

# The "Swiss Observer" 30 years ago

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## 30 YEARS AGO

On 1st April 1939, a reprint from the "Observer" was published saying that the Swiss were even better prepared in 1939 than they had been in 1914, "admirably trained and equipped", and that mobilisation would be effected so rapidly that any invader would have a hard task. All passes were fortified, and in a recent declaration the Federal Council had stated that Switzerland would defend the inviolability of her territory "to the last drop of blood". A.R.P. had been placed under a special federal office in Berne. Military precautions had again been taken as in September 1938. A large number of selected horses were being bought for the Swiss Army in Ireland. — Refugee Jesuits from Innsbruck were given temporary asylum in Switzerland (The Jesuit Order has been banned in Switzerland since 1848). — A large photo headed the report of the Davos Ice Hockey Team at a dinner at Pagani's. The team had played in several matches in Great Britain.

The next issue carried a report on the Annual Banquet and Ball of the Swiss Club in Charlotte Street, under the chairmanship of Mr. H. Ellenberger — 100 guests present! "Full House" (over 500) was the first statement in a report on a successful concert of the Swiss Orchestral Society and the Swiss Accordion Club at Queen Mary Hall. Mr. P. Dick (Orchestra), Mr. A. Gandon (Accordionists) and Mrs. Ausder-Au from Schaffhausen (Yodeller) in particular contributed to the success of the evening.

On 15th April, we read that a stone avalanche 20 miles West of Chur had caused much damage and considerable loss of life. — The Swiss Government had asked a further 9 million pounds for defence, and the age limit for men serving in the Army was raised from 48 to 60. — Eight tons of gold had been sent to the Federal Reserve Bank in New York for safe keeping, and large shipments had left for Canada. — The Swiss Press condemned the Italian invasion of Albania. — More news was given on the forthcoming National Exhibition in Zurich. An article on "The Spirit of Switzerland in 1939" practically filled the rest of the issue.

The issue of 22nd April gave a report of the broadcast to the American People by the President of the Confederation, Federal Councillor Ph. Etter. Dr. Laett, President of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, had visited London and Liverpool and given impressive addresses. His "Switzerland

in the European Crisis" appeared as a separate report. The rest of the issue was made up by "The meaning of Democracy" by a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, Mr. Reginald Lenard.

The last issue in April 1939 began with the text of Switzerland's reply to Hitler regarding President Roosevelt's message to the two dictators, a message welcomed by all friends of peace who were concerned at the agony Hitler's policy was causing the world. — Swiss reserve stocks were being built up (food, fuel, etc.). Switzerland had once again refused to take up diplomatic relations with Russia. The Mayor of St. Pancras had visited the Swiss Mercantile College, and Mr. Louis Chapuis had been re-elected as President of the City Swiss Club.

## PRO AQUA

## An Exhibition that concerns

## Everybody

The Pro Aqua international exhibition, due to take place in Basle from 29th May until 4th June, is intended, it is true, to appeal with its themes of water, air and waste to the competent experts; but the problems of maintaining the purity of water and air and the disposal of increasing quantities of waste matter arising out of our prosperous way of life, affect each individual so intensively that it is no exaggeration to say that this trade fair really concerns everybody.

The seriousness and importance of this field of activity are reflected in the increased importance and the enlarged scope of the exhibition. Compared with "Pro Aqua" of 1965, the number of exhibitors has risen from 197 to 278, and there has been a rise in the occupied stand area from 5,631 to 9,460 square metres. The number of countries taking part has also increased from nine to thirteen and they are: Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Denmark, Great Britain, the German Federal Republic, Holland, Liechtenstein, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States of America.

In connection with the exhibition, the congress "Pro Aqua" will be held from 28th to 31st May, at which the main theme to be discussed will be "Water and Air in Industry". From 2nd to 5th June, the 4th International Congress of the International Research Group on Refuse Disposal will take place. In this way, emphasis will be laid on the importance for our suburban colonies of the well ordered disposal, incineration, turning into compost and other methods of removing and dealing with domestic and industrial waste products.

## SWISS WATCH CENTRE IN IRAN

Wosro Iran Co. Ltd. (Watchmakers of Switzerland Repair Organisation of Iran Co. Ltd.) has just opened a collective repair centre for Swiss watches in Teheran, known as the Swiss Watch Service Centre. The shareholders of this centre which employs Iranian watchmakers locally recruited and trained, include the Swiss Watch Federation as well as nineteen individual concerns particularly interested in the Iranian market. This is the first centre of its kind to be opened by the Swiss watchmaking industry and it could serve as a model for the setting up of centres of the same kind in other parts of the world where similar needs are being felt increasingly.

(O.S.E.C.)

## SENSATIONAL NOVELTY

Three Swiss firms, G. Léon Breitling Co. Ltd., Hamilton-Büren Watch Co. Ltd. and Heuer Léonidas Co. Ltd. have just put on the market a watch, combining in a single timepiece all the advantages of the self-winding watch and the chronograph, together with the indication of the date. In order properly to realise the interest represented by this novelty, it should be remembered that to make a normal watch self-winding, a weight has to be hung from the mechanism capable of winding the spring through the movements of the arm. At the same time, to make a watch into a chronograph, the seconds wheel has to be made independent of the movement so that it can be connected up for the measurement of the time, released for reading the result, and set back to zero. Traditionally, these two mechanisms, the weight and the timer, were housed outside the watch movement, which naturally tended to increase its volume. Today, their combination in a single timepiece has been made possible through the use of a "sunken" weight and a miniaturised chronograph mechanism incorporated in the movement. This invention will make it possible to satisfy the wishes of two big consumer categories: those who do not want to have to wind their watch any more and those who want to measure short intervals of time with great precision. It will be of the greatest interest not only to the layman but also to the professional, whether engineer, sportsman or doctor. It should be mentioned that, almost simultaneously, the firms of Zenith and Movado, specialising in high quality watch production, have created a watch combining the same advantages but using a different technique.

(O.S.E.C.)