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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

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### FEDERAL.

#### SWITZERLAND'S FOREIGN TRADE.

Swiss imports during the month of October, amounted to 649,760 tons, valued at 150.7 million francs, as compared with 143.6 million in September and 128 million a year ago.

A slight fall is registered in Exports, at 80,900 tons or 119.9 mill. francs as against 123 mill. in September and 84.6 mill. in October 1936. England was the best customer for boots and shoes and bought over 700,000 francs out of a total of 1.68 mill. Textiles accounted for 22.9 mill.; watch-industry for 23.84 mill. or 2,886,320 pocket- and wristlet-watches and 2.55 mill. francs for parts; machinery for 14.56, aluminium 4.4, instruments and apparatus 4.34, metal manufactures 6.6, and vehicles 1.9 mill. francs. In the chemical industry, pharmaceutical products and drugs yielded 5.2, dyes 7.8 and other 2.4 mill. francs.

For the first ten months of the year we find imports at 1509.6 and exports at 1037.1 mill. francs, leaving an unfavourable trade balance of 472.5 mill. francs, compared with 258.5 a year ago. This year our suppliers rank as follows: 1. Germany 35.8; 2. France 22.7; 3. U.S.A. 10.3; 4. Italy 9.4; 5. England 8.5; 6. Belgium 6.3 mill. francs. The list changes somewhat when looking for customers. Germany leads with purchases of 472.5 mill. francs, compared with 258.5 a year 12.5, France 11.1, U.S.A. 10.8 and Belgium 4.4. England, Italy and to a lesser degree the United States are the only countries with, to us, a favourable trade balance.

Let's hope you did not hear similar details at last night's C.S.C. Banquet; some years ago you would, without a doubt. Now look for such information in the S.O., and if you are not interested, just turn the page.

#### DISMISSAL OF SWISS ARMY OFFICERS.

On account of various disorderly acts which occurred during a military inspection at Stans, in which the mountain regiments 19 and 20 were involved, the Federal Council has decided to deprive various officers of their command, they will be put "à disposition."

#### MINISTER BARBEY RETIRES.

Monsieur F. Barbey, Swiss Minister in Brussels, is shortly retiring from his post which he has held for the last 19 years.

#### RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION IN SWITZERLAND.

In the 1938 Budget, the Swiss Federal Railways have provided over 400,000 francs for the electrification on the standard 15-kV system of the branch line from Le Day to Le Pont, near the French frontier station of Vallorbe. The short private line between Le Pont and Le Brassus is also to be electrified.

#### A DISTINGUISHED SWISS SURGEON.

Professor C. Henschen, of the University Surgical-Clinic, Basle, Switzerland, opened a week of lectures at the Medical School of Manchester University on Thursday, following a series of lectures given by Professor John Morley, of Manchester University, at Basle in June. Professor Henschen's first lecture was on the crystalline structure of bone.

Introducing the lecturer, Professor Morley said that the system of exchange of professors was not new between various universities. It was not even new to Manchester, for Professor Fleure had lectured in Basle some little time ago, but it was new so far as medical lectures were concerned. In Professor Henschen they had got a great figure in Continental surgery, and, as the list of his lectures showed, he was a surgeon who did not restrict himself to some narrow corner of surgery. He claimed the whole of surgery as his field.

### NAZIS TO EXPEL ANOTHER JOURNALIST.

Herr Hermann Böschenstein, correspondent in Berlin of the *Basler Nachrichten*, has been informed by the authorities that his permit to stay in Germany will not be renewed when it expires at the end of the year.

It has been indicated to Herr Böschenstein on several occasions that his reporting of events did not meet with the approval of the authorities, although the complaints seem to have related not to the accuracy of the facts reported but to the conclusions which he drew from them. The keen interest of clerical circles in Basle in the German church dispute was reflected as a matter of course in Herr Böschenstein's dispatches, which dealt fully with the incidents of the struggle and the issues involved.

The *Basler Nachrichten* is a Liberal Democratic organ, generally regarded as inclining to the Right. Herr Böschenstein's predecessor as Correspondent in Berlin was expelled from Germany two years ago. The case of Herr Böschenstein is being discussed at the moment between the Swiss and German Governments, but it is not expected that the German authorities will reverse their decision.

### SWISS ARMY WOMEN.

Three hundred and fifty women volunteers have just been enrolled in the Air Defence Corps of the Canton of Zurich. This is the first Swiss canton to enrol women in army services.

### ROYALISTS ORDERED TO LEAVE SWITZERLAND.

The 700 French Royalists who attended a reception held at Versoix, near Geneva, by the Comte de Paris, son of the Duc de Guise, left Switzerland at the request of the Swiss police. The authorities ordered this step on the ground that the meeting was a political one; but the Comte de Paris declared that it was not political, and that there was no connection between the gathering of Royalists and the *Cagoulards* ("Hooded Ones") in France.

The Comte and Comtesse de Paris and their suite have not left Switzerland, and the Federal Government, who are making an inquiry into the affair, have so far taken no decision about their continued stay in this country.

### REFERENDUM ON FREEMASONRY.

A Popular Referendum is to be held throughout Switzerland on Sunday next to decide whether Freemasonry shall be banned or not.

Under Swiss law a plebiscite must be taken if 50,000 Swiss Nationals petition the Government to this effect. Such a petition is known as an "Initiative."

The newspaper, "Der Bund," of Berne, publishes documents on which it bases the contention that the "Initiative" in this particular was prompted by "Frontist" (Fascist) circles, and was prepared and supported by foreign propaganda agents, in collaboration with Swiss Frontist representatives.

"Never have foreign influences meddled in a more shameful manner in Swiss affairs," the "Bund" asserts. "The consequences will only be evident on Sunday, but we are convinced that the publication of these documents will make its influence felt later."

The question of banning Freemasonry has been under discussion in Switzerland for some time. The Catholic Church and Catholic Conservative party, it is understood, will leave their adherents free to vote as their conscience and convictions dictate, considering that Freemasonry cannot be regarded as a religious matter.

### SWISS CINEMA STATISTICS.

At the end of the year 1936, 34,500,000 francs were invested in Swiss cinemas and the expenses for the year and throughout the country amounted to 29,200,000 francs, resulting in a loss of 2,000,000 francs.

Nine new cinemas were built during the year. The decision to abandon certain projects was taken mainly on account of an agreement which was concluded between the Swiss Cinema Proprietors' Association and the Associations of Film Renters of French, German and Italian Switzerland, who agreed to work together to prevent the construction of additional cinemas where not absolutely necessary.

The 354 cinemas in Switzerland contain 132,000 seats, which gives a general average for the whole country of 32 seats for every 1,000 inhabitants.

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

The King and Queen of Bulgaria have stayed a few days in Zurich, the visit had no official character.

#### BERNE.

On the occasion of the 103rd anniversary of the founding of the University in Berne, the degree of *doctor honoris causa* has been conferred on Hans Fehlmans, Engineer in Berne, and M. Karl Täuber, head of the firm Trüb, Täuber & Cie. A.G., in Zurich.

#### GLARUS.

The "Landrat" elected Jacques Glarner President of the Cantonal Bank, in succession to old-national-councillor Heinrich Jenny, who died recently. The new President has been a member of the Committee of the bank since 1920 and of the Board since 1923.

#### ZUG.

Do you remember that part of the many lessons in Swiss history which would give you the year of the battle of "Morgarten"? I have just read that it took place on the 15th November, but the Swiss paper did not think it necessary to give such a well-known fact as the year in question. Or, perhaps the good man who wrote the article had forgotten it as well! Still, as you ought to know, and not having a suitable reference book at hand, I will make a guess and say, it was in 1315. And if it is wrong, well, kreuziget ihn! What of the news, this year's news? I apologise for digressing before even commencing the report I had in mind. Every year since 1912 a shooting competition is held on or near the field of battle; in 1912 the number of competitors was 204. This year, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the foundation of this festival of remembrance over 900 crack shots took part. President of the Morgarten Committee since 1912 is Franz Müller of Zug.

#### BASEL.

The well-known obstetrician and family doctor of Basel, Dr. Hans Vogelbach has celebrated his 70th birthday.

The traditional Basel University celebration, their Dies Academicus took its usual course.

Dr. Paul Karrer, professor of Chemistry at the University in Zurich, received the title of *Dr.med.*; Dr. jur. Edgar Refardt, well known for Chemistry at the Federal Technical High School in Zurich, also received the honorary decree of *Dr.med.*; Dr. iur. Edgar Refardt, well known for his activities in the library of Basel's University, more especially as regards music, was made *Dr. phil.h.c.*, in company with Dr. E. Briner, of Geneva, for his services in chemical research.

#### TICINO.

Pastor Nicolas Bolt, of the Protestant Church in Lugaggia, near Lugano, has celebrated his 50th anniversary as rector of the church. Pastor Bolt, who is 73 years of age has written various works amongst them "Svizzero" which was translated in various languages.

#### VAUD.

At the communal elections in Canton Vaud, where the bourgeois parties formed a common front, the Socialists, allied to the Communists, lost ground. The Socialists were heavily defeated at Lausanne, where they have had a majority since 1936.

M. Maurice Lugeon, for forty years Professor of Geology at the University of Lausanne, has received the degree of *doctor honoris causa* from the Technical University in Zurich. The French Ambassador has presented Professor Lugeon with the insignia of grand officer of the "Légion d'honneur."

M. Marins Chamot, the founder and manager of the "Théâtre vaudois" in Lausanne, has died at the age of 58.

### LA POLITIQUE.

#### Un projet malencontreux.

Il semble bien que, grâce à l'attitude énergique des autorités saint-galloises, soutenues par l'opinion publique du canton et de toute la Suisse, les promoteurs de la construction d'un vaste monument funéraire, à la mémoire des soldats allemands morts en Suisses, devront abandonner leur projet. Le chef du département politique fédéral n'a pas caché au ministre d'Allemagne que l'on voyait d'un mauvais œil, en Suisse, l'idée

d'un pareil édifice. Le Conseil d'Etat saint-gallois se retranche derrière la loi sur les cimetières, qui lui fournit un argument juridique très opportun. La discussion qui s'est élevée au Grand Conseil ne laisse aucun doute sur les sentiments de la population, qui voit, non sans raison, dans la construction projetée une véritable provocation. Le dernier mot appartient à la municipalité, compétente pour donner ou refuser son approbation aux plans qui lui sont soumis. Etant donné les réactions que l'on sait, il est à peu près certain qu'elle répondra négativement.

C'est une tradition de notre pays de s'associer volontiers aux témoignages de reconnaissance que des étrangers adressent, sur notre territoire, à leurs compatriotes morts au service de leur patrie et qui sont enterrés chez nous. De telles marques de gratitude sont, en elles-mêmes, hautement respectables, et la courtoisie nous fait un devoir de les entourer de bienveillance. Jusqu'à présent, les manifestations de cette espèce n'ont jamais justifié la moindre critique, parce que ceux qui les organisaient ont su faire preuve de tact. Une réunion au champ du repos, près d'un monument où l'on dépose des couronnes et devant lequel on prononce des discours, ne saurait porter ombrage à personne, pas plus d'ailleurs que les plaques commémoratives, discrètement apposées ici ou là, en l'honneur des soldats de telle ou telle nation.

Il fallait les Allemands pour provoquer un débat pénible autour du souvenir des morts de la grande guerre. On eût très bien compris qu'ils se préoccupassent de recueillir et de rassembler les ossements des leurs dans un mausolée commun. Mais le sens le plus élémentaire des convenances eût dû leur suggérer d'élever, dans un cimetière, un monument de proportions normales, comme on l'a fait en maints endroits. Au lieu de cela, ils ont conçu l'idée d'une immense bâtisse, qui se dresserait sur territoire suisse, près du lac de Constance et dominerait la contrée comme une forteresse. Il y a là un manque d'égards évident envers le peuple dont ces gens reçoivent l'hospitalité. Nos confédérés de la Suisse orientale redoutent de plus, et on les comprend sans peine, que ce lieu ne devienne un but de pèlerinages fréquents des nazistes séjournant en Suisse et de ceux d'outre-Rhin, avec cortèges, chants et harangues. Une pareille exploitation de la mémoire des soldats à des fins de propagande politique n'est nullement invraisemblable pour qui connaît les méthodes du Troisième Reich. Mais de quelque libéralisme que l'on veuille s'inspirer, elle n'est pas tolérable, pour un Etat souverain et neutre, comme est le nôtre jusqu'à nouvel avis.

Les autres colonies étrangères se rendent parfaitement compte de certaines nuances, sensibles aux esprits doués d'un peu de délicatesse. Nos voisins du nord, eux, n'ont pas saisi tout ce qu'il y a d'insolite et de déplacé dans leur initiative. Il sied donc de le leur expliquer assez nettement pour empêcher tout malentendu. C'est d'autant plus nécessaire que les auteurs du fâcheux projet n'ont pas agi sans ordres supérieurs: toute l'affaire a été montée en Allemagne même.

Mais nous ne sommes pas mûrs pour subir l'invasion, fût-ce sous cette forme déguisée. Peut-être le comprendra-t-on à Berlin? ...

Léon Savary.

(Tribune de Genève).

## ARMY REORGANIZATION.

### An Examination of the Swiss System.

By CAPT. J. R. J. MACNAMARA, M.P.

It is common in music-halls to make the standard joke about the Swiss Navy. There is no cause for any Briton, however, to joke about the Swiss Army. The Swiss have always been excellent fighters. Their mercenaries were for long the most famous and the most sought after in Europe. Ever since William Tell accomplished his famous feat with the arrow and the apple the Swiss have taken a particular pride in shooting. Nowadays they have their rifle clubs, and boys from the earliest possible ages may be seen bicycling after school hours out to a nearby range, there to be taught to interest themselves in and be proficient at the handling of a rifle.

Switzerland is a democratic country — as democratic a State, in fact, as any in the world. No Swiss, however, considers it incompatible with democracy that he should defend his heritage and prepare himself beforehand so that he may do it the more efficiently should a crisis ever arise. Virtually all Swiss then become soldiers, and they train for the defence of their fatherland. Their system is of great interest, because it is essentially a defensive system, the Swiss being a race who, like ourselves, have no aggressive intentions, but who are determined not to lose what they have built up in the course of history. It is also worth study by us, as it is efficient and produces the security required. Finally, although it demands hardness of its young men, it imposes no hardships on them by unduly interfering with their careers.

Roughly speaking, it is the national duty of every man between the ages of 19 and 48 to defend his country. For the whole of this period he is organized into a militia, what we might term a compulsory Territorial Army. Unlike the conscript standing armies of Europe, the Swiss Army does not demand a long period of full-time service at an age when young men are trying to get a footing in the professions of life. They serve full time only for from two to three months, according to their arm of the Service. After that they have to put in so many attendances a year, as does an English Territorial voluntarily. Once a year they must attend a refresher course, or what we should call annual training, for from seven to sixteen days, according to circumstances.

It will be seen that this imposes hardship on no one, and as it is compulsory all employers of labour have to co-operate and not only the patriotic ones, who thereby become penalized for their patriotism.

Up till the age of 32 a man is considered to be a front-line soldier. After that age he passes into what might be called partial reserve, into the Landwehr from the age of 33 to 40, and then into the Landsturm for the rest of his service.

The Army is organized into six divisions, most of which are apportioned stretches of the frontier to defend. The divisions are organized on modern lines. Some are mobile. The armament and equipment call for no comment, except for the presence of cyclist battalions and, perhaps, the great reliance nowadays placed on the machine-gun. There are also mountain brigades specially trained and equipped for service in what would seem to us almost impossible districts.

The officers are recruited in very much the same way as the men. More is expected of them. Their initial training is longer, as are their refresher courses during their service. It is interesting to note that the Swiss have an aversion to generals. They consider them a bar to progress — as I have already pointed out, the Swiss are very proud of their efficiency. They do not appoint them at all if it can be helped and prefer normally to promote them when an emergency arises, such as on the outbreak of a war. They believe they thus get the best men. Of course, it is a real citizen force, and the citizens like to feel that they are in control of it, as, in fact, they are. One may find that where one is staying the local commander responsible for that bit of frontier is the local bank manager, who in his spare time studies the military arts and makes himself proficient in them. His chief of staff, equally keen on the same hobby, may be the local chemist.

I am writing this article on the Swiss Army because we may be hearing a great deal about it in the near future, not because we expect an attack on Switzerland (although that is not out of the question), but as a basis for what may possibly have to happen in Britain. It would not be the first time that the Swiss system would have been taken as a model for others to copy. Britons would very rightly be suspicious of ideas savouring of future aggressive intentions. I do not believe, however, that the country is at present in a mood to turn down anything that, after careful consideration, it feels to be a necessity for its defence.

The Navy has always been a popular Service, for the public, rightly or wrongly, has felt that it is purely a defensive arm, a necessity if the seas are to be kept open for our food and our commerce. The Air Force is popular among its men for economic reasons, but the public are not quite so sure of it yet, although the tendency is to look upon it in much the same light as the Navy. The Territorials are popular, increasingly so every year, because the public know they are primarily for purely defensive purposes. There is an age-old suspicion of a standing army. Nowadays mothers fear their sons may get mixed up in foreign entanglements. Any form of national service would be more welcome if based on the Territorial rather than the Regular Army.

I shall discuss in a later article why attention may be turned to the Swiss system. To put it briefly, attention is bound to turn, if it is established that more numbers are required, to any system which gives security without expense and efficiency without waste of time. Furthermore, British character exudes the principle of self-defence, but not aggression.

There is a great psychological difference between something voluntary and something compulsory. It is true that volunteers may be better in spirit, but not necessarily so. It is arguable, however, that all are volunteers if a democracy merely voluntarily votes itself into doing something for the common good compulsory. Spirit is largely fanned by interest, and that is dependent on leadership. Where the psychological difference is most noticeable (and in our case most dangerous) is in the treatment meted out to volunteers as opposed to others. If men had to join they would get the equipment, and no pains would be spared in their training. As volunteers, however, they are not taken sufficiently seriously, to the great disservice of the nation.

(United Services Review.)

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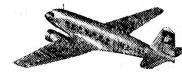
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