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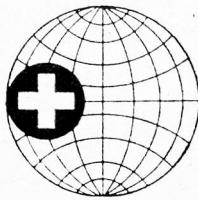
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1966 THE YEAR OF "FIFTH SWITZERLAND"

PROGRAMME TO MARK THE GOLDEN JUBILEE



The "Year of Fifth Switzerland" was officially opened by the spring meeting of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad in Berne on 22nd April. A Press Conference and Luncheon were organised for the Parliamentary Press.

In June, the special postage stamp for "Fifth Switzerland" will be issued. The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad is publishing a brochure called "Die Fünfte Schweiz". Also in June, the Nouvelle Société Helvétique in Geneva will hold a special Commemoration Meeting.

In view of the importance of this year, celebrations of the Swiss National Day on 1st August will have a special character in the Swiss communities abroad. It has been suggested that *Auslandschweizer* should be asked to give speeches at the celebrations at home. Anybody who will be in Switzerland at that time and is willing to address a gathering should kindly write to the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, 3000 Berne.

This year's Assembly of the Swiss Abroad will be extended to four days. It will be held in Berne. It opens with a Press Conference on Monday, 29th August. The next day will be devoted to the usual summer meeting

of the Commission, and the Official Opening and First Plenary Meeting will take place. A Reception and Banquet have been organised for the evening.

On 31st August, there will be meetings of Commissions with outside organisations interested in the work of the Swiss Abroad.

The last day, Thursday, 1st September, has been kept open for an excursion on the Lake of Thun. In the evening, a performance will be given at the Casino of the Oratorio "Niklaus von Flüe" by Honegger. The Berne Symphony Orchestra and the Brigue Mixed Choir will present this remarkable work especially in honour of the Swiss Abroad. It will be followed by an Official Gathering and Closing Ceremony at the Burgerratssaal.

On 16th October, the Swiss electorate will go to the poll to vote on the proposed Constitutional Article for the Swiss Abroad, which has already been passed unanimously by both Chambers. Also in October, a last celebration will take place in Zurich, organised by the Nouvelle Société Helvétique.

THE "SWISS OBSERVER" THIRTY YEARS AGO

The issue of 4th April 1936 carried an article on "Fortifying the Alps", describing the steps taken to make the exposed Northern boundary of Switzerland impregnable to attack. Similar articles appeared in following issues, one on "Switzerland Today", stating how Mussolini and more particularly Hitler had been stimulating the democratic self-consciousness of Switzerland, and "Switzerland and the Nazis", a reprint from the "Manchester Guardian", in which the writer explained how every Swiss tenet and tradition ran counter to the conceptions of Hitler, and that the membership of the Swiss Nazi Group "Front" was dwindling. Two social events in the Colony were reported on in the first issue in April 1936. One was the success of the Swiss dancing genius Trudi Schoop whose immense gifts of expression had created a great deal of interest and admiration in London. The Swiss Minister gave a Reception at the Legation in honour of the Swiss dancer and of Ella Maillart whose successful and daring journey across the most inaccessible parts of Asia, together with Peter Fleming, was being duly honoured by British circles. The other social event reported in the same issue was the 62nd Annual Banquet and Ball at Pagani's organised by the Unione Ticinese under the chairmanship of Mr. Oscar Gambazzi. The Swiss Minister Monsieur Paravicini attended, and, as was customary in those days, no fewer than seven Swiss societies were represented.

The next issue showed pictures of the newly opened Home for Aged Swiss in London's Conway Street (then called Southampton Street), W.1. The same issue and several future ones carried detailed lists of the sums donated in answer to the appeal made by the Zurich Rowing Club for financing their participation at the Henley Regatta.

On 18th April, readers were informed that the Gott-

fried Keller Prize had been awarded to Hermann Hesse. Unemployment in Switzerland had again gone up and figures stood at 98,362, over 16,000 more than a year previously. The State was to give aid to the Swiss embroidery industry, and a draft scheme for re-organising the Swiss Federal Railway had been approved. The Swiss were to build their own fighting aircraft for the first time. In Zurich, Mr. Armin Meili had been appointed Manager of the Swiss National Exhibition to be held there in 1939. From the London Colony, the news published was of the new Committee of the City Swiss Club elected at the A.G.M. It is sad to reflect that from amongst the twelve office-holders, not one of them, as far as the Editor is aware, is still alive.

On 25th April, readers learned that new decrees had been introduced by the Federal Council for improving the financial standing of Swiss banks, mostly aiming at the "protection of Switzerland's credit". The League of Nations had moved into their new building in Ariana Park in Geneva, and the new Gandria route had been opened to traffic, enabling cars to travel between Lugano and St. Moritz in a few hours.

A report on how the Swiss prepared their defences was published on 2nd May, about permanent anti-aircraft batteries, bomb-proof shelters in towns, fortifications and new-type aeroplanes and guns. In Geneva, a crime museum had been opened, and a number of jubilees had been or were about to be celebrated: The Loetschberg Tunnel 25 years, the Simplon Tunnel 30, the "Hero" factory of Lenzburg 50 years, and the Zurich store of Jelmoli 100 years.

"The much exploited joke about the Swiss Navy is definitely taboo", it said in the S.O. on 9th May 1936: a new motor ship "Albula" had been launched for direct and regular service between Basle and London via the

Rhine route. In the same issue, a report on the "Olde Friends" Evening at the Union Helvetia Club appeared, an annual gathering which had been held already for seventeen years.

The next two issues were headed "Where are you going next Saturday (today)? To the Swiss Sports at Herne Hill, of course!" There was a reprint from the "Morning Post" on 16th May headed "Swiss Milk With" — "How do the Swiss do it? Not only did they compel Germany to hand back Dr. Jakob, the anti-Nazi, kidnapped on German soil, but now they have sent the Nazi spy, Dr. Wesemann, to quod for three years. Could France or Italy have done that? I doubt it. Could Britain? The Germans would have laughed in our faces. We have not even protested against Wesemann being employed by the German Embassy here to spy on German refugees in London.

"It is easy to understand why no Power wants to antagonise Switzerland. There must be an international sanctuary somewhere, and Switzerland is temperamentally and geographically cut out for the part. An impregnable oasis of hotel keepers in the middle of an ocean of quarrelsome and mutually suspicious nations! A spiritual home for all the Ashendens in Europe! On top of that there is a sturdy independence about the Swiss that makes it more profitable to let them have their way than to quarrel with them."

In the same issue a report appeared on the presentation of a wonderful wrist watch to young King Farouk, Egypt's new ruler; it had been given to him by the Swiss Colony in Cairo and was one of the most exquisite specimens of its kind. A reprint was published of an appeal

made by the Alpine Club in "The Times" on behalf of the remaining members of the Boss family of Grindelwald, one-time owners of the famous Hotel Baeren.

An article on "The Perils of Mountaineering" by F. S. Smythe appeared in the following issue. Walter Mittelholzer's new book "Flying Adventures" got a splendid write-up; extracts were published on 30th May.

The last issue in May 1936 was the 17th Anniversary Number, twelve, instead of four pages and printed on art paper. It also had an illustrated article "Vom Stalldienst der Flieger" and a long report on the Swiss Sports at which "only" 300 people turned up. A large advertisement for Swiss Hotel Plan Tours gave "all-in" prices of as little as 8 gns. for nine days. A Swissair advert about the same period proudly announced "To Switzerland in three hours" — return fare to Zurich: £13.16.0. Comparing today's times and fares, we find that the less it takes us to get there, the more we have to pay for it! But then, think of the comforts of today's flights as compared with pre-war journeys.

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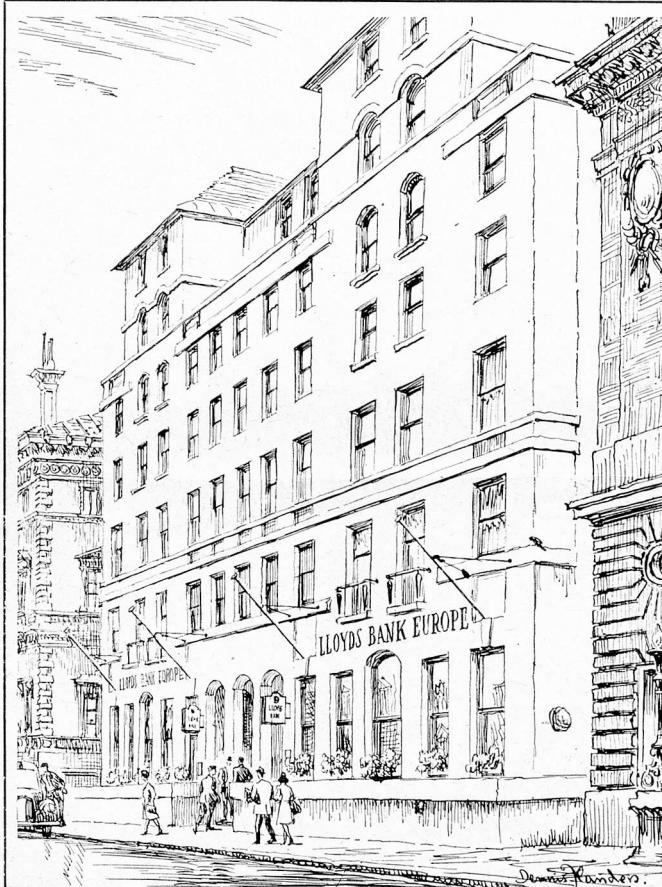
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