 61 on 10th August.

Also on 10th August, Mrs. A. Bachofen, of 24 Midholm, Barn Hill, Wembley Park, Middlesex, will be 75. On 15th August, Mr. F. Good, of Carmel, South Park, Gerrards Cross, Bucks, will celebrate his 75th birthday.

Best wishes and many happy returns of the day to all these readers and any others whose birthdays and anniversaries will take place within the next month.

Mr and Mrs Walter Zuber of The Grove, Ventnor, Isle of Wight, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on 1 June. Both are deeply loved and respected by local residents and their fellow Swiss on the Island for many years. They are perhaps best known for their traditional First of August celebrations. Their innumerable friends and the *Swiss Observer* wish them many more years of happiness together.

Mr and Mrs Max Luthert of 130 Elizabeth Avenue, Little Chalfont, Bucks., will celebrate their golden wedding anniversary on 30 September. Mr Luthert is a former employee of the Swiss Bank Corporation. May they too have many more years together.

### ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY

The Anglo-Swiss Society held a successful and well-attended evening on Thursday 24 April at the Dorchester Hotel.

The Duke of Grafton spoke on the European Architectural Heritage Year.

His exposé illustrated by slides, was most complimentary to Switzerland and was followed by many questions.

The meeting was presided over by Lord Sandford, accompanied by Lady Sandford. The guests included the Swiss Ambassador, Dr Albert Weitnauer, Lord and Lady Molso, Sir Derek and Lady Ezra and Mr and Mrs I. O. Chance.

At the Society's AGM, which took place before the Dinner, it was decided to increase subscriptions from £1 to £2.

### NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE

Under the heading "Swiss Security Policy - Possibilities, Limitations, Alternatives", Dr. Alfred Aebi, an official from the Federal Military Department in Bern gave a most interesting exposé at the May monthly meeting of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique. As the author of a doctoral thesis on the "contribution of

law. Dr. Aebi more than once referred to Switzerland's military "obligations" as a neutral country. These "obligations" were to prevent opening up a vacuum in central Europe which might attract outside intervention. It was in our foreign policy's "legal interest" to uphold neutrality and lend it as much credibility as possible.

The speaker neither defended nor rejected neutrality. His purpose was to set out its implications and, in this context, he was very realistic in his assessment of the value of the "good offices" which Switzerland was able to offer with the help of her neutrality. He said, to begin with, that the ability to act as a mediator in various situations of conflict should certainly not be an *end* to neutrality. Neutrality should serve the Swiss people first and foremost. That they should sometimes be asked to act as go-betweens or peace-makers is only a *consequence* of neutrality.

Secondly, the speaker refused to overestimate the effect of these good offices. He went as far as to say that they were part of a "myth". Acknowledging that Switzerland's services had been useful in situations of bilateral tension and in acting as go-between for countries that had severed their diplomatic relations, he said that only powers that carried a great deal of political weight were in a position to offer effective mediation in serious conflicts. He was implicitly alluding to situations like the Middle East, where Switzerland couldn't expect to play the same role as the U.S.

In other words, the notion that

claims that Switzerland helps to maintain peace by remaining neutral should be revised. Switzerland's stance, regarding the United Nations or on other international platforms, hadn't really reduced the risk of war.

Dr. Aebi's exposé was followed by a period of questioning and by two films. The first was a propaganda film on the Army made for the Swiss National Exhibition in Lausanne in 1964. It was a sabre-rattling production with a splurge, or frenzy, of explosions, gunfire, shelling, assaults, war cries and clattering weaponry which was highly entertaining. Some viewers must have thought the film a little frightening. To others, including the writer, it conveyed the picture of an army playing at war. The film contained some visually exciting snippets taken from the cockpit of Hunter jet fighters flying in close formation along alpine valleys. Another scene showed army sappers blowing down a good twenty pine trees to block the passage of "enemy" tanks. But, as Dr. Aebi had pointedly explained before the screening, such massive destruction of trees was not current Army practice. It just happened that the trees had to be felled to make way for a national road.

A second, completely different film portraying Switzerland with scenes of all aspects of its cultural and economic life completed an exceptionally long meeting.

It should be noted that among the thirty or so in attendance, Mr. Jean-Philippe Inebit had come all the way from Leeds to listen to a talk on a subject of particular interest to him, as

a dedicated pacifist. He rose during question-time to call on nations to let themselves be guided by the "spirit of Nicholas von Flue", in reference to the hermit who left his retreat in the mountains above Stans to make peace among warring cantons.

The full text will appear in next month's issue.

P.M.B.

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