

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1938)

Heft: 860

Rubrik: Home news

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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE LONDON COLONY.

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 9595/9596. Published every Friday at 23, LEONARD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON

VOL. 15—No. 860

LONDON, 7 MAY, 1938.

PRICE 3d.

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

UNITED KINGDOM AND COLONIES	3 Months (12 issues, post free)	3/6
	6 Months (24 issues, post free)	6/6
SWITZERLAND	3 Months (12 issues, post free)	12/-
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(Swiss subscriptions may be paid into Postcheck-Konto
Basle V 5718).

HOME NEWS

(Compiled by courtesy of the following contemporaries: National Zeitung, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, St. Galler Tagblatt, Vaterland, Tribune de Genève and Schweizerische Verkehrszentrale.)

FEDERAL.

NEUTRALITY OF SWITZERLAND.

The Secretary General of the League of Nations received from the Swiss Government the memorandum referred to in M. Motta's letter of April 20th in which he asked that the neutrality of Switzerland within the framework of the League should be placed on the provisional agenda of the session of the League Council which will begin on Monday, May 9th.

The memorandum says that the Swiss Federal Council—that is, the Government,—supported by the overwhelming majority of the two Houses of the Federal Parliament and of the people of Switzerland, asks the Council of the League with every confidence for a declaration that the traditional neutrality of the Swiss Confederation is consistent with the provisions of the Covenant.

The most important reasons given in the memorandum for this request are as follows:—

Circumstances have greatly changed since Switzerland joined the League. Some of the most important clauses of the Covenant have not been enforced. The system of sanctions has not operated in every case. Competition in armaments has been resumed on a larger scale than ever. Instead of becoming universal the League has lost the participation of some important countries. The United States did not see their way to join, and four great countries, two of them Switzerland's neighbours, have withdrawn.

Such a state of affairs could not but affect the position of a perpetually neutral country. Owing to her unique situation Switzerland cannot accept a system of optional sanctions. Her neutrality cannot be allowed to depend upon circumstances, it has been established once for all.

Its strength is in its clear definition and its permanent character. At the present day the distinction between military and economic sanctions would prove illusory so far as Switzerland was concerned. If she resorted to economic pressure she would be in grave danger of being treated exactly as if she had taken military action.

AIR MAILS TO BELGIUM AND SWITZERLAND.

The Postmaster-General announces that on and from Monday first class mail (letters, letter-packets, and postcards) for Belgium and Switzerland, prepaid at the ordinary international postage rates (2½d. for the first ounce and 1½d. for each subsequent ounce for letters, and 1½d. each for postcards) will be dispatched by air from London on weekday evenings as follows:—

BELGIUM.—Two dispatches each evening from Monday to Friday. SWITZERLAND.—One dispatch each evening from Monday to Saturday.

This is a further extension of the principle of using the air as a normal means of transmission of first class mail for Europe at the ordinary international postage rates. The correspondence must be posted in the ordinary posting boxes, and blue air mail labels or other marking indicating air transmission must not be used.

SWISS STRENGTHEN THEIR DEFENCES

Proposals designed to strengthen Switzerland's defences by making her more prepared to meet a sudden attack, have been drawn up by the Swiss Federal Council and sent to Parliament.

The Government proposes the extension of the period of annual military service from 13 to 18 days, with an additional special six-day service for the frontier troops every two years.

NESTLE CAPITAL REPAYMENT.

The directors of Nestlé and Anglo-Swiss Holding have decided to effect the repayment of capital at the rate of 100f. per share of 200f. and

the issue to shareholders of new share certificates and bonds d'amortissement, on surrender of the old share certificates, in accordance with the resolutions passed at the extraordinary general meeting held on January 16th last. Shareholders are requested to forward their old certificates (in London) to the Swiss Bank Corporation for repayment and issue of new certificates.

FIRST OF MAY CELEBRATIONS IN SWITZERLAND.

The labour day celebrations in Switzerland took place without any troubles; for the first time the Red Flag and the Swiss National Flag were flown together—an indication that the Socialists are ready to defend their independence and democracy.

FAREWELL PARTY TO DR. F. OSTERTAG.

A farewell party was held in Berne in honour of Dr. Fritz Ostertag, on the occasion of his retirement from his post as Director of the International Bureaux for industrial literary and artistic property.

Dr. Ostertag was from 1903-1926 a member of the Federal Tribunal, and since 1926 head of the above mentioned international office, a post which he occupied with great distinction.

"PIAZZA HELVETIA" IN ROME.

The Governor of Rome, has informed Dr. Ruegger, the Swiss Minister, that the Square on which the Swiss Legation is situated, will be called in future "Piazza Helvetia." The Swiss Minister has expressed his appreciation to the Governor for this "beau geste."

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Dr. Karl Hafner, has been elected President of the cantonal government for 1938/39.

BERNE.

The General Secretary of the Swiss "Volks-wirtschafts" Dept., Dr. Eugen Péquignot, has celebrated his 25th service anniversary in Berne.

LUCERNE.

The death has occurred in Lucerne, of Dr. E. Brenner, Counsellor of Legation and son of a former Federal Councillor, at the age of 51.

The deceased held various posts at the Swiss Legations in Berlin, Washington, Madrid and Vienna.

It is reported that Lucerne has invited Signor Toscanini to organize a festival like that of Salzburg, to take place next year at the time of the Swiss National Exhibition in Zurich.

OBWALDEN.

M. Franz Gasser, Manager of the "Holzbau" A.G. in Lungern, has been appointed a member of the cantonal government.

FRIBOURG.

The death is reported from Ueberstorf of M. Boschung, a former National Councillor, at the age of 70.

The cantonal government has bought the historical castle of Greyerz for a sum of 155,000 frs., another 56,000 frs. will be spent on general repairs.

BASLE.

Dr. Gerhard Börlin, President of the Appeal Court in Basle, has celebrated his 40th service jubilee; Dr. Börlin has been in the service of the canton of Basle Town since 1898, he enjoys a great reputation as a lawyer and judge.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD

Monthly Meeting
WEDNESDAY, MAY 11th 1938
at 7.45 p.m. followed by a lecture

THE EUROPEAN SITUATION

By Dr. G. P. GOOCH, M.A.

Members & their friends are heartily welcome

THE COMMITTEE

ST. GALL.

The cantonal tribunal has passed death sentence on the murderer Jniger, aged 25, who was responsible for the death of a policeman and two taxi drivers.

GRISONS.

Mme. Clementine Gilly, the well-known "romantisch" writer, has celebrated her 80th birthday anniversary at Zuoz. Mme. Gilly has translated a large number of works from Swiss authors into "romantisch."

AARGAU.

The death is reported from Turgi, of M. Hermann Müri, since 1919, a member of the National Council. The deceased was for nearly thirty years a member of the Grand Council, over which he presided in 1927.

VALAIS.

M. Albano Fama, until recently Vice-President of the cantonal government, has been elected President for 1938-39.

NEUCHÂTEL.

The accounts for 1937 of the canton of Neuchâtel close with a deficit of 754,471 frs.

FOOTBALL.

1st May, 1938, in Milan.

Switzerland2 Portugal1

By this handsome though lucky victory Switzerland has won a place among the last 16 nations competing in the World championship staged in France. In the first round we are drawn against Germany (Austria, by the way, has evaporated into thin air, after playing a last and final fixture against Germany in Vienna a month ago and winning it by 2 goal to none; as they were drawn against Sweden, that country is given a bye into round 2), the match to take place on June 5th at the Parc des Princes in Paris. Naturally Switzerland was keen to get that chance; but so was Portugal who had just held Germany to a draw in Cologne.

Our defence stood as against the Czechs in Basel, i.e., Huber in goal, Minelli and Stelzer (Lausanne) backs, Springer, Vernati and Loertscher (Servette) halves. For one reason or another only two of the forward line that shot four goals against Czechoslovakia remained: Aebi (Servette) at outside left and Amado (Lugano) this time at inside right. He played last at outside right and previous to that at centre forward, born footballer and a success wherever he is needed. Bickel (Grasshoppers) reappeared on the right wing, Kielholz (Young Fellows) resumed at centre-forward after some considerable time and Trello (Servette) partnered his club-mate Aebi. Not a bad line on paper, but somehow they did not find a very happy understanding. On the other hand our defenders were once again in great form. They needed all that and heaps of luck on top to hold their first half lead. Barely 12,000 spectators were in attendance. The Portuguese proved to be an extremely speedy and clever team and it was against the run of the play when Aebi scored in the 23rd minute from a pass by Trello. Five minutes later, Minelli placed a high ball into Portugal's goalmouth where Amado, with his back to the goal, performed an acrobatic masterpiece and the ball flew past the flabbergasted goalie into the net. Switzerland led by 2:0!

From now onwards Portugal pressed vigorously. But always some head or leg, or the post or crossbar helped our harassed keeper and prevented a score. Same picture, same story in the second half. Even a penalty-kick landed against a post! At last after 27 minutes the Portuguese centre-forward did score, at the second attempt. It was too late; the end came without any further score and Switzerland had won what must have been just about the luckiest victory there ever was. A long overdue change of fortune for our Reds.

By the way, the Swiss Cup Finale played in Bern on Easter-Monday between Servette and Grasshoppers, in the presence of the President of the Confederation (Dr. Baumann, Appenzell, in case you should not know) ended all square at two goals each after extra time. The reply will take place on the same ground on Ascension Day, May 26th.

M.G.