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THE "SWISS OBSERVER" THIRTY YEARS AGO

The first issue in 1938 carried a statement by the Swiss Foreign Minister Federal Councillor G. Motta on the occasion of Italy's withdrawal from the League of Nations (Germany had already withdrawn). He referred to the great changes which had taken place within the League since it was formed in 1920. Nevertheless, Switzerland would continue to play her modest part. In his New Year Message, the Editor of the "S.O.", Mr. A. Stauffer, expressed his "serious misgivings" as to the future of the paper, and he feared a loss due to increasing costs of production. His appeal for further support could well be reprinted today . . . An article "Forbidden Journey" by Ella Maillart made fascinating reading.

On 8th January, we read that the Swiss Trade Union Leaders had rejected any alliance with Russian Unions. The second article appeared on "Emigration of Swiss Industries".

The issue of 15th January had a boxed notice by Messrs. Charles Strubin & Co. Ltd., announcing the re-naming of their merchant ships. Application had been made to the Board of Trade under the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894, and thus the "Eastbury", "Pracat", "Barmoor", "Pomaron" and "Yorkbrook" would become "Lake Geneva", "Lake Lugano", "Lake Lucerne", "Lake Zurich" and "Lake Maggiore" respectively. Mr. W. E. Gattiker took up the Editor's S.O.S. and made an ardent appeal for additional support in the hope of getting 150 new subscribers. At the same time, he sang the Editor's praises — most deservedly, we should like to say, having known Fred Stauffer's devotion and unselfish work for so long. Incidentally, the appeal must have been successful, or the S.O. could not have weathered the stormy war years.

On 22nd January, we read that the Confederation's budget showed a deficit of 23m. francs. An article by Dr. C. H. P. "Briefer fliegen durch die Nacht" described the Swissair night mail service. The *Consistoire* of the Swiss Church in London announced the fusion of the two separate Swiss Protestant Churches into one Church.

The last number published in January 1938 carried a report on Monsieur Motta's statement regarding Swiss neutrality and the League of Nations. Switzerland would have to remain neutral even with regard to the League itself, and Switzerland would apply for restoration of her complete neutrality. The deficit of the Swiss Federal Railways was "only" 18m. instead of the budgeted 70m. francs.

On 5th February 1938, we read that Swissair inaugurated Europe's highest airport at Samaden in the Grisons when it flew a giant Douglas DC-2 airliner to the new airfield.

In the next issue a photograph of the new airport appeared, together with a large picture of four new Swissair pilots. We also read that the new President of the *Unione Ticinese* was Mr. G. Eusebio.

On 19th February we read that there were 280,000 Swiss abroad, 100,000 in France and 15,100 in Great Britain. There were still 95,700 unemployed in Switzerland. There was an obituary notice on Mr. Charles Alfred Barbezat who had died at the age of 63. He was a banker and later a representative of the American Dental House de Trey, which he developed into a successful public company. He was President of the City Swiss Club for 3 years and of the Swiss Sports Committee for 13 years. He was also an Honorary Member of the Swiss Mercantile Society.

In the same issue, an imposing portrait of the Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, appeared on the occasion of his attendance at a Rotary International Luncheon at St. Pancras. The report covered a full page (twice today's size).

The last February number gave results of the plebiscite in which the Swiss electorate voted for Romansh to be the fourth national language in Switzerland. Mr. A. Nussbaumer had presided the Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Benevolent Society and Mr. A. Steinmann that of the S.M.S.

On 5th March, there was a report on the 70th birthday of the former Federal Councillor Schulthess, and we read of Mr. G. Keller's appointment as correspondent of the "Basler Nachrichten", a job he still holds successfully today. Mr. Stauffer, the Editor, described the first stage of his flight to Samaden.

The Swiss painter Cuno Amiet had celebrated his 70th birthday early in March, and in the same issue, the Editor concluded his long report on the thrilling flight London-Samaden.

On 19th March, extracts from Swiss papers were published after the Nazi seizure of Austria, a fact which greatly disturbed the Swiss people. The Swiss frontier guards had been strengthened.

In the last March issue in 1938, the Swiss Government's solemn declaration was published regarding events in Austria, which in no way affected Switzerland's political situation and her neutrality, now more indispensable than ever. In London, the Swiss Orchestral Society had given another successful concert under its Conductor Mr. E. P. Dick. Miss Rosemary Pfaendler had played a cello solo.

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