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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

MINISTER STUCKI HONOURED.

The Syndicate of the National Press in Paris offered a Dinner to M. W. Stucki, the Swiss Minister in Paris.

The dinner was presided over by the French Premier, M. Daladier, who was accompanied by his Finance Minister. A large number of high personalities both in the political and commercial sphere were present.

M. Soustelle, President of the French Press Syndicate, addressed the gathering, pointing out the happy relations which have existed for a great number of years between the two countries.

Minister Stucki thanked the organisers for the great honour which they had bestowed on him, an honour which is also appreciated in Switzerland.

In his address, he referred to the recently held meeting of the League of Nations at which complete Neutrality to Switzerland has been restored.

"This fact," he said, "could be realised largely through the friendly attitude and understanding of France. In supporting Switzerland's demands," Minister Stucki continued, "your great country has acted in the interest of Europe, and in the interest of peace."

Amongst great applause, he declared that Switzerland will defend its neutrality at all costs against any aggressor and concluded his oration by saying, "we wish to remain masters in our own house."

M. Daladier, the French Premier, said that Switzerland was a shining example to all nations. "Although consisting of different races, speaking different languages and belonging to different denominations, your country has lived in peace and perfect harmony for many centuries. We have," M. Daladier declared, "only the one wish, the wish to see Switzerland prosper and to show the world that those who preach hatred against races and religion will have no place in this universe. The endeavour of civilisation is to bring about a rapprochement between races and religion."

MILITARY AERODROME IN EMMEN.

The Federal Council has decided to start shortly with the erection of a military aerodrome in Emmen, near Lucerne, at a cost of 3.2 million francs.

SOLDIERS PILGRIMAGE.

Arrangements are being made for a party of British, French and German ex-Servicemen, former prisoners of war who were interned in Switzerland, to visit that country in June to convey thanks to the President for "services rendered."

ALPINE HOLIDAY FOR POOR CHILDREN.

A month's free holiday in a village set amid the beauty and grandeur of the Swiss Alps.

This shortly will be the unexpected and happy lot of 25 children drawn from the homes of unemployed workers in the special areas of South Wales, County Durham, Tyneside, and Cumberland.

The holiday has been made possible through the generosity of the mayor and citizens of the village of Adelboden, in the Bernese Oberland.

How the offer to take the children, which reads more like a tale out of a story book, came to be made is told in a letter which Sir George Gillett, Commissioner for the Special Areas, received from Herr Hanz Kunzi, the Mayor of Adelboden.

An English visitor told the mayor of the steps taken to relieve unemployment in the special areas, and remarked:—

NOT A FAIRY, BUT—

"If only some Alpine fairy would wave her magic wand and transport some of the children to Adelboden."

"I am not a fairy," wrote Herr Kunzi, "but the words of your fellow-countryman stayed in my mind."

Having discussed the matter with colleagues and friends the mayor adds that they would welcome the children as the guests of the village.

Sir George Gillett has thanked the mayor and told him that the National Council of Social Service is undertaking all the arrangements.

WATCHES BOILED AND FROZEN.

What may be called the World's Watch Championship has just been held at the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington.

The entrants were 300 or so watches, mainly British, Swiss, and American.

The "examination" lasted six weeks, during which time each watch was tested on its sides, upside down, and in all sorts of positions in all degrees of temperature—even in refrigerators and ovens.

Any watch that obtains 80 marks out of 100 is awarded a certificate for accuracy, with the mention "especially good"; but much greater accuracy is necessary to win the "championship," and for the fifth year in succession it has gone to Swiss makers with 97.3 marks.

One expert declares that there is no hope of winning the certificate unless a watch, under these "third-degree" methods, does not tell the same average time consistently to within two seconds a day.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The death is reported from Küsnacht of Dr. Hans Behn-Eschenburg at the age of 75. The deceased was one of the pioneers of the Swiss "Elektrotechnik"; in 1892, he entered the "Maschinenfabrik" Oerlikon, where he became in time General Manager, on retiring from this post he remained on the board of this company. Dr. Behn rendered great services when the electrification of the Swiss Railways was undertaken.

The funeral of the late Army Corps Commander Bridler took place last Tuesday at the Municipal Cemetery in Winterthur.

A large number of high officers of the Swiss Army attended the service.

M. Minger, head of the Federal Military Department, eulogised the great services which the deceased had rendered to the Army and to the country.

BASLE.

Dr. Ernst Staehelin, Professor of Theology at the University of Zurich, has been nominated rector of the University for 1938/39.

The death has occurred in Basle of M. Max Zraggen, late National Councillor, at the age of 67.

Starting in humble circumstances, he worked his way up and became Manager of the Prometheus A.G. in Liestal. He entered the Grand Council of the canton of Basle in 1913 and six years later he was sent to Parliament (Nat. Council).

ZUG.

M. Hans Hegglin, President of the Superior Court (Obergericht), has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary in Menzingen. M. Hegglin is a member of this court for the last 30 years and its President since 1920.

FOOTBALL.

21st May, 1938.

SWITZERLAND 2 ENGLAND 1

Great news, is it not? And far from a fluke, by all accounts, a well-deserved result on the play of the day. No doubt Minelli was right when he

said that the Swiss had had a very good day, whilst the English team had one of those inevitable if unaccountable off-days. England has taken this reverse philosophically enough. But after the great things that were said about that identical team in consequence of the victory by 6 goals to 3 over Germany at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin seven days ago, I find great difficulty in keeping calm and dignified, when I would like to throw my hat in the air and shout and cry for joy!

You will have read the accounts appearing in the English Press. Close on 25,000 spectators on the Grasshopper-ground at Zurich. The first goal, the outcome of good work by our two wing forwards, Amadó and Aebi, the latter heading past Woodley after 30 minutes' play. The equaliser fell on a foul by Lehmann, Bastin scoring from the ensuing penalty kick. Half-time: 1—1. The supposedly better staying-powers of the English professionals failed to have much influence on the play in the second half. Young handled in the penalty area, some say it was unintentional, the referee gave a penalty without the slightest hesitation, and our old international (some thought "too old") Trello, so long with the Grasshoppers, now with Servette, made no mistake, scoring with a beautiful low shot into the left-hand corner. And after that our defence once more proved how good they are. Another quarter of an hour and the game was won. What no one dared to dream about, had actually happened. Switzerland had beaten the might of England at the fifth attempt.

Three rousing cheers for our National Team: Huber; Minelli (Capt.), Lehmann; Springer, Vernati (all Grasshoppers), Loertscher (Servette); Amadó (Lugano), Trello (Servette), Bickel (Grasshoppers), Wallace and Aebi (Servette).

For the benefit of my readers whose thoughts wander sometimes like mine to the far-off days of Swiss football, I append details and teams of our previous encounters with England. The first match took place on May 20th, 1909, in Basle: England 9; Switzerland 0. Half-time: 4—0.

Team: Ochsner (Chaux-de-Fonds); Müller (Winterthur), Glaser (Zurich); Neuweiler (Winterthur), Rubli (Y.B.), Collet (Montriond); E. Walter (Winterthur), Hasler (Basel), Sydlar II (Cantonal), Kämpfer (Y.B.), Kobelt (St. Gallen).

The following year Switzerland played its one and only game in London, on April 9th, 1910, re-resulting in England 6; Switzerland 1. Half-time: 5—0.

Team: Füeckiger (Aarau); Müller (Winterthur), Bark (Old Boys); Günthardt (Zurich), Kihm (Aarau), Baierlé (Genève); Weiss (Bern), Bürgin (Zurich), Sydlar II (Cantonal), Renand (Genève), Collet (Montriond). Sydlar II scored for the Swiss.

The next meeting took place on May 25th, 1911, in Bern, when we once more suffered defeat: England 4; Switzerland 1. Half-time: 4—1.

Team: Dreyfuss (Servette); Müller (Wint.), Würsten (Chaux-de-Fonds); Ehrbar (St. Gallen), Henneberg II and I (Servette); Weiss (Y.B.), Sydlar II (Cantonal), Wyss I (Etoile Ch. d. F.), Sydlar III (Cant.), Collet (Montriond). Wyss I scored for Switzerland.

What struck me most, when perusing the list of these old internationals, was that unmistakable sign of a relentless change in the fortunes of the clubs. To-day we have in Switzerland 12 clubs constituting the National League or top class. But none of the following, supplying the bulk of the internationals in pre-war days, are among them: Chaux-de-Fonds, Winterthur, Zurich, Cantonal, St. Gallen, Aarau, all First Leaguers or second class; Old Boys even one class lower still, Etoile Ch. de F. defunct, Montriond and Genève by other clubs absorbed!

On May 20th, 1933, we once again had the honour to entertain England in Bern, only to lose once more decisively: England 4; Switzerland 0. Half-time: 1—0.

Team: Séchey (Servette); Minelli (Grasshoppers), Bielser (Basel); Gilardoni (Lugano), Imhof (Carouge), Hufschmied (Basel); v. Känel (Biel), Trello (Grassh.), Pasello (Servette), Xam (Grassh.), Jaeck (Basel).

And that gave the following total:—

Switzerland: Played 4; lost 4, goals for 2, against 23; and now: played 5, won 1, lost 4, goals for 4, against 24. The one thing to look forward to now is an invitation to Switzerland to come to England for a return match. It is no secret that

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Le Comité.

we have sought such an invitation for some time past, without success. Now the case is altered; this reverse must be put right at the earliest moment and we shall soon be able to shout: Hopp, Schwyz! To show you the truth of this, here are England's Continental defeats and their corrections at home:—

1929 in Madrid: Spain 4, England 3.
1932 in London: England 7, Spain 1.
1930 in Berlin: Germany 3, England 3.
1935 in London: England 3, Germany 0.
1930 in Vienna: Austria 0, England 0.
1932 in London: England 4, Austria 3.
1931 in Paris: France 5, England 2.
1933 in London: England 4, France 1.
1933 in Rome: Italy 1, England 1.
1934 in London: England 3, Italy 2.
1934 in Budapest: Hungary 2, England 1.
1936 in London: England 6, Hungary 2.
1934 in Prague: Czechs 2, England 1.
1937 in London: England 5, Czechs 4.

And so far unrequited remain:—

1936 in Vienna: Austria 2, England 1; and in Brussels: Belgium 3, England 2. Austria is no more. So it is Belgium's and Switzerland's turn next. But you see, we are not alone to win a game against England.

MG.

WHAT OTHERS THINK OF US. THE PARADOX OF THE SATISFIED SWISS. Condensed from The Forum. (U.S.A.)

Edwin Muller.

(Continuation).

There is little abject poverty among the Swiss. Conversely, it is surprising how few rich men there are. It isn't that large personal fortunes are taxed out of existence. The income taxes in the higher brackets, the inheritance taxes, etc., are lower in Switzerland than here. And Switzerland has businesses that are big businesses even by our standards. Yet the leading men in finance and industry are willing to put forth their best efforts for rewards that seem very modest indeed by our scale.

Incredible as it seems to us, the Swiss apparently doesn't want vast wealth. It isn't fashionable. There's little place in Swiss culture for lavish display, for "conspicuous consumption." There's not much of the gambling spirit. Enough is enough.

Of course, the Swiss have their faults. One misses in them the innate gaiety of the Austrians across the border. But they are relatively prosperous in the midst of economic depression, soberly happy in an unhappy world.

That they are so is due, not alone to the character of the people, but to the characteristics of their government. The Swiss distrust the concentration of great power in the hands of one man. The executive power is vested in a commission of seven, in which the President ranks equally with the other six. The executive is subordinated to the legislative, and the legislative arm is supplemented by an effective use of the initiative and the referendum. Even more than in England, the work of government is carried on by permanent officials, civil service appointees who do not change with changing administrations.

Another characteristic is the tendency to decentralize. Large powers are entrusted to the states—the cantons—and on those powers the central government cannot encroach. It must be so. The Swiss have no racial unity. They are split into French, German, Italian and others. They speak four different languages. To an outsider it is hard to see what some of them have in common.

Take a farmer of the Canton of the Ticino. He lives on the southern slopes of the Alps, cut off by the great central chain from the rest of Switzerland. He is Catholic, speaks Italian, grows olives and wine like the Italians across the frontier. What has he in common with a city worker of Zurich, Protestant, German-speaking, allied by race to the nearby Bavarians? Yet the two have co-operated in one government for centuries. They are tolerant of each other's local culture and customs, never trying to force them into a standardized pattern. In national matters they fight it out with ballots and abide by the majority decision. In foreign matters they stand together under the Swiss motto, "One for all—all for one."

In Switzerland, generally speaking, the government is behind business but not in it. The Swiss wants to run his own business with as little interference as possible, yet he recognizes situations where the government must interfere. When he permits that interference, however, he watches it very jealously.

For years government subsidies have pegged the price of wheat above the world price level. When foreign currencies were disorganized after

the war, the government subsidized certain exporters and limited the production of certain commodities. Laws still in effect forbid the establishment of new watch factories without government permission. When the world depression shot the tourist trade to pieces, the erection of new hotels was forbidden.

The majority of voters show themselves willing to tolerate this necessary interference with their liberties chiefly because the Swiss identifies his government with himself. "The government?" he says. "I'm the government," whether he's a banker, a railway conductor or a hotel porter.

There's no move to make Switzerland self-sufficient. No *ersatz*. They have to buy, they want to sell. They believe in free trade, and make the most sparing use of tariffs. All they ask for is a prosperous world around them. Even without it they do pretty well.

Like its neighbours, Switzerland has felt the pressure of Communism and Fascism. After the war Switzerland's grooves of foreign trade were clogged up. There was a rise of unemployment, discontent, strikes and other disturbances. The Communists moved in and for a time made progress.

Then came the fascist reaction, calling itself the Front Movement. There was the Society of the "Iron Brooms," promising to sweep democracy out of the country. There was the familiar technique of uniforms, parades, salutes. They were all set to create another fascist nation.

To-day what has come of it all? Communism in Switzerland is dead. The Front Movement can barely muster voting strength to put one representative in the national parliament.

There's no exciting story about this collapse of dictator movements. No great leader, no knight in shining armour, arose to stamp out Communism. There was no violent repression of Fascism. No fighting in the streets. Communism and Fascism were seeds that fell on stony ground and withered away.

It hasn't been easy for the Swiss democracy to maintain its principles—isn't easy now. German citizens in Switzerland number 150,000. Three fourths of the population speak German, are as German racially as the Prussians. (? Ed) A cardinal aim of the Nazis is to bring all German peoples under their rule. Hitler talks of "the lost Swiss tribes," and a flood of propaganda has flowed across the frontier by radio and the printed word. There has been violent agitation, centering in the German nationals—agitation to detach German Switzerland from the rest of the country and attach it to the Reich. The Swiss don't like it. In recent months Zurich motion picture audiences have had to be requested not to hiss the picture of Hitler when it appears on the screen.

It's a delicate problem for the Swiss government. A country of 4,000,000 must be wary in its treatment of a resident alien population belonging to a country of some 70,000,000, a belligerent country whose bombing squadrons are only a few minutes' flight away.

The alien in Switzerland has, in most respects, as much freedom as the Swiss—freedom of movement, of opinion, of engaging in business. But he is no longer permitted freedom of political agitation. No alien is allowed to address a political gathering. The Swiss have made it clear that they do not relish suggestions for change that come from outside.

Ever since 1914, military strategists have discussed the possibility that Germany might attack France through Switzerland. To prepare against such an attack, the Swiss have re-organized and re-equipped their army. Out of a 4,000,000 population they are now prepared to put 250,000 men in the field within three days.

Germany's annexation of Austria has caused them to speed completion of an elaborate system of pillbox forts all along the German and Austrian frontiers. Every able-bodied Swiss is a trained soldier. The farmer who lives within the threatened area is trained, if the need arises, to man the pillboxes on his own land.

The keynote of Swiss patriotism is defence. They want nobody else's land. Immediately after the war, when the Austrian province nearest Switzerland made overtures to join the confederation, the offer was firmly declined. But to defend their own territory they would fight to the last man.

And so the Swiss stand united, as they have for 700 years. They stand to-day in the midst of a troubled world that staggers insanely toward war. They hear around them the demands of the dictator-ruled nations: "Give us land, colonies, raw materials—or we shall take them." They answer by example: "Those are not the primary necessities. It is not aggression that makes prosperity but co-operation, within and without."

Above all, the Swiss are an answer to the pessimists who say that democracy won't work.

THE END.

Readers Digest.

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