

Niklaus von Flue

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francs of 2½ per cent. notes with a term of five years. In these two cases also, amounts subscribed exceeded the amounts first offered. The Government raised 320 millions by the first loan and 270 millions by the second. The loans contracted in 1941 made it possible to convert outstanding loans of 320 million francs. The Government thus succeeded in borrowing 830 million francs of new money. In addition, 142 million francs of Treasury bills were placed on the market, principally with banks.

RAILWAY CENTENARY.

(*"Railway Gazette,"* September 11th, 1942.)

The creation of a national traffic museum to be opened in August, 1947, on the occasion of the centenary of the first Swiss railway, was brought a step nearer by the constitution in February last of an association for the promotion of a Swiss Museum of Communications & Transport. Its president is Dr. Cottier, formerly Secretary-General of the Federal Railways, later Manager of the 3rd Division, and now Director of the Federal Transport Department, who presided also over the study commission set up in 1939 to make preliminary contacts and investigations. The results so far achieved are due to a great extent to the activities of M. Eugène Fontanellaz, the future Director of the museum, who is a former official of the Federal Department of Industry & Labour and has considerable experience of railway matters, having been for some years a locomotive engineer at the Skoda Works. The museum is to be in Zurich, most probably near the site of the transport section of the National Exhibition of 1939, on the left shore of the lake, with track connection to the adjacent Zurich-Wollishofen Station. It will be divided into six sections, concerning water, road, rail, air, communications (post office, telephone, telegraph, and radio) and tourist traffic respectively; each will be housed separately but will have connecting galleries. In addition to numerous documents, photographs, maps, and charts, it is intended to show a large range of models, to a uniform scale of one-tenth, representing locomotives, carriages, and wagons of the principal Swiss railways at various periods, and the co-operation of Swiss model-railway clubs may be enlisted in this connection. Appeals have been made to railwaymen and the general public for contributions in the way of documents, tickets, and other items of particular interest, relating especially to the earlier years of railway history. Full-size exhibits include one of the original cars of the Vevey-Montreux-Chillon Tramway (the first electric tramway in Switzerland), and electric locomotive No. 2 of the Burgdorf-Thun Railway. The first locomotive of the Rigi Railway, which was shown at the National Exhibition in 1939, also has been preserved. Unfortunately, none of the original locomotives of the first Swiss Railway, from Zurich to Baden, are in existence, nor were any complete drawings available; but by careful research at Esslingen and Karlsruhe M. Fontanellaz has been able to assemble authentic data regarding the first engine, named *Limmat*, and these are being co-ordinated at present with a view to the construction of a replica, which, together with coaches, will be prominent in the celebrations and afterwards will tour the country before going to the traffic museum.

NIKLAUS VON FLÜE.

(Reprinted with acknowledgement from *"The Swiss-American,"* August 1942.

The blessed Niklaus von Flüe is undoubtedly one of the most eminent figures in Swiss history. According to a tribute paid to him a few years ago by Federal Councillor Philip Etter, President of Switzerland for 1942, he started life as a peasant on his own free soil. He was tall and straight like the towering rocks of his mountainous homeland. His face and arms were tanned by sun, wind and rain. He was a soldier and officer, and as such he fought under the flag of his native canton of Obwalden in the old Zurich war from 1436-50. He also participated in the drive to Thurgau and in other campaigns.

Against his real inclination he became a member of the Court of Justice and the Council of State. He was a Democrat to the bone and took an enthusiastic interest in the fate of the small and free canton of Obwalden. He never hesitated to confront his colleagues in court and in the council with the sometimes unerring instinct they sensed that Niklaus von Flüe possessed all the qualifications for President of their canton.

However, Niklaus von Flüe declined this honour. Nobody could understand his decision except his still youthful wife Dorothea, who had presented him with five sons and five daughters. She knew of her husband's inner conflict, of his higher destination, of his nightly prayers to the Master who was calling him for service dedicated to Him. And this strong heroic woman fought her own victorious battle. She was ready to let her husband follow the divine voice. In the year 1467, when he had reached the age of fifty, Niklaus von Flüe, strong in body, possessor of a fine wife, ten children and many distinctions, owner of a flourishing homestead with cattle and land, left all this to seek complete solitude.

At last Brother Klaus, as he was affectionately called by the people, was free. He was free from worldly property and worldly cares. He now could devote himself to God and his country. He remained in his retreat praying when, from 1474-1477, the Confederates had to wage war against Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. In due time the soldiers of Obwalden returned home victorious, heavily laden with valuable booty. Niklaus von Flüe did not like this, for he knew the danger of unwonted foreign riches. Soon differences arose between the towns and peasant cantons. The latter feared for their rights of equality and ancient privileges; they opposed the admission of the cities of Fribourg and Soleure to the Swiss Confederation.

There was danger that the young Swiss Nation was going to be divided by Civil war. The delegates of the Assembly convening in these matters at Stans in 1481 were about ready to disband, threatening to take up arms. At this crucial moment the venerable Niklaus von Flüe was called from his mountain retreat, one hour's walk above Sachseln on the Brünig route. With his great love for his homeland the saintly man succeeded to reconcile the delegates. He reminded his listeners of the democratic ideals which their forefathers had adopted almost 200 years previously and so convincing was his counsel that within an hour all their differences could be settled. Fribourg

and Soleure became members of the Swiss Confederation.

For this successful intervention in a crisis Niklaus von Flüe has ever since been venerated as Switzerland's great conciliator. Even to-day the Swiss people cherish the advice he gave the delegates at that time: "Do not seek to enlarge your domain too much. Shun foreign quarrels and be peaceful neighbours. But whosoever wishes to oppress you, may he find you as men. Far be it from you that one of you accept gold for the homeland. Beware of internal strife, for it would lead to your destruction. Love one another, oh Confederates, and may God watch over you kindly as heretofore."

Niklaus von Flüe died on March 21st, 1487. In December, 1934, his last remains were transferred to a new resting place in the beautiful parish church of Sachseln.

In his lifetime Niklaus von Flüe was always ready to assist those in need and many miraculous deeds are credited to his intercession. Instead of being forgotten he is more and more venerated by the Swiss people as a guardian and father of his country. His last resting place at Sachseln is one of the foremost places of pilgrimage in Switzerland. Efforts have in recent years been made that the great Swiss conciliator be canonized and His Holiness Pope Pius XII appears to be most favourably inclined toward this elevation.

SWISS CLUB DUNFERMLINE.

1st August Celebrations.

Almost the entire Swiss Colony in Dunfermline was present at the 1st August celebrations again arranged by our club. The evening was spent very appropriate to the occasion. Our president M. F. Gualeni gave a short talk which was followed by three Swiss Films kindly lent us by the London Office of the Swiss Federal Railways. It appeared that all present very greatly enjoyed the films showing pictures of our beautiful country. The rest of the evening passed amidst cheerful talk, games and music. The culinary desires were very well catered for, in the real Swiss way, by our enterprising Social Committee.

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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

After a short recess during the summer months, the Society resumed its activities at Swiss House on Wednesday, September 9th, when the Monthly Meeting was held. Mr. J. J. Boos, President, was in the Chair, and a large number of Members was present.

The Society was very fortunate indeed in being able to open its Autumn/Winter programme with a lecture by Dr. G. P. Gooch, Companion of Honour, the famous lecturer and eminent historian, who addressed the meeting on "World Outlook." The Chairman, introducing the lecturer in suitable terms, said that Dr. Gooch was no stranger to the audience, having lectured to the Society on many previous occasions. He also mentioned that many amongst the audience no doubt vividly recollected some of the events forecast by Dr. Gooch, which had since come to pass. If only some of his warnings had been heeded at the time by the authorities concerned, things might have turned out differently.

Dr. Gooch then addressed the audience. He said:—

"It is always a pleasure for me to speak at Swiss House. I love Switzerland and have known it for well over fifty years. It was the last country in which I spent some time during my travels before the war. I congratulate your country on its neutrality, which has been preserved without any sacrifice of national honour, and hope you will be able to maintain it until the end of this terrible struggle.

I am first of all going to call your attention to three enormously important facts, viz.

1. That Isolationism in America is dead.
2. That the British and Russian peoples have discovered one another.
3. That China has at last taken its well-deserved place not only as a Great Power, but as, in every sense of the term, an equal among the leading Nations.

The second part of my talk will be devoted to the sort of settlement which we may expect, which we should strive to obtain if and when we win the war. There is my lecture in two parts; part one brought about by the three changes mentioned, which are stamped right across the face of the world, not temporary changes, but changes which I hope have come to stay and which will influence the future of the world for the benefit of mankind.

Isolationism, which was very strong both as a tradition and what we may call an ideology ("Weltanschauung"), died on Sunday morning, December 7th, 1941, when the phone bells rang over the whole of the North American Continent with the news of the attack on Pearl Harbour. Most great events happen within a certain period, such as the Reformation, the fall of the Roman Empire, the French Revolution, etc., but world-historic events sometimes happen in a moment. When the first bombs fell on Pearl Harbour a new era of history began. It not only brought America into the war, which was inevitable, but something more important or equally important happened: Isolationism died. Until that moment millions of Americans had said and millions of Americans had believed that they were safe, whatever happened in Europe or Asia. Before the days of submarines and aeroplanes, Americans