

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: - (1957)

Heft: 1309 [i.e. 1310]

Rubrik: Press review

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PRESS REVIEW.

By V. MAY.

The Editor-in-Chief of the Liberal "Journal de Genève" devotes a comprehensive article to the future problems which Switzerland will have to face in connection with the discovery of nuclear power. This article deals, above all, with the difficulties and the possibilities which will arise in regard to the organisation of research and the training of specialists in this domain in our country. The article in question draws attention, first of all, to the fact that Switzerland is very behind the times in the sphere of atomic energy when compared with the great industrial countries, but then goes on to say that this is no reason for giving up the thing as hopeless. In this particular case, however, it will be necessary to renounce from certain forms of individualism, from certain particular characteristics of the universities, and from certain federalistic tendencies, although these have every right to exist.

The paper goes on to say that the educational and research centres for the science of physics belonging to the seven Cantonal Universities and the Technical Colleges in Zürich and in Lausanne do not possess the necessary equipment for atomic research. It would, however, be a mistake to replace these centres for higher education by a central Atomic Institute financed by the Confederation and supported by industry. On the other hand it cannot be demanded from the Cantons that they should equip their Universities for atomic research work. It will, therefore, prove necessary for the Confederation to intervene in this matter. If this intervention is to prove effective it must not consist merely of a planless subsidising of the Universities. This would be an absurd waste of money. It is much more a matter of finding an intermediate solution between an integral centralisation and a splitting up of forces. In the opinion of the "Journal de Genève" this would prove quite possible on the condition that not every individual University should possess its own small reactor, its own cyclotron and its own betatron. The Universities must divide the various tasks among themselves — some should specialise in basic research and others in the problems connected with chemistry, biology and medicine — and they must all help each other.

In regard to the *big* plants for carrying out tests, the "Journal de Genève" thinks that a choice must be made between two possibilities: either such plants must be concentrated in Würenlingen, in the Canton of Aargau, where the "Reactor Ltd." founded by Swiss industry is already operating a reactor, and is engaged in setting up a second one, or else, if it is considered preferable to have *two centres*, one of these should be in French-speaking Switzerland.

According to the opinions expressed by the "Journal de Genève", the atomic research work to be divided among the various Universities must be placed under the supervision of a national body, which will also proceed to co-ordinate it. There are two institutions which come into question here: the "Committee for the Study of Nuclear Energy" set up by the Federal Council in 1945, and the "Swiss National Foundation for Scientific Research". The Genevese newspaper considers that the first-mentioned

body is the most suitable for the purpose, in view of the fact that this atomic research work is not confined exclusively to purely scientific matters but must also embrace practical questions and, above all, must collaborate closely with private industry.

According to provisional estimates, Switzerland will have to spend as much as a hundred million francs during the next five years for nuclear research and development work. The "Journal de Genève" describes this sum as being a minimum. If our endeavours, when all possibilities have been taken into account, are to succeed in being comparable to those of our neighbours, then — so the "Journal de Genève" affirms — this will mean an expenditure of some fifty million francs a year.

The Genevese newspaper concludes its article as follows:— As a result of technical progress it is apparent today that the Confederation must contribute financially to the development of the Cantonal Universities. This is perhaps regrettable; nevertheless it would be foolish to deny what is so obviously necessary. What is important, however, is that such unavoidable intervention on the part of the Confederation into Cantonal sovereignty in the domain of education, and of the autonomy of the Universities should prove as little encroaching as possible. This aim, however, can only be achieved to that degree to which the Universities will be able to put in a word for themselves when the preparatory planning and co-ordination is taking place.



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