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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

A MESSAGE OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL.

During last week's crisis the Federal Council had addressed the following message to Hitler and President Bénés :

“ Faisant écho aux messages de M. le président des Etats-Unis d'Amérique, le Conseil fédéral suisse adresse simultanément à S.E. le chancelier du Reich allemand et à S.E. le président de la République tchécoslovaque un appel ému en faveur de la paix. Ferment attachée à sa neutralité traditionnelle, qui répond à sa structure même, la Confédération est résolue à rester rigoureusement à l'écart de tout conflit. Le Conseil fédéral n'entend donc pas s'immiscer dans les questions controversées, ni même exprimer un avis sur la procédure qui permettrait de les résoudre. ”

“ Il ne peut taire, en revanche, son impression que si une guerre entre la Tchécoslovaquie et l'Allemagne ne pouvait être évitée, plusieurs autres nations risqueraient d'être entraînées à y prendre part. Les dommages moraux et les ruines inimaginables qui en résulteraient pour le monde entier, pour les belligérants en première ligne et même pour ceux qui ne participeraient pas à la guerre, seraient si graves qu'aucune voix, si modeste soit celle qui l'élève, ne saurait renoncer à se faire entendre en faveur d'un règlement pacifique du différend. ”

“ Le Conseil fédéral est certain que cette démarche sera comprise par les deux parties dans son vrai sens de profonde amitié. Elle est soutenue par les vieux ardents de toutes les mères et de tout le peuple suisse unanime. ”

SWISS TRIBUTE TO MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

The people of the canton of Neuchâtel have decided to present Mr. Chamberlain with a gold chronometer.

The “ Journal de Genève ” has opened a book in which all the inhabitants of Geneva may inscribe their names testifying to their gratitude to the British Prime Minister. The newspaper states : —

“ We invite all the inhabitants of Geneva, which is the city of the Red Cross and the city of the League and of the International Red Cross, to sign an address which will be submitted to Mr. Chamberlain and which will give him the grateful homage of our city. ”

“ We know that if our soldiers have not had to leave for the frontier it is mainly due to the persistent efforts of this noble Englishman. Geneva will not forget. ”

RE-UNION OF BASLE TOWN WITH BASLE COUNTRY.

By a popular vote the electorate of the two cantons of Basle City and Basle Country accepted by 25,719 ayes to 14,654 noes the reunification of the two into one canton proposed by the two councils. The division of the territories which is thus ended dates from 1833.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR TO A BLACKOUT.

Airmen who flew over Switzerland on Tuesday night, when there was a complete blackout over the whole country, stated that the experiment was a success. The train service was maintained as usual and no delays were recorded.

The police had, however, to fine a few persons who had not taken the necessary precautions. This was the case with two retired clergymen in Zürich who left their windows open and their rooms fully lighted, the one for reasons of conscience, the other on the ground that the Con-

stitution does not provide for anti-aircraft defence.

TUG O' WAR IN SWITZERLAND.

While the world's attention is focused upon the political struggle around the question of war and peace, Switzerland has been the scene of a minor tug o' war between the Federal authorities and the Swiss National Bank. Ever since the devaluation of the Swiss franc in 1936 there has been spasmodic agitation in favour of the utilisation of the bookkeeping profits of the National Bank on the gold reserve for the purpose of public works and rearmament. Suggestions to that end have repeatedly been put forward and pressed with much vigour, but until now the National Bank has always succeeded in resisting them. At present, however, it is the Federal Council which has put forward a suggestion for the utilisation of the gold profit. Undaunted by this growth of pressure, the Board of the Swiss National Bank continues to resist. At a recent meeting the Board of the National Bank put forward a formidable array of arguments against the proposals. At the same time, however, it is prepared to meet the proposals half way by offering the Federal Government and the Cantonal Governments exceptional credits on very favourable terms for the purpose for which they would like to utilise the profit on the gold reserve.

SWISS WARNING TO REFUGEES.

The Swiss Federal Government decided that German subjects classed under the Nuremberg laws as “ non-Aryans ” should be prohibited from entering or travelling through Switzerland unless provided with a special visa from a Swiss Consulate.

This measure, which is to be enforced immediately, is a precaution against any renewed influx of German Jewish refugees.

The Swiss Government emphasises that no permanent right can be accorded to German Jewish refugees already in this country, and that during their temporary sojourn here they must not indulge in any profession, business or vocation.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

GOLDEN JUBILEE FESTIVITIES

MEMBERS' EVENING

on

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14th, 1938

at

Pagani's Restaurant,

Great Portland Street, W.1.

(TOWN DRESS) 6.30 for 7 p.m.

JUBILEE BANQUET and BALL

on

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15th, 1938

at the

Trocadero, Piccadilly Circus, W.1.

(EVENING DRESS) 6.30 for 7 p.m.

TICKETS for both functions at 18/-; for Members' Evening only 5/- and for Banquet only 14/6 can be obtained at Swiss House, 34-35, Fitzroy Square, W.1. (Tel. Museum 6663), City Office, 24, Queen Victoria Street, E.C.4 (Tel. City 3310), and Swiss Observer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2 (Tel. Clerkenwell 2321/2).

NEW SWISS LAW TO " STUDY POLITICAL CINEMATOGRAPHY."

On October 12th a new film import law will come into force in Switzerland.

The Swiss Federal Council has decreed that cinematograph films must, in future, only be permitted to enter the country after having received the permission of the Home Office, which is given the power to fix the quota.

The chief object of this new law is to institute an exact control over all imports, without which it is impossible to study the problems of “ political cinematograph. ”

The new law does not interfere with the question of censorship, which remains in the hands of the different cantonal authorities.

SWISS OFFICER'S HOLIDAY.

Lieut. Hans Schwarz, Swiss poet and journalist, and super enthusiastic horseman, returns to Berne after eight weeks' holiday in Great Britain and Ireland.

During the last two months he has ridden 1,400 miles through Ireland, Scotland, and the North of England. He started in Dublin where he bought “ For Ever,” a 7-year-old mare with a grand hunting record, although Lieut. Schwarz has never seen a fox hunt, and rather dislikes the idea of one. For a month he rode in Ireland and had a wonderful time.

“ The people were marvellous,” he said. “ They all seem to be passionately fond of horses, and wherever I went they had heard of me and my ride. I have never met such friendly people. ”

Then he and “ For Ever ” crossed over to Glasgow and rode up Loch Lomond into Perthshire and down from Loch Tay to Stirling, Edinburgh, and Carlisle.

From Carlisle Lieut. Schwarz went southward on the main road through Lancaster and Preston to Liverpool, then on through Chester to Birmingham. From Birmingham he and “ For Ever ” returned to London by train for the continuous hard surface of the big modern motor-roads was a terrible strain on the mare's legs and feet, in spite of the patent Swiss type of non-slip shoe with which she was shod.

“ I did not like the roads, and there was very little grass on which to go,” he said. “ Motorists were not very considerate. ”

A big sunburnt man, Lieut. Schwarz weighs 16 stone and carried nearly 50lb of luggage, so that the mare's total was about 270lb. He was able to cover about 35 to 40 miles a day. His holiday has cost him less than £100, including the £50 he paid for “ For Ever. ”

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The death has occurred in Kilchberg of M. A. Lüscher-Ruof, Manager of the Lindt-Sprungli works in Kilchberg, at the age of 63.

* * *

Five persons lost their lives in a fire which broke out at premises at the Preiergasse in Zurich. The names of the victims are: Walter Staub, Ernest Grimm, Erich and Albert Odermatt, 3 and 6 years old respectively and their uncle, Albert Odermatt. The causes of this disastrous fire have not yet been ascertained.

BERNE.

The newly erected municipal orphanage was inaugurated last week in Berne, the building, which cost 1,750 Mill. has room for 75 children.

* * *

At a Shareholders Meeting of the “ Spar und Leihkasse ” in Berne, it was decided to accept the offer of the late Manager and the Directors of a sum of 1 million francs, there will be therefore no further Court actions instituted against these former Bank Officers.

SOLOTHURN.

The death is reported from Solothurn of Dr. E. Tatarinoff, Professor at the “ Kantonsschule, ” and President of the “ Schweiz. Gesellschaft für Urgeschichte. ”

* * *

M. Ferdinand von Arx, for twenty-two years a member of the cantonal government, has celebrated his 70th birthday.

GENEVA.

Burglars entered the premises of the firm "La Samaritaine" in Geneva, and rifled the contents of a safe containing 15,000frs.

M. Julien Fleggenheimer, the Geneva architect who was one of the designers of the League of Nations building, died at Geneva on Saturday at the age of 58. He was well known also as a water-colour painter and his works were much appreciated in Paris, where he had terminated his art studies after having successfully completed his studies in law, as he at first intended to be called to the Bar.

TICINO.

On the occasion of the official day of the "Foire Suisse" in Lugano, M. Motta, head of the Federal Political Dept., was the principal guest; during the Banquet he made a patriotic speech.

NEUCHATEL.

The "Feuille d'Avis" in Neuchâtel has issued a special number on the occasion of its 200th Anniversary.

THE STOCK EXCHANGE OF ZURICH.

(By Leu & Co.'s Bank, Ltd., Zurich.)

The trading on our Swiss Exchanges during the whole month of September was dominated entirely by political events, which followed each other on a very rapid scale. Whereas a week or two ago war all over Europe seemed imminent and unavoidable, the mere announcement of the Munich conference of the four principal European Nations gave hope again for a peaceful settlement at the eleventh hour.

It was logical therefore, that the public over here was very nervous during all these times. It so happened that one day stocks and bonds were thrown overboard at big losses, the same to be repurchased on the following day with substantial premiums, whenever political news seemed more optimistic.

Violent price variations took place on several occasions and the declines were generally more pronounced than the gains. The following quotations may give a picture of the extreme optimism and pessimism reigning these last days:

October 1st, 1938.

	August	lowest during	September
	31st	the month	30th
Schweiz. Kreditanstalt	672.—	550.—	674.—
Elektrobank	558.—	430.—	525.—
Motor-Columbus	294.—	215.—	278.—
Elektrizitäts- & Verkehrs-			
Ges.	168.—	110.—	154.—
Italo-Suisse	152.—	110.—	148.—
Schweiz. Rückversicherung	3970.—	3500.—	3850.—
Ad. Saurer	275.—	210.—	265.—
Aluminium	2710.—	2500.—	2735.—
Lonza	539.—	450.—	535.—
Nestlé	1240.—	1120.—	1240.—
Sulzer	710.—	610.—	710.—

SOME FACTS ABOUT SWISS HISTORY.

By Prof Dr. ERNST GAGLIARDI.

The Swiss Confederation, as a State, belongs to the historically more recent political formations of the Continent. Whilst its cultural formation goes back to pre-historic times, it was only at the middle of the 13th century that the evolution commenced which, shortly before the Reformation, led to the separation of the southern Alemannic territory from the German Empire. This separation resulted less from a logically developed, deliberate movement towards independence, for at the outset this hardly existed, than in consequence of a chain of manifold circumstances. It can only be suggested here that since the middle of the 13th century the struggle waged by the Central Swiss Cantons (Waldstätte) — Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden — against the Royal House of Hapsburg which menaced their administrative independence and was, moreover, since 1440 practically in hereditary possession of Imperial power. From an early date the democratically organised rural districts in Central Switzerland had exercised a magnetic attraction over an ever increasing radius. In 1332 Lucerne, which was formerly Austrian, associated itself with its neighbours across the lake. In 1351 the City of Zurich joined them. In 1352/1353 Zug, Glarus, and above all Berne, who just previously, with tenacious energy, had gained the leadership in the realm of Burgundy, also united themselves to the nucleus. Whilst elsewhere towns-people and peasants remained separate, in the domain of present-day Switzerland they organised themselves for joint action. This phenomenon does not merely exist in the unparalleled energy of such democratic tendencies as were cradled in the

valley districts of Central Switzerland and above all in Schwyz, which had obtained only half-privileges with sovereign liberty from Emperor Friedrich II. Even more astounding is the rare political talent of the local leaders. They cast about everywhere for confederates, were clever enough to gather communities of similar views or to create movements fully in agreement with their own.

Elementary military power helped the tendencies towards self-government to victory. In 1315 the peasants from Central Switzerland defeated, as Morgarten on the Lake of Aegeri, the cavalry corps of Leopold of Austria who threatened their country with invasion. The experience they had gained on the lowland battle-fields of Germany and Italy was applied by them in their mountainous country. Whilst the Barons were triumphant elsewhere, the Hapsburgs looked helplessly on at a strengthening development which cast aside all feudal power. The Battle of Sempach of 1386 became to a certain extent an international sensation. For Leopold III, the most energetic representative of the House of Austria, together with many of his feudal warriors, were fairly defeated by the hated peasants. Moreover, owing to disagreement among the would-be allies, the plan of a joint battle of the South German towns against the mighty Hapsburg Dynasty had already failed prior to these successful battles, and this paved the way simultaneously for the separation of Switzerland from the German Empire to which until then she had belonged as a matter of course. North of the Rhine the principle of monarchy took firm root. On the south, peasants and towns formed a republican community which became more and more conscious of its special character.

In the history of warfare, the triumphs of the Federal infantry run parallel with these victories gained by the Flemish infantry over the French nobles near Courtray (1302), or the "Dithmarschen" in northern Holstein (at Oldenwörden, 1319). But whilst no political results followed such events, the Confederates, after concluding a 20 years' peace pact with Hapsburg (1394), began to look beyond their mountains. At the beginning of the 15th century, Schwyz organised a campaign to deliver the district of Appenzell. A closer relationship between various places and the Valais and Grisons began to develop about 1400, for there democratic ideas on the Central Swiss model had become apparent. The people of Uri advanced across the Gotthard. And regardless of the language and racial differences, the whole Central Alpine districts entered into mutual relationship. North, south, east and west — the inhabitants of all the Alpine slopes felt the common bond of their interests. Natural obstacles, which to-day would have the effect of complete separation, were swept away before the elementary urge of common needs. While recognising the social differences which characterised the Middle Ages, the Confederation came to embody the principle of reciprocity.

The Federal Union encountered an ever increasing amount of success and admiration. Its Alpine population was possessed of more individual privileges and influence as citizens than elsewhere. Growing defiance led to public prosperity.

Even though the political combinations of townspeople and peasants represented perhaps the decisive moment of power of the Federation, there was certainly no lack of far-reaching quarrels between its two basic elements. The "Old Zurich War" ("Alter Zürichkrieg") from 1436—1450 — which was fought for territorial claims between the Imperial City of Zurich and the Schwyz district — threatened to destroy everything attained. For fifteen years either party was bent on exterminating the other. Only a complete rout of the Zurich army owing to bad leadership finally freed the way to that new development which definitely eliminated every possibility of conciliation with the House of Hapsburg, which supported Zurich. It paved the way for political and military relations with France, i.e. decisively weakened the link with the German Empire.

All subversive factors which hitherto had seriously threatened the internal health of the Federal states were eliminated during the bloody crisis. After Argovia, the home of the Austrian Dynasty, was conquered in 1415 by a daring breach of peace, Thurgovia was also taken in 1460. It became more and more evident that the Rhine was to be the northern frontier — although Waldshut, Rheinfelden, Säckingen and Laufenburg, as well as the Black Forest, unexpectedly escaped the absorption threatening them at that time. The "Great Old Federation of Upper German Countries" ("Grosse alte Bund oberdeutscher Lande") as the Confederation was called by its neighbours — waged from 1476 to 1477 a victorious war of existence against the most dreaded Prince in Europe, Duke Charles the Bold of Burgundy. At the battles of Grandson, Murten and Nancy, the Swiss, without properly realising it, decided the course of a chapter of European history. For the extensive

Central Empire, which the dead Duke had conquered by means of his strong material power, was split up between France and Hapsburg, thereby establishing an opposition of interests which lasted over centuries, nearly up to the time of the French Revolution.

Owing to seriously conflicting interests among members of the Federation these military successes could not be exploited politically. However, the Confederates enjoyed unique fame in Europe as warriors. Their infantry tactics were imitated as far off as Spain. The German mercenary infantry may be considered as a copy of the Swiss prototype. When, in 1499, King Maximilian tried to restore on a firmer basis those districts of the German Empire which had become nearly independent, he met with one defeat after another in the so-called "Swabian War." Active association with the closely related mother-race north of the Rhine has since then practically ceased to exist. The two opposites were, in fact, full of real hatred for each other. The bridge-heads of Basle and Schaffhouse, whose military importance had just been clearly recognised, united themselves with the "Magna liga altiae Alemanniae," the first named specially adding to this league a cultural centre of international importance. On the other hand, the original cantons — especially Uri — urged for an extension of their possessions south of the Gotthard, whilst the Grisons for their part also occupied the valleys on the other side of the water-shed.

(To be continued).

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