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## THE "SWISS OBSERVER" THIRTY YEARS AGO

In the first issue of July 1938, we read of the introduction of fast "Arrow" trains in Switzerland, red and blue in colour, red for SBB, blue for the LSB. A Black List of Swiss citizens compiled by the German secret police had been discovered in a brief case left in a Zurich tram. There were two articles on "Swiss Neutrality and Germany" reprinted from "The Times", and on Swiss devaluation two years previously "Switzerland consolidates Economic Structure".

On 9th July, we heard that the Federal Penal Code had been accepted by the Swiss electorate (Referendum), settling the question which had been considered for forty years. A report in French described the 176th anniversary celebrations of the Eglise Suisse in London. Madame Paravicini, wife of the Swiss Minister, had given a sherry party at which Swiss sports clothes were displayed by attractive models. An article on "Romance of the Red Cross Movement" filled the last page of that issue, apart from advertisements and Church announcements.

In the following issue the construction of the most powerful electric locomotive for the Gotthard route was hailed, and a visit of 25 children from Tyneside and South Wales to Switzerland was reported; the children were "adopted" by Adelboden. More on Switzerland and how others saw her at that time and an appeal by the *Bundesfeier* Committee preceded the long report on the Swiss Sports and Garden Party held at the Duke of York's Headquarters in Chelsea. They were attended by the Minister and other members of the Legation, and a band of the Royal Engineers provided smart music. Mr. P. F. Boehringer again judged the ever-popular pillow fight carried out sitting astride a horizontal pole. The Beauty Parade for Ladies was a new event. The George Dimier Cup for teams was won by the S.M.S., with Union Helvetia being runners up, and Cercle Valaisan in third place. Where are they now?

The Swiss National Exhibition planned for 1939 was given a write-up in the next issue. Retreating Swiss glaciers, a climb with the famous Alpine guide Alexander Burgener, and an Englishman's suggestion for closer co-operation between Great Britain and Switzerland, i.e. by setting up of trade agencies and holding Swiss (British) Weeks, were all dealt with in the same number.

The last issue in July brought an account of the scaling of the North Wall of the Eiger by two Austrians and two Bavarians. A portrait appeared of Paul Walser, a well-known personality in the Swiss community in London, whose 70th birthday was announced. "ST", the then Editor of the "S.O." wrote on the Swiss National Day — the heading alone took up space 3" by 10"! The former President of the Permanent International Court of Arbitration, Prof. Dr. Max Huber, published an article on "the Growth and Nature of the Swiss State" which he called the most characteristic creation of the Swiss people.

The first issue in August 1938 carried an invitation to the Assembly of the Swiss Abroad — in French. In the same language, an account of the 5th Grand Prix Automobile de Suisse appeared. Anton auf der Maur wrote an article "Auslandschweizertum und Alte Heimat". He opened his survey by saying "Jeder ist gerade soviel, als er selbst aus sich macht." Still holds good, doesn't it? The report of the First of August Celebration of the Swiss Mercantile Society's College was followed by yet another article in French on the fortification of Swiss frontiers in

which Colonel Labhart had pointed out that there were three frontiers to defend for Switzerland, since Austria was aligned with Germany.

On 13th August, we read that the death penalty had been abolished in Switzerland. Prof. Laur, the Swiss "Farming King", had retired as Secretary-General of the Swiss Farmers' Union. The Swiss Press Association had resigned from the International Federation of Journalists, as that body still had members representing countries where the freedom of the Press had ceased to exist. St. Gall was described as "Treasure Chest of Ancient Art and Culture" in an article, and Salvador de Madariaga, Gilbert Murray and Robert Hichens wrote on "What British contemporaries think about Switzerland". Murray praised Liberty, Tolerance and Peace, de Madariaga called Switzerland a "Creation of the Human Will", whilst the last-mentioned wrote on "Zurich — A City that raises the Spirits". There was also an article "Six Years to build a Tunnel" — celebrating the silver jubilee of the Loetschberg Tunnel (reprinted from the "Daily Mail"). From the "Birmingham Post", there was an account of a visit to the Monastery of St. Bernard.

On 20th August, we heard another report on fatal climbing accidents in the Swiss mountains; it was an unusually bad summer for mountaineers. We also read that the top of the Matterhorn had been kept in Geneva since 1868, taken there by M. F. Thioly, and recently sold for Fr.5.50. The influx of refugees into Switzerland was on the increase again. A large number of Jews had crossed the Alps from Austria. A reception camp had been established at Diepoldsau (St. Gall). "The Heroic Age of English Alpinism" was the title of an article by Mrs. M. Hottinger-Mackie, M.A. (nineteenth century). The Editor reviewed a book called "Swiss Summer" by Charles Graves, and congratulated the S.O.'s publisher, Mr. P. F. Boehringer on his 60th birthday. "Don't forget the Appenzell" was the reminder by Dr. E., and C.B. wrote on his (her?) first trip by air. The Editor also regretted that the London Colony did not even have an official First of August Celebration. His lament was supported by Mr. S. M. Brugisser's letter.

The last issue in August 1938 had lengthy "Notes and Gleanings" by Kyburg, but I am unable to tell readers anything of the other contents as the first page (twice today's size) has been cut out from our bound volume at one time or another.

## SWISS YODELLING BY CORRESPONDENCE

The young Korean Kim Hong Chul, number eight in a family of ten, had an irrepressible urge to learn to yodel. He hunted high and low throughout Korea but failed to unearth either a teacher or a manual of instruction. Kim Hong Chul was not daunted. He immediately sent off to Switzerland and asked for a taped performance. Very soon afterwards, the talented young Korean despatched a yodel tape of his own to Switzerland where even the experts were agreeably surprised at his prowess. The Swiss National Tourist Office, together with the Zurich newspaper "Tages-Anzeiger", decided to invite Hong Chul over to Switzerland. Here, he was interviewed by the local press and gave a performance in a well-known Zurich restaurant. By all accounts, Kim Hong Chul is still yodelling away merrily in his native Korea, clad in the traditional dress and singing the praises of Appenzell and Schwyz.

[S.N.T.O.]