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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY P. F. BOEHRINGER.

**The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.**

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

The debates of September 18th in the National Council brought to light the severe obstacles which confront the natural development of our country and which are not far short of an economic boycott. The continued maintenance of the allied "black list" unchained attacks on the Federal Council to which Federal Councillor Stampfli replied candidly and without reserve. The following is a short resume of his statement: Of the 1,200 Swiss firms appearing originally on the black list, only 200 to 300 had so far been expunged, most of them subject in some measure to foreign control. No effort had been spared to free our country from the pernicious operation of this black list; the steps undertaken by our ministers in Washington and London were of no avail. Not only are the firms figuring on this list excluded from the export market, but they are also prevented from purchasing raw materials which latter are obtainable only from firms not on this list. These firms, however, are subjected to considerable pressure as to the disposal of the raw materials, it being even hinted that they, if not falling into line, might themselves be black-listed.

Federal Councillor Stampfli is our Minister of Agriculture and Industry, and the matter has naturally gone very much to his heart; there are, nevertheless, two sides to every argument and we incline to the opinion that our Minister has been narrow-minded, not to say that he has chosen to ignore certain facts. Our readers will remember that during a critical time of the war a Government spokesman stated in the House of Commons that the actions of certain neutrals would be remembered after the war. Presumably this statement found a little space in the Federal files at Berne, perhaps not prominent enough to keep the warning in front of the particular ministry. Though first vigorously denied, we had to admit gradually that war material and munitions, in one form or another, were regularly supplied to Germany, and as this export was a vital operation to maintain our economic existence the Allies, possibly unwillingly, accepted our plea that all this was merely the manufactured

(Continued overleaf.)



## "MARIE-LOUISE" (U)

### THE PRESS:

From Switzerland comes one of the most sincere and moving films I have seen for many months. **STAR.**

MARIE LOUISE is a superb film. It is simple and unpretentious and utterly sincere. It is often touching and always tender. And it has precious moments of genuine humour . . . If Switzerland can really make films like this, the sooner we see some more, the better for the reputation of the cinema. **OBSERVER.**

Miles above any other programme in London. **NEWS CHRONICLE.**

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Easily the best of the new films is MARIE LOUISE. It tells, with tact, sympathy and humour, how French children from bombed cities regained health in Switzerland. **DAILY TELEGRAPH.**

Pride of place this week goes to a feature film made in Switzerland. I do not hesitate to call this a really great film. **DAILY HERALD.**

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product of raw materials previously lent for this purpose by Germany. This is not to mention the export of other "home"-produce to the same client. The assertions put forward by Federal Councillor Stampfli suggest recrimination, but he cannot close his eye to the fact that our lack of raw materials is in the first instance due to the universal scarcity of these substances and to transport; does he expect Gt. Britain to come to the assistance of these black-listed firms in their fight for the acquisition of raw materials which she badly wants herself. Swiss papers have accused Gt. Britain of "crippling" our normal and legitimate development, but can we be surprised that Gt. Britain in her present predicament, contests competition in the world's market by a country that has emerged from the war safe and sound in every respect, particularly in industrial factories and skilled labour. It looks as if the cherished notions of our neutrality will have to undergo some modifications; our foreign trade is likely to suffer considerable restraint for some time.

\* \* \*

A matter which for months had given rise to endless criminations has, we hope, been finally disposed of by the publication after three weeks' delay of the protocols signed by the Russian, French and Swiss negotiators investigating the Russian complaints about the treatment of Soviet internees. The Federal Council stated at the conclusion of the enquiry that the findings had given satisfaction to both parties but this complacency is shared by no means by the Swiss press,

who had been called upon to refute categorically the Russian accusations. The English press has from the beginning inclined to the Russian conception and the final report has of course given no cause for changing their attitude. An extremely fair and impartial consideration has been published in "*The Times*," October 1st, from the Berne correspondent and the following is an extract:

"The complaints were that escaping Russians were turned back by the Swiss on the German frontier; that the camp commandants at Andelfingen and Bellechasse discriminated against Russians, denying them the rights and treatment accorded to other nationals; that interned Russians, on an unfounded suspicion of conducting political propaganda, were severely punished and kept under strong guard, and even sent to penal prisons; that interned Russians were subjected to extremely severe conditions in camps at Lachaux and Lachaluet, and also in a penal prison at Wauwilermoos, where police dogs were used against them; that several Russians died through this treatment; that an unnamed escaping Russian soldier, after reaching Swiss territory, was shot by a German frontier guard, and that the body was handed over by the Swiss to the German authorities; that anti-Soviet propaganda was conducted in Swiss camps; and that there was a Press campaign against interned Russians.

The Swiss case is that the Federal Government has always claimed that international law imposes no obligation regarding the right of asylum, which can be refused at will. In all, more than 270,000 refugees crossed into Switzerland during the war, and among them were 10,000 Russians. Some of the Russians were turned back, and the Government regrets that they suffered through this. The Swiss maintain that the Russians were subjected to exactly the same regulations as other refugees, but that, owing to language difficulties and the indiscipline of many of them, some incidents were unavoidable. The Russian refugees were the most difficult to manage, probably because of their sufferings in the German concentration camps from which they had escaped.

The Swiss authorities say they could not always find suitable officials to be camp commandants. Owing to the demands of the army, men of the officer class were not available, and commandants from the lower ranks proved unequal to the task and psychologically unfitted to deal with that kind of interned person. Hence blunders, such as detention in prisons and the use of police dogs and firearms, with loss of life. They admit also that the shooting of the Russian by a German guard and the handing over of the body to the Germans was a clear breach of neutrality, and regret is expressed. They also admit that the camp commandants permitted anti-Soviet propaganda, but they declare that this was unknown to the federal authorities. The Soviet delegates, for their part, express their regret over incidents at Villars during the inquiry in which two Swiss were killed in a clash with Russians. They also declare that since their arrival the situation in the Swiss camps has been entirely satisfactory, and that they are fully satisfied with the efficiency of the Swiss repatriation arrangements. The inquiry was conducted in a spirit of good will and with a desire to avoid recrimination."



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Without discussion the National Council has sanctioned the extension for another ten years, till 1957, of the monopoly of our National Bank to issue bank notes.

\* \* \*

In the States Council (Ständerat) the well-known national economist Wahlen criticised the traditional appointment of our diplomatic representatives abroad. We did not require, he asserted, diplomatic scholars but men who were thoroughly acquainted with our own national economy and the one of the country to which they were going to be accredited. The names or splendid social relations were of little avail; the Federal Council should, in an increased measure, rely on the co-operation of Swiss residing abroad.

\* \* \*

A preliminary statement to the press by Federal Councillor von Steiger made it clear — as far as his official position allowed it — that the "parti du travail" was not in receipt of financial support from Russian quarters. There was no mystery, however, about the handsome reward remitted at regular intervals to Leon Nicole for his collaboration with "Pravda." He also said that a few Swiss capitalists to some extent financed this particular party in the hope that this would ultimately lead to personal business relations with Russian interests.

\* \* \*

Telephone talks to Switzerland are no longer restricted to English and French but the service is still available for commercial calls only.

#### Cantonal

The enquiry into the boat catastrophe at Haslihorn a year ago (Oct. 12th, 1944), when 20 members of a wedding party were drowned, has now been concluded by the Lucerne court. The guilt has been fixed on the navigator of the motor boat "Schwalbe," Rudolf Müller, who was included in the victims.

\* \* \*

The municipal council of Lucerne rejected by a large majority a proposal to make a bonus payment of 20 cts. for every day served in the army by the Lucernois.

\* \* \*

An ardently fought by-election for the fifth seat in the Lucerne Council (Kleine Stadtrat) resulted in the victory of the liberal candidate, Paul Kopp, by a narrow margin against his socialist opponent; 71% of the voters went to the polls.

\* \* \*

A stag weighing over 400 lbs. has been shot in the canton Lucerne near Perlen.

\* \* \*

Considerable damage to the railway track between Diesbach and Rüti (Glarus) was caused by the descent of an avalanche, interrupting railway traffic for over a fortnight; large sums have been spent some years ago to dam the passage of this monster, the "Erlen-Runse."

\* \* \*

In the canton Zurich an initiative launched by the youngest of our parties, the Party of Labour (extreme socialists), was set aside by a majority of nearly two to one. The demand had in view a reorganisation of the cantonal police force which would have resulted in a notable reduction in the number of the actual preservers of the law. About 62% of the voters recorded

their opinions which was more pronounced "against" in the canton than in the town itself.

\* \* \*

The prize of literature of the town of Zurich (for 1945), amounting to Frs. 5,000 has been awarded to university professor Dr. Robert Faesi, born in 1883, writer of lyrics and author of many novels and plays, the best known of which is "Füsilier Wipf."

\* \* \*

The Zurich hotels have, during the last few months experienced an increased patronage so that visitors have found it difficult to be accommodated without considerable trouble and loss of time. The local hotel association has now come to an arrangement with the municipal telephone administration whereby, by calling up a certain number, a forlorn visitor can be informed at once where and at what price a room is waiting for him.

\* \* \*

Dr. Hans Hoppeler died in Zurich at the age of 66; he was a much-sought practitioner and a busy writer on educational, hygienic and medical matters all written in popular phraseology. Apart from serving on cantonal councils he was for twenty years (1919-1939) a member of the National Council.

\* \* \*

The monument to the memory of our late foreign Minister, G. Motta, towards the cost of which a goodly amount was collected in the London Colony, will not be erected at present for several reasons, one being that later years will be in a better position to pass an impartial judgment on the merits of the once famous





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statesman. The statue was originally intended to be set up in front of the Palais Fédéral.

Col. Fritz Gubler, chief of the army engineers, died in Berne at the age of 58 after a short and painful illness. Born in Zurich he was the constructor and first commander of the Sargans fortress.

The Säntis is rarely the scene of accidents. Two alpinists on skis were caught in a collapsing snow bridge, one of them being completely buried. A search party, after about nine hours' exploring, recovered the body. Attempts at restoring life remained unsuccessful. The victim is a law student from Thun, named Hans Wytenbach.

Christian Burgener from Grindelwald who in 1894 guided the then 20 years old Winston Churchill in his ascent of the Wetterhorn, died in Berne in an old-age home.

The new building "Bettenhaus" of the Basle municipal hospital (Bürgerspital) was opened in the presence of 400 official guests. It took 6½ years to build and the cost exceeds 30 million francs; on the eight floors there is accommodation for 668 beds.

Another unanimous resolution has been forwarded to Berne by the three Rheinwald communes (Splügen, Nufenen and Medels) protesting energetically against the proposed erection of a large power station; the artificial stowage lake would cause the flooding of several farmsteads.

The hamlet of Schuders above Schiers in the Prättigau is being threatened with destruction through the approach of marshy land descending from the higher region. An extensive drainage scheme is under consideration which would not only preserve this small village but add more than 100,000 ha. of agricultural land.

St. Moritz and Pontresina will see some of their hotels opened this winter, the banks being prepared to grant the necessary credits.

The cantonal authorities of Aargau whilst declining to interfere with the sovereignty of the communes have

indicated their dislike of the proposed bonus payment to burghers who have served in the army.

If reports — not confirmed — from Vevey are to be believed, the Grand Hotel is to be demolished and a new building erected by a Zurich syndicate. The old hotel has generally been described as an architectural misfit. The new building is to have 200 bedrooms, all facing south overlooking the lake, with spacious halls for conferences, concerts, balls, etc. A feature will be the way the staff is housed: instead of being relegated to nooks in the basement and attics an entirely separate part of the hotel is to be reserved for them. Apart from about 60 spacious single and double bedrooms there will be a library, bathing accommodation, canteens and a detached terrace.

Professor Edmond Rossier, the well-known journalist, died in Lausanne on October 2, at the age of 81. After editing the *Tribune de Lausanne* he joined the *Gazette de Lausanne*, on which for the past 20 years he had been chief leader writer. A professor of history, Rossier lectured at the Universities of Lausanne and Geneva. He held an honorary doctorate at Glasgow University, and was the author of numerous books, among which was his recent "Contemporary History from 1815 to 1919."

Fines exceeding Frs. 100,000 were imposed on 22 members of a black market gang who had acquired and sold to butchers and catering establishments over 800 pigs. The chief culprit, a cattle dealer in Nyon named Roger Pilloud, was also sentenced to six months imprisonment.

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This year's apple harvest having been somewhat disappointing the sale of apples in Neuchatel and most other places in the canton has been rationed; it can take place only against the surrender of a special coupon.

\* \* \*

The first snow this year fell on Friday night, October 5th, at La Chaux-de-fonds and LeLocle.

\* \* \*

The socialist party in Geneva has declined to form a common front with the "parti du travail" (Leon Nicole) in the forthcoming elections for the Grand Conseil.

\* \* \*

Three months imprisonment is the equivalent of stealing four million meat-coupons; it was inflicted upon Francis Mercanton who had appropriated them from a butcher's shop in Geneva.

### Army

The Swiss press on many occasions expressed in no uncertain terms its dissatisfaction and surprise at the way in which vital information reaches foreign papers through the indiscretion of government officials, it being rightly contended that such news should in the first instance become available to the Swiss public without travelling in a circuitous route. An illustration of this regrettable state of affairs is supplied by an interview which Col. Roger Masson of the Swiss Army Intelligence Service is reported to have granted at the end of last month to a Paris correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*. The colonel's pronunciamento

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LE COMITÉ.

has found a limited echo in the English press and conveys the following:

"Had it not been for the last-minute intervention of Himmler's right-hand man, Walter Schellenberg, Switzerland would have gone the way of Norway and Denmark under the Nazi yoke. Hitler had ordered 30 picked divisions to be massed on the Swiss borders and the date of the occupation had been set for March 25th, 1943.

But at a final meeting of the German General Staff on March 19th, Schellenberg, who was head of the German Secret Service, succeeded in convincing Hitler that neutral Switzerland was a far better protection for Germany's southern approaches than if it became part of the vast Nazi 'fortress.'

Schellenberg gave his personal word of honour that the Swiss would resist any violation of their neutrality by Britain or America. This information was given by Col. Roger Masson, head of the Swiss Counter-Intelligence Service during the war.

He was also told that through Schellenberg the Swiss Secret Service was able to save the lives of French political hostages whom Hitler had sent to the Austrian redoubt to be disposed of if an Allied advance was threatened.

In addition, said Col. Masson, Schellenberg intervened to save Genevieve de Gaulle, niece of Gen. de Gaulle, and at Col. Masson's request last April he freed the family of Gen. Giraud, former French C.-in-C. in North Africa.

Schellenberg, said Col. Masson, was not a fanatical Nazi, despite his membership of the S.S. During their last meeting in April, 1943, he appeared doubtful of a German victory."

Col. (Brigadier) Masson has had the reputation, right from the beginning of the war, of restricting to the utmost the liberty of the press.

As was to be expected, the chief of our military department was called upon to supply an explanation. Several questions were tabled in the National Council and during the morning session of October 4th, Federal Councillor Kobelt gave a full account of the German menace during the war. Dr. Kobelt began by stating that it had been the intention of the Federal Council to give, at the earliest possible moment, complete information about the dangers to which our country had been exposed. Several incidents still

required documentation, but the untimely disclosures of Brigadier Masson made it desirable that this information should not be withheld any longer. While paying due acknowledgment to the great services and aptitude deployed by Brigadier Masson in framing and directing our military intelligence he could not condone his indefensible indiscretion; if an orientation appeared opportune the Swiss press certainly possessed the right to receive such information in the first instance. The Brigadier was, for the present, on leave at his own request. Our intelligence service, continued Dr. Kobelt, functioned promptly and with undeviating certainty, in fact—and this is probably for home consumption only—we knew the exact date of the invasion of Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and Russia, one to three weeks before the actual event took place. The excellence of this service enabled us to concentrate in good time large bodies of troops whenever a surprise attack on Switzerland was discussed at the German headquarters, and thus dishearten its execution. In the first phase of the war the political aims of Hitler presented a constant danger; though later on the scattering of the German forces seemed to improve the outlook, we were still haunted by the spectre of a surprise attack perhaps not prompted by military considerations, but more by personal passion. The espionage service aided by the large fifth column in our country worked at fever heat at all times. In the summer of 1940 our inability to effectively prevent the constant violation of our neutrality by the over-flying British bombers created a critical tension; a German sabotage action on our airfields was frustrated by the vigilance of our troops. A military operation did not follow, but the slogan broadcast at the time of the initially victorious African campaign "Die Schweiz, das Stachelschwein, nehmen wir auf dem Rückweg ein" remained an incessant threat. A surprise attack on our country was actually planned and prepared towards the end of March, 1943, when General Dietl was reported to have assembled a large army in southern Bavaria. Again, a prompt intimation from the military intelligence found a large concentration along our side of the Rhine which changed the mind of the invaders. Soon after the capitulation of Italy, September, 1943, additional units were called up, but the danger passed. The cause of a mysterious explosion near Zurich has also been revealed by Federal Councillor Kobelt: on April 29th, 1944, a German Me 110 landed on the Dübendorf air-

field by mistake. As the machine was equipped with the very latest gadgets the "Luftwaffe" insisted on its immediate return. This was of course refused and the Germans threatened to recover the plane by force; by mutual consent the Messerschmidt was exploded there and then.

The original mobilisation in September, 1939, called up 400,000 men; a second mobilisation in May, 1940, produced half-a-million. In the course of time preparations were completed for an increased defence force of 850,000 men, but their calling up would probably have paralysed our economic life.

An action for slander between two army officials which came before the Divisional Court 3a, on July 26th, has just been disposed of. Dr. Lindt, a former departmental chief in the Intelligence Service, had accused Col. Däniker (retired), a former commandant of the military firing ranges at Wallenstadt, of pro-German utterances. In the course of the proceedings it was established that Col. Däniker, when reporting his impressions of a trip to Germany in 1941, advised the Federal Council to yield to German plans regarding Switzerland. The Colonel lost the slander action the presiding judge remarking that he was foolish to re-open the matter.

Two officers were killed when a military plane, during exercises near the Simplon, crashed; they are Lt. Fischbacher and Lt. Schmid.

In an interview which General Guisan granted to the Times correspondent and published in its issue of October 15th, the General emphasised the strength of our "redoubt system" about which we have already given information in previous issues.

At the annual meeting of the National Fund for Soldiers and their Dependants held under the chairmanship of General Guisan it was stated that the income for 1946 would be Frs. 700,000 while the expenditure would reach two million francs. Large sums were earmarked for the provision of the dependants of the 4,000 casualties; alone in the sanatoria of Montana, Davos and Leysin there were 900 tuberculous soldiers whose families had to be cared for.

It is now stated officially that 1,200 bombs fell on our country during the war, destroying 85 buildings and killing 84 people.

During training exercises, Lt. Hugo Lanz, age 22 from Lotzwil, lost his life by crashing into the lake of Neuchatel; no particulars about the accident have been released.

For participating in a secret military news service, Serg. Jakob Ackermann, age 49, of Teufen, has been sentenced to four years hard labour.

A former army officer who had already been sentenced during his absence was retried on his turning up in Switzerland. He is Major Corrodi, a business man from Biel who will have to spend the next 2½ years in prison. Originally a major in the Swiss army he deserted in the summer 1941 and was enrolled in the German S.S. advancing subsequently to brigadier. On service in Italy, he smuggled, on the latter's col-

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lapse, back into his own country. There was no charge against him for disclosing military information.

The army exemption tax (Militärsteuer) which at the beginning of the war was doubled will as from the 1st of January 1946 be collected at the original (single) rate.

### Traffic

A regular timetable is already in operation for several routes flown by Swissair. The Zurich-London service commenced on September 29th. The plane is leaving Zurich three times weekly, i.e. Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 9.30 and returns from London the same day at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the journey taking about three hours. The aircraft carries passengers, mail and goods. Apart from the service from Geneva and Zurich to Paris, a third one to Amsterdam is being worked three times a week. Tentative flights to Spain, Czechoslovakia, Algeria and Egypt have been made and they are likely to be the precursors of regular lines. All the routes are flown with the familiar Douglas machines; Swissair has recently obtained another four planes of this type which are said to cost about 650,000 frs. each.

The Swiss Federal Railways are showing for the present encouraging results. The following is taken from "Modern Transport" October 6th, 1945:

"Passenger traffic on the Swiss Federal Railways continues at a good level. In August, the railways carried 18,300,000 persons, an increase of 2,000,000 compared with the corresponding month of last year. Revenue was correspondingly higher at Sfr. 24,700,000, which was Sfr. 3,000,000 more than was earned in August, 1944. Although the volume of goods traffic continued to fall in August, when it was 280,000 tons less than in August, 1944, the Federal Railways was able to report a slight increase in revenue from this source. The month's income from goods traffic amounted to Sfr. 21,626,000, or about Sfr. 430,000 more than in August of last year. Receipts, at Sfr. 47,802,000, were Sfr. 3,000,000 higher than in August, 1944. Expenditure amounted to Sfr. 29,750,000, or about Sfr. 2,000,000 more than in August of last year. The balance of about Sfr. 18,000,000 was Sfr. 800,000 higher than in the corresponding month of last year and can cover charges on the profit and loss account for interest on capital, writings off, etc. This rate of profit, however, is not expected to be maintained in coming months, and a deficit of about thirty million francs for the whole year seems likely."

A regular goods traffic with Czechoslovakia is now in operation. The first train (40 trucks) loaded with Kaolin and bottom-plates arrived at Buchs on September 24th; it took just over three days. The first train from Switzerland left on September 29th carrying exclusively cattle for breeding.

### Economics

Negotiations have been concluded between the Schweiz. Bankverein and the Basler Handelsbank under which the assets and liabilities are taken over by the first named concern; particular assets (frozen!) the realisation of which is deemed to be difficult are retained by

the Handelsbank and now constitute its only asset, the nominal amount being about 43 million francs.

At a meeting in Zurich of bank clerks, severe charges against the directorate of the Basler Handelsbank were made. The name of the former Federal Councillor Musy was freely mentioned as having induced the bank to grant loan to certain foreign governments on the promise that, if necessary, our own government would back these transactions.

It is officially stated that Swiss imports now exceed a daily quantity of 4,000 tons; the improvement is due to the accessibility of the harbours of Antwerp, Genoa, Toulon and Cerbère.

A great stride towards normalcy in living conditions has been taken on October the 15th when rationing was abolished as regards tea, coffee, cocoa and some other products; the restrictions on the sale of textiles and the manufacture of cloth are also removed.

A good range of exhibits was sent by our manufacturers to the Paris Fair which took place from September 8th to 24th. The English trade papers commented very favourably on the Swiss stands and the following is what the "Drapers Record," September 22nd says:

"The best textile show is undoubtedly Swiss. The embroideries of St. Gall are beautiful, as also are some of the novelty silks. Organised by the Swiss Chamber of Commerce, there was a good sprinkling of Swiss textile journals and plenty of ideas.

One novelty, also Swiss, was a portable electricity-driven sewing machine. This surprise exhibit is a small but efficient piece of work. When in its case it looks as if it might be a portable typewriter, for the case is no larger. Opened up, the case provides the table on which the machine stands."

Generally speaking, however, our country has had a bad press during the period under review. Even the "Daily Telegraph" has missed no opportunity to cast bricks. If it were not for the "Times" and

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"Manchester Guardian" one might conclude that our country had been a former enemy; here is a cutting from a long article in the latter daily of October 8th:

"First, Switzerland has no coal, no iron, no textile or other raw materials; it has only water-power and brains. All the industries have concentrated on high-quality products, and they have been so successful that, in time of peace, they worry neither about their dependence on import sources nor about their need for export markets. On imported coal tar the chemical industry has built up a powerful position in dyestuffs, pharmaceutical products, insecticides, and other fine chemicals. The marine engines of the Swiss engineering industry, which is a thousand miles away from any sea-shore, are world famous. In textile finishing and design, in the manufacture of precision instruments, of boots and shoes, and many other products the Swiss hold their own with the best anywhere, and their watch-making industry is unequalled. And these great export industries have been built up without the help of a big home market. All this is not meant to praise the Swiss, but to suggest that the British export problem, which to-day seems so forbidding, has been faced and solved by another nation before. Finally, while all belligerent countries have been inventing and perfecting new ways of making instruments of war Swiss industry has had six years of peaceful progress. We talk, for example, of applying the lessons of aircraft manufacture to transport. In Switzerland the first all-aluminium train is already in service!"

Switzerland is one of the very few continental countries which can — and is even anxious to — respond to the English export drive. All means are used to heighten the momentum of this drive which is probably the object of the following news item which is taken from the Manchester "Sunday Chronicle," October 14th:

"One of the most versatile aircraft yet produced, the Miles Aerovan, which flies at a fuel cost of about 3d. a mile, played a part in Britain's export drive when it left Croydon yesterday for Switzerland with a load of 5,000 fountain pens.

The aircraft, which will give demonstration flights in Switzerland and France, can be used as an air-bus, carrying ten passengers, a freighter, ambulance, caravan, or a flying showroom."

which seems to indicate that since the lifting of the censorship, ink is running dry in Switzerland. We can imagine our people at home scanning with their now redundant spy glasses the horizon for the arrival of these modern time-savers which at one time or another are also the producers of bad tempers as if we had not enough of the latter in this happy world of ours; their delight and relief will be intensified when they realise that with their order of 5,000 fountain pens a brand new aeroplane has been thrown in.

Another amusing piece belonging to this chapter is revealed to us by the "Autocar," September 28th. We are informed that Mr. Emil Frey, the Swiss distributor of Austin cars — evidently fearing that he might be overlooked in this export drive — came over here to make sure of his share. After worrying himself through the jungle of visas, permits, M.O.W.T. licences and what not, he succeeded in getting two cars across to Dieppe whence he is supposed to have wheeled them with the help of a companion to Switzerland. How he managed to keep the engines turning on the 500 mile trip we shall probably learn when the story is published in book form. A week later, on October 5th, we read in the morning papers that during the next three months another three hundred cars are likely to be delivered in our country. Now, private motoring is still prohibited on Sunday owing to petrol shortage; our "juice", unless we are mistaken comes from America, and we can hardly believe that Uncle Sam will be in a great hurry to oblige John Bull, his chief competitor on the Swiss market. It looks therefore that a good many of these cars will be shop-soiled before they take the road.

### Humanitarian

The amount collected by the "Don Suisse" to end August last amounted to nearly 37 million francs. The money is used exclusively for relieving the privations and misery still obtaining in the war-devastated countries. Textiles, shoes, tools and medicaments are being sent abroad while children, particularly tuberculous cases, are being cared for in our health resorts.

Well over 300,000 foreign refugees of all ages from 28 different countries were sheltered in our country during the war.

A brisk black market business with members of the U.S. forces on holiday in our country is done at all the centres, specially at Interlaken. A great variety of goods, such as fountain pens, razor blades, chewing gum, coffee, etc. partly obtained in Italy and partly at American canteens in France and Germany are finding ready buyers as they are not burdened with the Swiss import duty. This extra income together with the liberal army pay is spent locally and remains in the country.

## SWISS BANK CORPORATION,

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The phenomenal success of the "Marie Louise" film has found an undiluted echo in the whole of the English press; an article in the "Cinema," October 3rd gives us an insight into the preliminaries:

"The growth of film production in Switzerland is being hampered by the present attitude of Swiss bankers, who are not interested in financing entertainment projects.

So a Zurich production company issued an appeal two years ago for financial aid. Stock of a minimum of 50 francs was offered and, in 48 hours, more than 600,000 francs had been subscribed.

Many purchasers of this stock were peasant folk who decided to risk a portion of their savings in the venture.

The result was the recent success, "Marie Louise," now showing in London, and the subscribers have had no cause to regret taking the risk.

At Geneva recently a similar appeal did not interest the people and a proposed production had to be abandoned, although, after the United States and Russia, Switzerland occupies the third place as possessor of one of the largest gold reserves.

Since 1933, Switzerland has produced more than 60 feature films with the aid of private finance, as well as many hundreds of documentary and educational shorts."

\* \* \*

The Anglo-Swiss football match, referred to in a previous issue, has now been fixed for May 11th in London; another match will be played a few days later in Scotland.

\* \* \*

One thing the so-called peace conferences cannot change is the lure of our mountains. The latest conqueror of the Matterhorn is Mrs. Norton, the wife of the British Minister at Berne who together with an American officer and several guides accomplished the achievement in six hours on September 20th. Mrs. Norton, not exactly a sportswoman, has already the Zinalrothorn and the Obergabelhorn to her credit.

\* \* \*

The more than usually unsatisfactory reception of the Beromünster transmitter is caused by damage suffered during the heavy storm on August 10th to the high frequency cable. The repairs are expected to be completed some time next month.

\* \* \*

The next "Tir Federal" is stated to take place in 1949 though the actual town has not been fixed yet.

\* \* \*

Emigration to overseas countries has already made a start. The employment department of the Schweiz. Kaufmännische Verein in Zurich has so far placed 17 young "commercial", mostly in British Colonies, such as Gold Coast, Nigeria, Ceylon, etc.

\* \* \*

The prospects of Geneva regaining the seat of the new world organisation are not entirely negligible though a majority vote of the Council in London has decided in favour of America. The following comment appeared in the "Manchester Guardian," October 1st:

"The United Nations Organisation, will not exist until the first Constituent Assembly meets in London (probably in Westminster Hall) on December 4. This should enable the Security Council, the Assembly, and other organs to meet for the first time early next year. Much of the preparatory work has

already been done by the Commission which is now sitting in London, but it has yet to be decided where the permanent headquarters of the Organisation shall be. Mr. Noel-Baker outlined the necessary qualifications. The seat of the Organisation must be easily accessible with good communications. It must have a reasonable climate and adequate accommodation. More important, it must guarantee the representatives of the United Nations diplomatic immunity and complete freedom; the press must not be hampered by any censorship. It is obvious that all these qualifications are possessed by the former seat of the League of Nations at Geneva and there will undoubtedly be strong support for returning there. Any opposition is likely to come from Russia, who has unpleasant memories of the League and only chilly relations with Switzerland. Her objections might be overcome to the benefit of all if the Swiss Government agreed to the establishment of a small international zone at Geneva under the sovereignty of the United Nations."

#### The following communication has been received from the Swiss Legation.

As most readers of the *Swiss Observer* no doubt already know, the air service Zurich-London-Zurich was officially inaugurated on Saturday, September 29th.

In order to avoid any possible misunderstanding, it should be pointed out that this air service—which is at the moment operated by Swissair three times a week (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday)—is still a restricted one and functions primarily for the requirements of official traffic.

The Swiss Legation dispose of a certain number of seats on each plane which are allocated to applicants of Swiss or other nationalities travelling on official mission or urgent and important business.

Owing to the heavy demands, it is urgently requested that applicants, who can justify a priority and have already secured the necessary visas, should notify the Swiss Legation a fortnight in advance if possible.

Ordinary travellers should apply directly to the British Overseas Airways, Airways House, Buckingham Palace Road, where a limited number of seats can be allocated according to vacancies and to date of application. It is realised that the present limitation of the air service between this country and Switzerland will cause some disappointment, but it is very likely that the situation will improve gradually until present restrictions on normal civil air traffic will be removed altogether.

15th October, 1945.

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