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THE "SWISS OBSERVER" THIRTY YEARS AGO

On 5th November 1938, we were informed that St. Moritz has been chosen for the Olympic Winter Games 1940. The Swiss Police had discovered a Nazi organisation working in villages in Eastern Switzerland "to dangerous proportions". An article reprinted from the "New York Times Magazine" gave a glowing account on "Switzerland rallies again for Freedom".

In the following issue we read that the Swiss frontier guards had been strengthened, and that Switzerland was taking firm measures to fight Nazi propaganda. An illuminated address of gratitude had been presented to Mr. Chamberlain by the town of Geneva. Preview articles on the Swiss National Exhibition 1939 appeared, and reports on a Concert by the Swiss Orchestral Society at Conway Hall, in conjunction with the Nouvelle Société Helvétique. The Women's Fair at Olympia also got a big write-up, though the only connection with Switzerland there was, were the Bulle clocks exhibited at the show.

On 19th November, there was a long report on the unanimous and outright condemnation by the Swiss Press of the Nazi persecution of the Jews in Germany. Plans for a Swiss Maginot Line were being discussed by Swiss experts. More Nazi documents had been seized and arrests made. A stirring article by Editor-in-Chief Schuerch of the "Bund" was reprinted, reminding the Swiss citizen of three important points: 1) *It is wrong to say that only a country can be defended properly which has given comfort and affluence to the individual — on the contrary, the man who has learnt to live the hard way can appreciate the good things in life and will have the guts and stamina to defend his country.* 2) *No Swiss must ever think that resistance will be of no avail; personal bravery always pays, in spite of modern weapons.* 3) *It is not necessary to have a long life in order to be a useful citizen; once one is sure that one can depart to eternity at any moment, one is truly reasonable and able to look upon the defence of one's country with confidence, even if loss of life were involved. And the latter would be preferable to existance under the rule of a foreign power.*

"A Travers la Suisse" was the heading of a long illustrated report on a successful film show arranged by the Nouvelle Société Helvétique.

On 26th November 1938, we read that a prominent Gestapo man had been arrested in Schaffhausen as well as 12 other Nazis elsewhere. The Basle Municipal Theatre had sacked a German actor who had attended a political meeting in Germany. To this, the S.O. Editor added "Bravo". More on the coming "Landi" in Zurich and on Swiss football appeared, and a long report on the Farewell Dinner given to the Rev. and Mrs. Hahn who were leaving London after 14 years of valuable work in London. Under Swiss Church news, we read that no fewer than seven Swiss babies had been christened at the Schweizerkirche; among them son of Mr. and Mrs. E. Kern the son and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. Ulmann, two daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Ernst Weber and the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Seiffert, all parents and one son are still subscribers of the S.O.



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