

Switzerland and the Soviet

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SWITZERLAND AND THE SOVIET.

Berne, March 29 -- Denying any ideological motive or desire on the part of the Swiss to prolong ill-balanced foreign relations, Marcel Pilet-Golaz, chief of the Diplomatic Department (Foreign Office), in a seventy-minute address before the National Council this morning, swung the Social Democratic party back into line long enough for the withdrawal of a motion for a debate on the subject of immediate renewal of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

The motion had been presented by Ernst Reinhard. It said: "So that it may enjoy correct relations with all states, the Federal Council is invited to do its utmost, in so far as circumstances permit, to reestablish normal relations between Switzerland and Russia."

The motion was reduced to an expression of the party's desire for future consideration by the Federal Council at such time as "circumstances lend themselves to the normalization of relations with the Soviet Union".

The address, largely a recapitulation, surveyed all aspects of the problem since diplomatic and economic ties were cut in 1917, concluded that, however desirable it may eventually be to renew those relations, the delicate balance of Swiss wartime neutrality has a prior claim to consideration.

SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The war has brought a very considerable increase in the number of civil servants employed by our government. The ordinary administrative personnel has risen from about 42,000 to 49,000 while an additional 10,000 have found work in the special departments necessitated by war conditions.

The notion and introduction of Summertime which has never been popular amongst our agricultural population has been definitely discarded by the Federal Council.

Rumours of an early resumption of diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia are still persisting though no tentative announcement from official circles in Berne has so far appeared. The generally well-informed correspondent of the "Manchester Guardian" reports the following on January 26th: "Switzerland is the only neutral State in Europe that has never resumed diplomatic relations with Moscow since the Russian Revolution, although many times during the past twenty years public opinion in favour of doing so has found expression in Parliamentary discussion. The Federal Council's refusal to take action was always supported, however, by a considerable majority in the Swiss Parliament, particularly during the long years of the late Dr. Motta's tenure of the Foreign Ministry. The present demand for establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, though not universal, is certainly stronger than ever before. There is no doubt, however, that a decision by the Federal Council to reopen diplomatic relations with Russia would be endorsed by the greater part of the population."

The well-known Hotel Rigi-Staffel has been acquired by the town of Lucerne for 142,000 francs and with additional adjoining land under negotiation will be converted into a holiday home for the children of the canton.

The Fribourg government in order to encourage the insurance against damage caused by hail storms is assisting the farming community by contributing up to 30% of the respective premiums.

A meeting of musicians of Geneva convened by the director of the local "conservatoire" appointed a small committee to draw up rules and the constitution of a professional association whose membership would be limited to qualified musicians. This is to restrict the existing practice that practically anybody can style himself a professor of music.