

Aspects of Swiss Democracy

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I conclude this short address with the hope that you all enjoy seeing each other again in these rooms."

Although wind, rain and cold swept the Auckland streets on the 3rd of August, a bright and cheery evening awaited the large number of compatriots and friends, who travelled from far North and South to our social gathering. Although space does not permit us to mention each of the talented and versatile artists, who were so enthusiastically received by the audience, we wish to extend our thanks for the generous way they helped with the programme.

Trusting that next year conditions will allow us to hold another such happy reunion, I'll close with the good wishes of the Committee who hope to see you all next year.

B.R. Halmeyer,
Hon. Secretary.

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FAMOUS \$10,000,000 ART COLLECTION AGAIN DISPLAYED AT BASLE ART MUSEUM.

One of Europe's most famous art collections is again on public view in the Art Museum in Basle, Switzerland, after more than six years of concealment in mountain air-raid shelters. Recently, the last masterpiece of the more than 1,000-picture collection was transferred from huge cellars chiseled in rocky Alpine walls, back to the graceful halls of the Museum of St. Alban-Graben.

The collection, which has an estimated value of over \$10,000,000 is Switzerland's finest. On the first floor are works by the old masters, centering around Hans Holbein, the younger, who worked in Basle from 1515-1532. Dutch and Flemish masters are also prominently featured, as well as such titans as Leonardo da Vinci and El Greco. Modern master-works are grouped on the second floor, with some exceptionally fine paintings by Arnold Böcklin. Here, too, a room is devoted to some notable creations by Ferdinand Hodler, best known modern Swiss painter who was, until his death in 1918, an enormously vital factor in the Expressionist movement.

The Art Museum, completed in 1936 by Rudolf Christ and Paul Bonatz, is itself an excellent example of modern architectural trends in Switzerland. Its walls of limestone and Ticinese granite, two arcaded courtyards and graceful collonnades combine ultra-modern movement with traditional Swiss forms.

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ASPECTS OF SWISS DEMOCRACY.

We think our compatriots will be interested in a series of articles on Aspects of Swiss Democracy by the Swiss historian, Walo von Greyerz, which have just come to hand. In this number we give you the first article dealing with Features of the Swiss Character; the other articles will appear in later issues.

The author proceeds from a dictum of the Swiss historian, Karl Dändliker, who, in his History of Switzerland, wrote in 1883: "What distinguishes our confederation among the nations and peoples of Europe, what makes its worth and its importance, what makes it great and wealthy, and justifies its existence, is to be sought for in its political spirit".

To this the author in his preface adds: "It is a peculiar trait that we Swiss are not so much aware of this fact as might be expected. By word and picture we direct attention especially to the country's outward beauties, to her manners and customs; we pride ourselves on the quality of our industrial workmanship; on our sports achievements and, perhaps, on our works of art and mental culture. Nevertheless we are inclined to overlook the most remarkable and the most original achievement, which is contained in the political structure. There, in the democratic communalities which have

stood their test in many old and new forms, both, in confederation, cantons, parishes and corporations, which are well-balanced between the different tongues, between town and country, there is the confirmation of what a foreigner rightly terms 'the marvel of Switzerland'.

In recent years historians have clearly demonstrated, how deeply Swiss democracy is rooted in the past. In these articles Walo von Greyerz tries to show how the Swiss confederation lives at present in all its diversity. If it be true that the confederate democracy culminates under the cupola of the parliament building, it is no less true that its consistency and constancy are mainly due to its roots reaching deep into the substance of many a venerable yet living form, and into the substance of numerous newer forms of democratic community and are due also to the spirit that lives within.

Though the existing order is, on the whole, described and acknowledged to be the positive result of the Swiss' political spirit, we are keeping in mind that these forms are not created for eternity and that it is incumbent on our time to find and to shape the forms suited to its own spirit and needs. This, then, is the task of our generation and especially of the young. In so doing one will, in good Swiss manner, build up on the existing order; and for this reason these articles may be found suggestive at the beginning of a new epoch."

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SWISS CITIZENSHIP COSTS THOUSANDS.

Twenty-nine Swiss, mostly residents of Germany, have lost citizenship because they were accused of conspiracy against Switzerland's security, A.P. reports from Berne.

In addition, fifty-six persons lost Swiss citizenship in 1945 because they had made false declarations to obtain Swiss nationality or because their conduct was prejudicial to Switzerland.

Loss of Swiss citizenship in many cases is a financial loss. It costs a lot of money to become a Swiss citizen. Government statistics showed that in 1943 in 1,684 cases of naturalization, individuals paid the equivalent of \$361,000 to the communities and \$170,000 to the cantons of their residence.

Individual fees for naturalization vary among the various communities and cantons. The authorities of the communities and of the cantons decide whether citizenship can be granted, but the Federal Justice and Police Department is the final authority. The procedure is long and rigorous.

"We do not want any one to become a Swiss citizen who has worshipped foreign ideologies or has taken an active part in foreign politics," a spokesman of the Justice and Police Department said.

A foreigner must have lived for many years in the community to which he would like to belong, before he can fill out an application for naturalization.

"In the last ten years," said the representative of the Justice and Police Department, "the practice has been not to grant citizenship to a foreigner unless he has resided in one and the same canton for at least twenty years."

In 1945, 814 foreigners with their families, a total of 1,526 persons, were granted Swiss citizenship.

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1947 FOOD CRISIS IN EUROPE SEEN.

Europe's food situation, despite considerable imports from Canada and the United States, will show only limited improvement with the summer harvest and by September will again be critical, a June survey prepared