

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: - (1968)

Heft: 1555

Rubrik: The "Swiss Obersver" thrity years ago

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THE "SWISS OBSERVER" THIRTY YEARS AGO

On 3rd September 1938, we read of a grave aviation accident when five fighter planes of the Swiss Air Force crashed into the mountainside of Drusberg and Heuberg in Schwyz, all five pilots losing their lives. Denmark stopped all Swiss watch imports by way of retaliation — Switzerland had increased the production of dairy produce, and consequently, Danish butter imports had fallen off appreciably. At the Tribschen Villa near Lucerne, the famous conductor Arturo Toscanini had given his first open-air concert; the best Swiss soloists formed the orchestra, and precious and rare old Italian instruments were used. The rest of the issue was taken up by Kyburg's "Notes and Gleanings" all dealing with incidents and journeys in the Alps. An advertisement by the Charles Strubin Company in London appeared; it carried a proposal to change two ships' names, both owned by the said company, from "Carol Dorian" and "Houstone" to "Lake Hallwil" and "Lake Neuchâtel".

In the following issue we learned that the former Swiss Consul-General to Austria (prior to the German annexation) had been arrested and put into the Dachau concentration camp; he was Dr. F. Forster, a Bernese lawyer and Swiss national. In Basle, the problem of the Jewish refugees from Germany was becoming a serious one. The life in a Swiss sanatorium was the subject of one and economics of another article. The story of William Tell was recounted by an Englishman in peculiar French. Samples "Pourquoi ne montré-vez pas de l'obéientz à mod?" asked Gessler.

In the following issue appeared a message by the *Consistoire* of the Swiss Church in London referring to the Federal Day of Prayer, reminding us of our obligations, particularly during such a serious period as that of the Munich Crisis of September 1938. Switzerland had charged all the mines at main roads and alpine passes which were to have been blown up in case of an invasion. *Bundesrat* Motta was to address the Assembly of the Swiss abroad in Schaffhausen, but was prevented by political events. The first Swiss glider flights had been made from Zurich to Basle and back by the Swiss pilot Marcel Godinat. "Historians and the Crisis" by E. L. Woodward and "Switzerland fights against a new *Anschluss*" by R. A. Friedman were reproduced from the "Spectator" and the "Contemporary Review" respectively.

On 24th September 1938, we read that Sir Malcolm Campbell had beaten his own water speed record on the Lake of Hallwil. A long report on the 50 years of history of the Swiss Mercantile Society in London appeared, written by the Editor, A. Stauffer who had himself been a president of the Society (1917/19) and was an Honorary Member. Special features of the Swiss National Exhibition in Zurich were described in another article.

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