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democracy. The will of this majority should be respected and it is natural that those who defy it should pay a price.

While Parliament agreed to consider a military-exemption legislation, three National Councillors asked the Government to consider apparently contradictory proposals providing for women's military service. Two parliamentarians asked for a voluntary service, and a third for a compulsory one. The Federal Council replied that it would accept these proposals as long as they were not binding and asked the M.P. who had called for obligatory service to alter the form of his request from that of a private member's bill (motion) to a question ("postulate"). The Government stressed that women military service presented many problems which would take time to settle.

The fact that some M.P.'s are asking for *women* to serve when conscientious objection is on the order of the day shows how concerned many Swiss are over the future of national defence.

—*Swiss Observer.*

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## ZURICH — AN UNEXCITING CITY? . . .

The verdicts passed on Zurich by its most famous visitors have been anything but unanimous. The English man of letters Arthur Symons closes his remarks on Zurich with the words: "The atmosphere of the second-rate weighs heavily upon one." By comparison, Benvenuto Cellini called it a "marvellous city bright as a jewel", Goethe said it gave "a charming and ideal conception of the finest and highest civilisation", and Paul Valery was hardly less positive in his praise.

Where does the truth lie? When Picasso first saw Zurich he is said to have picked out the chimney of a district heating plant as its most interesting architectural feature. Certainly Zurich has neither the impressive historical pattern of Berne nor the bright modern vistas of younger cities. It is not a Gothic town, nor a Baroque town; it is a mixture of all styles and epochs, yet they blend in an unexpectedly pleasant accord. Its old town is full of atmosphere, its seven guildhouses still bear witness to a glorious past, and the famous Bahnhofstrasse, a long window-front of luxury, has a certain grandeur where it opens upon the wide, lucent expanse of the lake.

Today Zurich is of course first and foremost a commercial city, pre-eminent in the fields of banking and insurance, with a stock exchange, a busy airport and plans for an underground. It is also an efficient city, a city of modern conveniences in which almost every family has a telephone and there are no slums, no beggars and hardly any smog, with a host of good hotels and restaurants waiting to satisfy the needs of the tourist. Just this

efficiency, however, may seem all too mechanical and superficial to the casual observer. Where is the warmth, where the individuality, where the pulsating life some other cities have to offer?

The answer to this probably becomes clear only to those who stay in Zurich for some length of time. Efficiency and comfort can be very reassuring in themselves in everyday life. But gradually one notices that Zurich has something more: a quiet well-being that tends to pervade one's existence and that is based on the sensible and reasoned discipline of its inhabitants. Everything is clean and functional, and even in the poorer quarters you might search a long time for the weed-grown yards or heaps of junk that disfigure the back streets of so many other towns. The citizens of Zurich have a communal conscience that will tolerate no eyesores. You are more likely to turn a corner and come upon old fountains or well-tended flower beds.

The dialect of Zurich is harsh, but nowhere are so many people able and willing to speak other languages, above all French English or Italian. The people of Basle claim that the Zurichois do not know how to celebrate, but the stranger at their spring festival, when they burn an effigy of winter and the guilds turn out in all their glory, will be amazed at the riot of colour that fills the streets. In short, the virtues of Zurich may not be conspicuous, but they go deep.

—Stanley Mason.



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