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SWISS NATIONAL FETE DAY.

1st August 1291 — 1941.

Thoughts and Reflections.

The great Burke has truly said: "People will not look forward to posterity who never look backward to their ancestors."

In celebrating the 650th anniversary of the Swiss Republic let us therefore dwell for a few moments with the men of Rütti, who negotiated and concluded the treaty of friendship on which the Swiss Confederation is founded. How refreshing and inspiring to contrast the "Ewige Bund" of 1291 with modern treaties of friendship which — before the ink is dry — are superseded by declarations of war. What a proof, if proof is needed at all, that "Honesty is the best Policy." The men of Rütti were not versed in the arts of international diplomacy. They were simple men of the people, without guile, godfearing and straightforward. Their word was their bond. They did not believe in mental reservations and the tortuous Machiavellian principles were then unknown. Result: — a treaty which, despite wear and tear and stress during centuries of economical and political convulsions, has stood the test of time and is as binding to-day as of yore.

Schillers William Tell, in which the noble epic of Switzerland's fight for Freedom has been immortalised, is almost known by heart by every Swiss and — like the Bible — is kept in every home. Rütti, the cradle of Swiss Liberty, is to the Swiss what holy Mecca is to the Mohammedans. Sempach, Murten, Stans, Näfels and Stoos are milestones on the long road from oppression to liberation, especially Sempach, where with primitive weapons the poorly clad Swiss mountaineers defeated the heavily armed Austrian Knights, at that period equivalent to the Panzer-Divisions of modern armies. However, Swiss sacrifice and Swiss courage made short order of the new order which the arrogant Hapsburgs tried to impose. The Swiss Davids were unafraid of the Austrian Goliaths.

Let us therefore pay homage to those proud, gallant and upright ancestors by cherishing and preserving the sacred heritage of Liberty and Independence which they bequeathed to us, their children. Let us emulate the noble examples of Arnold von Winkelried and Nikolaus von der Flüe in self-sacrifice and the highest motives of patriotic service and devotion to national duties. A selfish man can never be a good patriot.

Every Swiss can be justly proud of his Country and its history. Surrounded by mighty nations, without access to the seas, limited in natural resources such as coal, iron and oil, this little country of ours, founded by a handful of mountaineers, has developed into a federation of peoples, politically independent, with democratic institutions, efficient governmental machinery, an educational system second to none, a well-equipped Militia Army in which every Swiss is proud to serve, and holding our own in science, industry and commerce.

True, there is room for much improvement, but the same applies to other and bigger countries. Let us

always remember, that real and steady progress can only be achieved by evolution and not by revolution, through collaboration and co-operation instead of class war; by mutual respect, goodwill and tolerance in place of hatred and narrow-minded egotism.

Instead of celebrating our National birthday in the orthodox way no doubt festivities in Switzerland will be severely restricted. Fireworks and funerals do not mix very well. And there is a very great funeral going on at the present time, with nearly three quarters of the world in mourning. Let us thank God that Switzerland is not one of the many national bodies which have been stricken by the scourge of war and buried in the cemetery called "Lebensraum," waiting for its resurrection.

Without being actually involved in the war Switzerland is in a very difficult position and we owe our Government a deep debt of gratitude for having navigated the ship of state without mishap past many dangerous economical and political reefs.

And now on top of all the many anxieties the Government is faced with new tribulations as the result of the destruction of badly needed crops. It is a catastrophe of the first magnitude and our sympathy goes out to the patient and hardworking farmers who must be nearly brokenhearted to be deprived of the fruit of their labour and toil. Anything we can do to mitigate the loss and the suffering will surely be forthcoming in full measure.

But what about the future of Switzerland and her post-war problems? In these times of ever-shrinking distances national outlook has to be widened and economical policy broadened correspondingly. Our country, in conjunction with the resurrected states of Europe, will have to assume bigger responsibilities and take part in constructing a new world on the basis of economic and social freedom.

Those who still believe that after the war things will remain as before live in a fools paradise. This is not only a world war but the World's greatest Revolution. We are participating in the most stupendous drama of human history. Europe — nay the world itself — is in the grip of confronting forces where Fate is playing a part as well as wills and historical circumstances. The conflict marks an epoch in the life of Mankind. It may end war or perpetuate it.

It will require vision and farsighted statesmanship to handle these complicated post-war problems. Judging by the speech of Federal President Wetter on the economical aims of Switzerland the matter is already being studied and thoroughly examined by our Government and it is highly satisfactory to know that affairs are in such capable hands.

A creative Union with other states has been suggested as the only way to establish security and progress. This might necessitate big alterations, such as a common defence force, a common free trade market, and a common currency.

Let us be clear. We do not want an excursion into some airy Utopia. But it behoves us to look ahead and to take note of what people of authority are thinking and saying on this subject. For instance, Lord Halifax said 12 months ago: — "We must build our new order on foundations which themselves will be

well laid and solid." The Times, quoting Lord Halifax's speech, in a leading article entitled "The new Europe" made the following interesting comments: "Great Britain abates, and will abate, nothing of its traditional support of the right of small nations to pursue and cherish, in security and independence, their own way of life. But the conception of the small national unit, not strong enough for an active role in international politics, but enjoying all the prerogatives and responsibilities of sovereignty, has been rendered obsolete by modern armament and the scope of modern warfare. The freedom and self government of national communities in Europe will need other defences and a broader foundation in the future. Economics enforce the same lesson."

And later in the same leading article:— "Some measure of pooled resources and centralised control is necessary for the survival of European civilization. This concentration cannot be achieved by power alone, but only by the creation of common loyalties and by a sense of common values. The new order in Europe must seek to create new ties, not to dissolve old ones, to build, not to break up."

Surely, if these remarks reflect the ideas and intentions of the powers that be, we Swiss cannot do better than cordially support same and do all we can to collaborate on these lines in the moral and economic reconstruction of a stricken and exhausted Europe. By helping others we shall be helped in return. May God bless and protect Switzerland!

F. ISLER.

CADER IDRIS.

From the great and little hills,
Spilling over grass and shingle,
Tumbling, rolling, forming rills,
Untold streamlets intermingle,
To a whisper, murmur'ring low,
Soothing, like a lullaby,
Then increasing, as they flow,
Fast and faster, rushing by,
Through the deep and narrow way,
To the chasm, so deep and grey.

Onward, over slipp'ry rocks,
Laughing, mocking all endeavour,
Placing hindrance, causing blocks,
Dashing, roaring, gay for ever,
Hast'ning, as at nature's call,
To a glorious waterfall.

'Midst a wealth of tender green,
While a flood of sun discloses,
Quiv'ring brushleaves in between,
White and pinkish briar roses,
Plots of bluebells — heav'nly blue —
Bracken shimm'ring with the dew.

With its music's haunting strain,
And its low, enchanting song,
Mystic visions come and wane,
Precious mem'ries glide along.

H.E.

CRONACHE.

Il popolo svizzero segue con vigilante interesse gli sviluppi degli avvenimenti bellici e della situazione internazionale, ma continua dritto il suo cammino, fedele alla sua politica di stretta neutralità. Si è stati un po' sorpresi nell'apprendere che gli Stati Uniti d'America avevano bloccato tutti i crediti stranieri, compresi quelli svizzeri. Il consiglio federale fece immediatamente dei passi a mezzo di un rappresentante della banca nazionale che trovasi a Nuova York ed ha ottenuto che la Svizzera sia messa, come la Svezia, al beneficio di cosidette licenze generali. Il governo di Washington ha informato il governo federale e la banca nazionale che essi possono disporre, a certe condizioni, degli averi che posseggono negli Stati Uniti.

La situazione finanziaria del nostro paese e del mercato monetario rimane tuttavia favorevole, come ebbe a rilevarlo a Montreux, in occasione dell'assemblea dei banchieri svizzeri, il direttore della banca nazionale, signor Rossi.

Le trattative commerciali con la Slovacchia sono state concluse in modo soddisfacente ed un trattato di commercio e di residenza è stato firmato tra la Svizzera e la Slovacchia, trattato che prevede un aumento degli scambi commerciali tra i due paesi.

La questione dell'approvvigionamento del paese preoccupa sempre in prima grado le nostre autorità, che cercano con tutti i mezzi di favorire ed aumentare i trasporti dai paesi di oltremare e viceversa quelli di merci svizzere per quei preziosi mercati di esportazione. Bisognerà tuttavia prepararsi a nuove restrizioni, che il popolo svizzero accetta sempre con calma, cosciente della situazione privilegiata di cui gode in un mondo rovinato dalla guerra. Il tempo magnifico di cui siamo gratificati da alcuni giorni — con un caldo che ascende spesso ai 40 gradi — ha avuto per effetto di favorire la campagna che ora presenta un aspetto bellissimo e dove la fienagione procede a ritmo accelerato e con risultati abbastanza buoni, specie per quanto concerne la quantità del foraggio raccolto. Il capo del dipartimento federale dell'economia pubblica ha rivolto al popolo svizzero — come il generale alla gioventù — un ardente appello affinché tutti, giovani e vecchi, uomini e donne, consacriano le ore libere di cui dispongono a por man forte ai nostri bravi contadini nei lavori del raccolto.

La polizia federale continua la sua severa lotta contro elementi estremisti o sospetti e così negli ultimi giorni essa ha proceduto in varie località della Svizzera e specialmente a Zurigo a delle perquisizioni, che hanno fatto risultare gravi contravvenzioni al codice penale militare. Un centinaio di persone, tra cui cinque stranieri, sono state arrestate. Appena conclusa l'inchiesta di polizia si deciderà sul seguito giudiziario da dare a questa faccenda.

Se le ferrovie federali hanno continuato a registrare aumenti delle loro entrate anche nel mese di maggio, una prima notevole ripercussione della riduzione della circolazione automobilistica si è avuta nella ripartizione fatta dal consiglio federale ai cantoni dell'utile proveniente dal dazio sulla benzina per il 1940, che ha prodotto appena la metà della somma dell'anno precedente. La confederazione ha distribuito