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SWISS EVENTS

FEDERAL

New federal order on the environment

The Federal Council has speeded up the implementation of laws which the Confederation is entitled to make as a result of a referendum in September 1969 on environmental planning. Not prepared to wait for the completion of an expected large legislative package on environment, the Swiss Government has passed a Federal Order, which will be shortly voted by Parliament and possibly submitted to the people in an optional referendum, which anticipates the law on environmental planning to be eventually written on the Statute Book.

The Order requires of the cantons to delimit within a year those areas which are to be protected for their natural beauty, for their tourist vocation, or for the eventual dangers (such as avalanches) which they might present to human settlement. The final law will expect of every canton to draw an exact map of those areas where building is to be allowed and the zones exclusively devoted to agriculture. The government felt that the definite law of environment, currently being drafted by a commission of experts, would only become operative in the mid-seventies,

and that it was preferable to take action before.

Many cantons, particularly the smaller ones, have already laid down strict rules governing their urban development. The Order will bring nothing new for them apart from increased federal supervision (a delegate from Berne will be appointed for this task).

Presenting the draft order, Mr. Kurt Furgler, head of the Department of Justice and Police, said that it was "a first step towards the rational use of Switzerland's restricted space for the benefit of future generations".

Austro-Swiss relations

Mr. Rudolf Kurtsschlager, Austria's Foreign Affairs Minister, arrived on 27th January for a three-day official visit to Switzerland. He had a round of talks with Mr. Pierre Graber, Head of the Political Department, on European matters and international affairs, notably the recognition of Bangladesh. Austria has more affinities with Switzerland than any other country.

Both countries are neutral members of EFTA and seek association to the Common Market. Austria is furthermore a member of the UN, as attested by the nationality of its new

Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim. The European aims of the two countries are very similar, although Austria is slightly more "European" and has shown more interest than her neighbour in taking part in a European Security Conference.

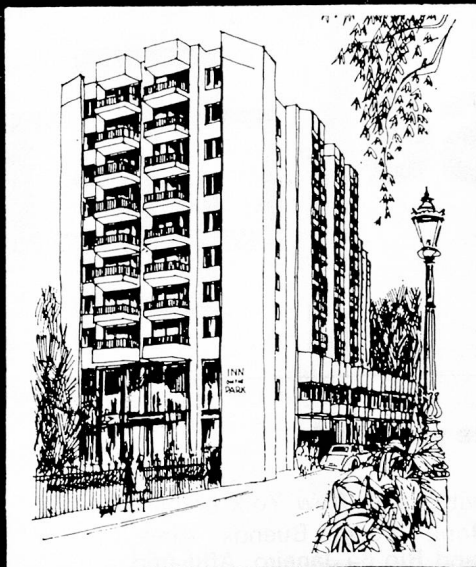
Intelsat

Switzerland has joined the Intelsat agreement. It is now one of the 82 countries using the communications system offered by three stationary satellites hovering above the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans. "Intelsat" has been built into a world undertaking. Switzerland signed the Intelsat agreement in August 1970 and the Federal Assembly has now authorised Federal Council to ratify it.

Eventual creation of a "Peace Institute"

The Federal Council has given its approval to the creation of a "research institute on international relations and the causes of conflicts". It has asked an ad hoc committee to make proposals for a draft law on the matter to be eventually submitted to Parliament.

The creation of a "Peace Institute" was first proposed in 1966 by the Zurich National Councillor Max Arnold in Parliament. The suggestions contained in a "Postulate" tabled by him were well received by the Swiss Council for Research. The Federal Council commissioned a former ambassador to Moscow, Mr. Roy Ganz, to prepare a report on the subject and



Vintage Room

Standing at the Piccadilly end of Park Lane, the Inn on the Park was recently named 'Hotel of the Year' by Egon Ronay. The Vintage Room, on its first floor, could equally be said to be deserving of the title 'Restaurant of the Year'. It specializes in presenting succulent steaks and traditional Ribs of Scotch Beef . . . the meat faultless . . . the service impeccable. Its subdued and intimate decor, continuous dancing from

9-0 until 3-0 a.m., and easy parking, make it an ideal after-theatre rendezvous. While at lunchtime, it is rapidly becoming a 'club' for those who appreciate good food luxurious surroundings and today's greatest rarity – personal service.

Inn on the Park

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put forward concrete ideas on how such an institute should be run.

Both the Council for Research and the Council for Total Defence were satisfied with his conclusions and have recommended that the legal aspects of the future institute and its eventual location be given detailed consideration. There have been suggestions that it should be either part of the Geneva Institute of International Studies, or at the Zurich Polytechnikum, which houses an important military section.

Methodical research into the causes of war is already a fully-fledged university discipline in France, where books on "polémologie" have already appeared. Mr. Max Arnold was primarily interested in finding a non-military way of ensuring peace and of breaking the arms race circle. "The young people called to military duties have a right to expect of Government, Parliament and the Army that they seriously study the political means of guaranteeing peace," he said in a radio programme. "The spiritual importance of our foreign policy is as valuable as our material weaponry".

Mr. Arnold claims that research into peace must be linked with research into development. As the origins of conflict are linked to poverty, social outlook and nationalism. A Peace Institute would also have the role of assessing and supervising development aid.

Foreign manpower

The Federal Council decided during its second January session to reopen negotiations with Italy on the question of Italian migrant workers in Switzerland. Swiss-Italian negotiations broke off in December 1970 after the two parties had disagreed on several aspects of the problem, particularly the definition of "seasonal" workers. The unofficial contacts that have been made since justify a resumption of negotiations at higher level, although the Government will not depart from its policy of stabilising the foreign population in Switzerland.

Chinese delegation in Switzerland

A Chinese mission has visited Switzerland during the second week of February. It was conducted by the Assistant Director of the "New China" Press agency, and included a Foreign Affairs Editor of the "Peoples Daily" as well as Chinese television personalities. As expected, the Chinese were particularly interested in Switzerland's state of economic development.

They were shown the factories of Brown Boveri in Baden, visited the Buehrle workshops at Oerlikon, and the Sulzer plant at Winterthur. They saw chemical factories in Basle and watched how chocolate was made at Nestlé's plant at Broc (Fribourg) and

also visited a modern cheese works at Gruyere. They paid courtesy calls to the Political Department, to Mr. Tschudi, Head of the Department of the Interior and to Mr. Nello Celio, President of the Confederation. One Swiss paper expressed marked admiration for the interest and prior knowledge of Switzerland shared by the members of the visiting delegation.

POLITICAL LIFE

Opposition with the "National Action" Party

Mr. Rudolf Weber, Central President of the National Action Party, has resigned and plans to create a new party specifically oriented towards the working classes. In a declaration, Mr. Weber sharply criticised the leaders of the present movement, whose well known aim is to reduce foreign presence in Switzerland.

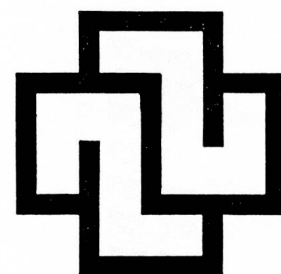
"As over 90 per cent of the Party's following belongs to the working classes, it is surprising that its leaders should increasingly profess ideas pertaining to the extreme right," says Mr. Weber, who finds it unacceptable that the National Action Party should be "manipulated" by a group of officers with university backgrounds, instead of becoming a left-wing organisation.

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The role of Central President has lost all relevance under those circumstances, claims Mr. Weber. He is reduced to a puppet and his articles in the "Volk und Heimat", official organ of the party, are censured and replaced by editorials above the level of understanding of the majority of its readers.

Mr. Weber expressed doubts that the leaders of the party were serving its members. He criticised Mr. Walter Jäger, who after having been elected as National Action representative to the National Council by the people of Basle, retired to the Grisons. He also attacked Mr. Schwarzenbach for having attempted to frustrate a third anti-foreign initiative launched by the party.

RELIGION

A Committee created to fight pro-Jesuit constitutional changes

A new body called the *Comité d'action pour la sauvegarde de la souveraineté nationale et pour l'autonomie spirituelle du citoyen* has been formed in Lausanne. Composed of about fifteen French-speaking personalities the new Committee aims at bringing home to public opinion "the serious inconvenience of the reinstatement of the Jesuit Order in Switzerland".

In a declaration, the Committee says that it is concerned about a renewal of inter-denominational tension in Switzerland and is persuaded that Articles 51 and 52 on Jesuits and Convents have in the past guaranteed peace on the religious front.

According to this declaration, the Jesuit Order's avowed aims are to bring every man within the unity of one particular church. Up to their extradition, the Jesuits have taught principles at variance with those that inspire the Federal Constitution, it adds. "Despite appearances, the Jesuits are a threat to the forces that have cemented our country by the firmness of their aims and the deviousness of their methods".

Another similar group has been formed at Reinach. At present, both have about 25 members. They plan to co-operate closely to fight against the eventual abrogation of Articles 51 and 52.

RESEARCH

Swiss biologist looking for an American "Abominable Snowman"

The Swiss Telegraph Agency reports on a Swiss biologist, Mr. René Dahinden, devoting his energies in the cold reaches of British Columbia in search of a creature which is as mysterious as the Abominable Snowman and which the Indians of Canada call

the *Sasquatch*. Trappers and lumberjacks have told various traditions and stories related to this monster. Mr. Dahinden, who has recently arrived in Switzerland to find support from scientific circles, said that "he was determined to know the truth".

"I believe that the Sasquatch exists, because I have seen and photographed thousands of traces of the creature. Its weight must be approximately 400 kilogrammes, its two paws measure up to 44 centimetres and the beast stands approximately 2 metres 20 high". A 45-second film was made of the Sasquatch in 1967 and Mr. Dahinden intends to make sure that this film has not been "mounted". There are apparently no American scientists interested in this zoological enigma at present, but Mr. Dahinden says that he has obtained the support of Russian and Scandinavian scientists.

CANTONAL

Tenants Association see Mr. Bonvin

Zurich badly requires a third telephone exchange. The planned site of the new installations lie in the working district of Aussersihl. The exchange would be built in two stages, beginning this year during which 80 flats and workshops involving 265 people would have to be demolished. The tenants of Hellmut-hohlfeld and the Brauerstrasse joined forces, created an association, collected 7,098 signatures and sent a delegation to Berne.

These emissaries explained their grievances to Mr. Roger Bonvin, Head of the Federal Department of Transport and Communications, and asked that the proposed telephone exchange be built elsewhere. Mr. Bonvin received the delegation for an hour-and-a-half and told them that he would consider their demands with understanding.

The management of the Swiss Post Office has stated its willingness to consider another site but emphasised the consequence for Zurich's 400,000 telephone subscribers from any delay in erecting a new exchange. An alternative solution will have to be found quickly and a Socialist National Councilor has already tabled a motion on this matter.

Return to the tip system

The Migros organisation has apparently not been satisfied by its "services included" experiment and will reinstate tipping in its cheap restaurants in French-speaking Switzerland. The higher prices introduced with the new system which has not yet been generalised in Switzerland seems to have discontented many customers. Migros are not planning at present to change the "services included" system in German-speaking Switzerland.

The Pfuertner Affair

Father Pfuertner, a Dominican Priest recently appointed ordinary professor of Morals and Speculative Theology at Fribourg University, gave a conference on "sexual morals and present-day evolution" last November. The ideas contained in this exposé, delivered before a mixed audience of students and citizens from Fribourg, were highly avant-garde and went beyond the traditional teaching of the Church.

Cardinal Pierre Mamie, Archbishop of Lausanne, Fribourg and Geneva, was not inconsiderably concerned by Father Pfuertner's theories and left for Rome, where he asked the Congregation of the Faith for advice. The upshot was that the Dominican professor was sent on a year's sabbatical leave.

The students of Fribourg University immediately reacted by staging a solidarity march and by issuing a strongly-worded manifesto, in which they accused the Cardinal of not having acted through the usual administrative channels of the university.

In a letter sent to the Catholic Press, the Prelate explained that he had acted in "reflection and prayer", and that, as one called to the service of the Lord, it was his duty to stand up against ideas which, coming from a man of the Church, were contradictory to the teachings of the Church. He also pointed out that Father Pfuertner had already professed fringe ideas on sexual morality on a previous occasion.

Father Pfuertner was attacked in the Fribourg Great Council, which represents a strong Catholic establishment, and acceded to the demands of his superiors, being eager to respect the hierarchy of the Church. He will give up his chair at the university of Fribourg for a year.

The Committee of the French-speaking section of "Una Voce Helvetica", an organisation aiming to defend the Catholic faith and traditional liturgy, issued a declaration supporting Mgr Mamie and underlining its "indignation" at the attacks that had been levied against him for having intervened in the Pfuertner affair.

Zurich teacher's case dismissed by the Federal Court

The Federal Tribunal in Lausanne has dismissed a case referred to it by the secondary school teachers from Zurich who had asked for the annulment of a cantonal vote last June altering the beginning of the school year.

On 5th June, 1971, the people of Zurich were called to vote on the question of adhering to the Inter-cantonal Convention on Education, and on the possibility of altering the start

of the school year and the length of obligatory schooling.

While the first of these two issues carried the overwhelming majority of votes, the question of new school terms was adopted by a bare majority of 133. A secondary school teacher, Mr. Hans Kellermüller, and a few parents took exception to these results and called for an annulment of the vote. They claimed that the small excess of positive votes fell within the margin of counting errors, and that the Press had given a biased coverage on the advantages of the proposed legislation. When the Kantonsrat rejected the appeal, on 30th August, 1971, Mr. Kellermüller brought his case to the Chamber of Public Law of the Federal Court. It was rejected by five votes to two. Although the judges felt that a renewed vote was "desirable", they ruled that no formal infringement of the democratic procedure of Zurich had been committed and dismissed the case.

"The four seasons" in Zurich

Zurich's delightful "Winkelwiese" Theatre opened its first season after the death of its founder and manager, Maria von Ostfelden, with the German premiere of "The Four Seasons" by British socialist playwright Arnold Wesker.

TRANSPORTS

Protecting pedestrians in Basle

For the past twenty years, the authorities of Basle have concerned themselves increasingly with the problem of limiting private traffic in the centre of the city. Traffic restrictions have been implemented every year during the Christmas shopping period. The success of these experiments have prompted the authorities to liberate the town centre from motorists of every kind with the exception of delivery services.

Explaining the new measures in a Press conference, Mr. Wullschleger, of the Basle State Council, said that the ban on driving in the city centre would be compensated by the creation of new parking spaces in surrounding areas. The authorities are determined to discourage shoppers from using their cars and will be implementing new traffic restriction in two stages, starting respectively on 22nd March and 6th December. In the first stage, "No Parking" signs will be erected at specific points, such as the main Post Office and the Market Place. Road signs will avoid private traffic from sharing the same streets and crossings as public transport.

For example, it will not be possible for drivers coming from Steinenberg

and Elisabeth Street to turn left at the level of the Swiss Bank Corporation into the Freistrasse.

These various measures should have the effect, it is hoped, to frustrate motorists from driving during working hours in down-town Basle. The town's public transport have already noted a marked improvement in the flow of their services during the December bans. Trams are up to 16 minutes late at Barfusserplatz during normal rush hours. These delays have been reduced to less than four minutes during the December restrictions. The Public Transport Corporation are therefore the first to be pleased with the new regulations.

With the purpose of defending the interests of motorists, the Swiss Touring Club were dissatisfied with these measures and criticised the Basle government for having put them before accomplished fact. The Touring Club intends to take action against the traffic ban some time in the future.

The Zurich trams

The "Weltwoche" of 19th January published a lengthy report on Zurich's trams. To the tourist they appear as a particularly modern and sleek means of transportation, yet many of the people who use them complain they are uncomfortable, overcrowded, irregular and too expensive. Despite this, trams remain the backbone of Zurich's public transport, which last year carried about 200 million passengers, not much less than the federal railways and three times more than the number of people who travelled by car within the city limits.

The trams of Zurich are losing money and their fares are expected to rise sharply as soon as the Municipal Council allows it. In other towns, particularly St. Gall, Geneva and Lausanne, fares have gone up by up to 20 per cent during the past six months. In Geneva, a minimal journey now costs 80 cents—which has produced widespread protest and tentative boycott campaigns. The people of Zurich feel they pay too much for a tram journey considering that most passengers have to stand even outside rush hours. A normal Zurich family with two children spends 703 francs a year on public transport (in Basle the figure rises to 833 francs) and the year's season ticket costs 420 francs.

Many people still prefer to take a car into Zurich because it is faster. The "Weltwoche" made the experiment. A 2-CV Citroen takes 13 minutes to go from Albisriederplatz to the Cantonal Hospital on the Rämistrasse, whereas the same journey takes 26 minutes by tram. It appears that the authorities of Zurich are inconsistent in their traffic-planning policy.

To streamline traffic, it is necessary to discourage motorists. Yet present plans foresee a 50 per cent increase

of private traffic within Zurich during the next few years. Vast underground parking spaces have been built or are under way. The highly-publicised "Y" crossing in the near-centre of Zurich and the N1 National Highway to be built under the River Sihl are ventures which will not reduce traffic in Zurich. An underground is also planned to connect Kloten to the Dietikon area by making a large curve under Zurich. But it is unlikely to solve Zurich's transportation problems, which will rely on the existing tramway. Some other Swiss towns have switched to buses. Zurich, judging by the modernity of its rolling-stock, has staked for the tram.

According to a person interviewed by "Weltwoche", too little public money is spent on public transport. Zurich spends 75 million francs on roads (i.e. private transport) a year and only 3.5 million francs on public transport. A new definite policy in favour of trams and public transport is therefore demanded by many circles, who also want the introduction of free fares. This would increase the local authorities' burden by 67.5 million francs, or almost the equivalent of an increase of 20 per cent in local taxation. The free-tram experiment has been tried in Lausanne (and in Rome) but did not last long enough to be conclusive. For the time being, few town officials are prepared to introduce such a scheme and most of the town's expenditure will go towards making Zurich the most perfect crossroad in Switzerland's motorway network.

Massive signature collection against speed limits

The Swiss Automobile Club and the Swiss Touring Club have remitted 174,254 signatures opposed to planned speed restrictions to the Federal Chancery. Strongly against the Federal Council's intention of imposing a 100 kmh speed limit on all roads except motorways, the signatories demand speed bans adapted to local conditions.

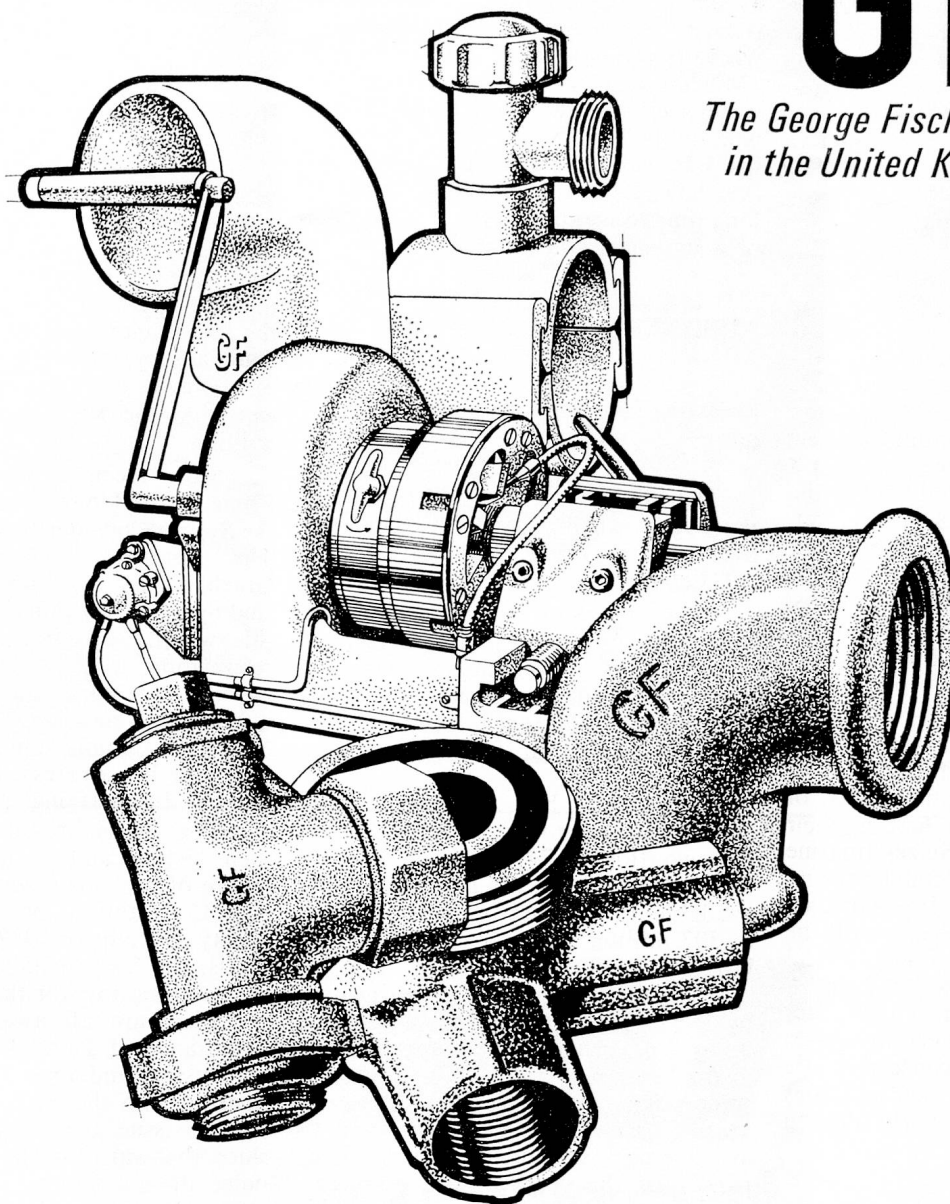
ECONOMY

Natural gas in 1973

All the legal groundwork having been achieved, Switzerland is now ready to receive natural gas from abroad. Agreement has been reached between the firm "Swissgaz A.G." and Dutch companies for the yearly supply of 500 million cubic metres of Dutch natural gas for 20 years. Deliveries will begin in 1973 and will use a pipeline linking Holland to Italy, crossing Switzerland from Rheinfelden to the Gries Pass. The gas tapped from the pipeline will be distributed to three sectors: Western, Eastern and Central Switzerland.

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The distribution network for Western Switzerland will branch off at Obwald. The pipeline will follow the Conches Valley and supply the Valais, the lower Rhone Valley and the Lemman Riviera. "Gaznat S.A.", the company undertaking the necessary work for these areas, has recently increased its capital from 200,000 to 13,500,000 francs by issuing 13,500 registered 1,000 franc shares. They were immediately subscribed by former shareholders.

(ATS)

Swiss shares in high demand

Swiss shares continued to be in high demand throughout 1971 despite the difficulties created by the revaluation and fears of a slow down in Switzerland's expansion. The Swiss share index came third after the British and Japanese index as the volume of new issues on the capital market reached a peak value. The main banks, lead the healthy movement of the Stock Market. They have had a relatively good year, being still faced with high demands for credits despite official restrictions. Other sectors, such as department stores, have gained by revaluation, since the drop of import prices has been favourable to retail business.

Following the merger with Ursina-Franck, Nestlé has gained first position in foodstuffs, thus enlarging the list of Swiss companies already first in their field. Other leaders are Sulzer (marine diesels), Landis & Gyr (counters) and Roche (pharmaceuticals). It is expected that interest in Swiss shares will be sustained this year by both institutional and private investors. The large multinational Swiss companies do not depend primarily on the economic situation in Switzerland because they are in a position to re-direct their activities in those countries of the world offering the best prospects.

Olivier Long in London

Mr. Olivier Long, former Swiss Ambassador in London and Director of the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT) spoke at the Foreign Affairs Club in London at the end of January. His speech was given extensive coverage in the financial columns of the British National Press. If any single person can be said to be leading the industrial world towards a new, less protectionist and more co-operative outlook, then it must be Mr. Olivier Long.

Mr. Long suggested that new rounds of talks should begin to break the many trade barriers, particularly in the field of agricultural products, still preventing world trade from blossoming fully. The many technicalities resulting from differing social and fiscal legislations should not be in the way

of a universal free trade, he said. Prices of agricultural products should no longer be fixed on a purely national basis he stressed, adding that it was inadmissible that countries should harm one another's agricultural economy by closing their borders in the interest of their own producers. However, as pointed out by the "Basler Nachrichten" economics' correspondent, where is the country willing to save a "Milchrappen" in the interests of the world's agricultural balance? Mr. Long, who told "The Swiss Observer" that his job was to create a "consensus" (see S.O. 26th November) will need a long time to make world free trade part of a universal consensus.

AIRLINES

Swissair shows good traffic growth in 1971

In 1971 Swissair carried 4,489,890 passengers, an increase of 17 per cent over the previous year's figure of 3,927,864.

The expansion in passenger traffic was nearly in line with the 18 per cent increase in ton-kilometre capacity available, resulting therefore in only a slight fall in the seat utilisation to 52.1 per cent from 53.1 per cent in 1970.

More than half the capacity increase was due to the introduction of the two Boeing 747B Jumbo jets on the North Atlantic; the number of tkm available in this sector rose in 1971 to 507 million from about 400 million in the previous year.

Revenue capacity sold rose overall by 14 per cent. Carriage of cargo went up by 7 per cent, showing improvement in the latter months of 1971, following some stagnation in the first half of the year. This development contributed to an average scheduled service load factor for the year of 49.2 per cent, compared with 51.1 per cent in 1970.

The company says its traffic results for 1971 can be considered gratifying, especially as world air transport recorded on average appreciably lower growth rates.

Swissair's route network in 1971 extended over 245,337 kilometres, linking 78 cities in 57 countries.

SWITZERLAND IN THE BRITISH PRESS

"Losing that neutral feeling"

The following article appeared in "The Guardian"

Swiss neutrality, like the warm Alpine wind known as the Föhn, is becoming the cause of many a headache to those allergic to it. Not that

anyone expects that the negotiations which Herr Ernst Brugger, head of the Swiss Economics Department, has just started with the European Economic Community will risk infringement of Swiss neutrality. Clearly, the most Brugger can hope for at present is some form of commercial "association".

Nevertheless, something is changing in the air. The sympathies of the Swiss were far from neutral when Russia occupied Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the Swiss in fact, offered immediate asylum and work permits to all Czechoslovak refugees. Then, in 1970, came the destruction of the Swissair flight to Tel-Aviv, together with the subsequent hijacking and blowing-up of another Swissair jet by the Palestinian guerrillas. From neutral complacency, the Swiss found themselves involved, along with the Americans and the British, in Middle East politics.

More recently, the admittance of China to the United Nations has made the Swiss reconsider their own position. The Foreign Minister, M. Pierre Graeber, has suggested that Switzerland might at last join the UN, although this would be subject to a national referendum, to be held in 1974. Switzerland has, in the meantime, decided to accept full membership in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and has expressed an interest to join the International Monetary Fund.

The Swiss are acutely aware of their history and of the evolutionary nature of their own society. Their federal Constitution of 1848, and the Treaty of Rome of 1957, have the same ideals; the Swiss believe it is a matter of evolution now for the EEC.

They are all aware of the vital importance of Herr Brugger's mission to Brussels and that their future relationship with the EEC is the most important issue they have had to face since the war. Europe has reached a point of no return, and Switzerland can no longer stand aside in "splendid isolation". Herr Brugger believes that between isolation and complete membership, the Swiss people would prefer a middle course.

"The basis of the agreements which we are negotiating will meet the needs of our politics of neutrality," he promises. "Further, it will not involve any modifications to the federal structure of our country. Given that the negotiations—which cannot be easy—succeed, it will enable us to combine the respect we have for our political structures with participation in a larger economic unit which will meet the needs of modern technological and economic dimensions."

The Federal Government is well aware of the delicate differences which could so easily split the Swiss cantons on this issue. Further, the Federal Government must also take into account the strength and backlash of

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the supporters of Schwarzenbach's popular initiatives with the chauvinistic ethos which dominates so many of the German-speaking cantons. For these Swiss, the current sentiment remains: "We've nothing to lose, everything to gain, and, above all, there's nothing to change."

And looking at their tidy, well-organised little towns and villages, one can understand their innate conservatism, their placid, solid ways of life. Here are a people, largely untouched by two world wars and the economic consequences of the peace, and although they have one of the highest standards of living anywhere in the twentieth century their customs remain largely those of the nineteenth.

It is a society where everybody must work and poverty is a crime—the latest unemployment figures in the whole of Switzerland reveal only 43 names. Switzerland, it might seem to others, has become more or less a country without history since the 1848 federal Constitution. How often has the radio news bulletin informed us only of the important milk debate in Berne—a neutral observation post for world politics?

Today, Switzerland is faced with most of the problems of its EEC neighbours: insidious inflation, exorbitant defence costs, dependence on foreign labour (especially in the building and tourist industries), and powerfully organised trade unions. Examining this comparison in his recently published book, *La Suisse face au Marché Commun* (Switzerland *vis-à-vis* the EEC), Franklin Cordey does not see why a European federation with supranational aspirations should be more difficult to bring about than the Swiss one, with its diversity of cultures, religions, and languages.

Because of their directness, the Swiss do not see why Europe cannot follow their own example and that of the United States. The Swiss, more than anyone else, have followed the evolution of the EEC since the initial enthusiasm of the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957. So far there has been no challenge to Swiss interests: not even an attempt to create a European currency, in spite of a continuing monetary crisis.

Leap forward

Much depends on the second half of this decade as to whether the EEC will make the dramatic leap forward which will enable Europe to enter the new technocratic and post-capitalist age and create its own values. If and when this happens, Switzerland cannot remain the most European country of Europe and stay outside the Community.

It is at such a time that the Constitution of 1848, which has served Switzerland admirably and has been

the basis of its neutrality, would have to be revised. With a knowledge of Switzerland's past one can imagine the dissensions between the different cantons which would run riot and threaten the federal structure.

Those cantons of, say, French-speaking Switzerland would almost certainly want to join the larger Europe. Those embodying the ideas of Herr Schwarzenbach would prefer to retreat to first principles and the original Alpine pact of Waldstätten of 1291 rather than come to terms with a new Europe and a new age. The first cracks of this rift have already appeared. It is on the basis of evolution, therefore, and not instant McLuhanism, that the Swiss delegation has opened negotiations at Brussels as their first step forward.

WINDFALL AT SAPPORO

The 1972 Winter Olympics at Sapporo have brought Switzerland more medals than any of the previous twenty Winter Games. Switzerland collected ten medals during these two weeks in February, coming in third position after Russia (16 medals) and East Germany (14), way ahead of countries such as the USA (8 medals, 5th position), Austria (5 medals, 9th position) and France, who came in 15th place with a dismal harvest of only three medals. Great Britain failed to win any medals this year.

The fact that the Swiss team won the most glamorous event of the Winter Olympics speak yet more eloquently than the medal score. With an unknown 17-year-old lass from Flums, Marie-Therese Nadig, who won gold medals in the Women's Downhill and Giant Slalom events, Bernard Russi, equally Swiss, won the Men's Downhill race. His team mate Roland Collombin came second, winning a Silver. Two Swiss, Edmund Bruggmann

and Werner Mattle, respectively won the Silver and the Bronze in the Men's Slalom. Walter Steiner won a Silver in the 90 metre Jump and a Swiss team even managed to win a Bronze medal in a Scandinavian discipline, namely the 40 km. relay race. The Swiss finally won the Gold in the four man bobsleigh and the Swiss pair won the Bronze in the two man bobsleigh.

There was an undeniable element of luck in all this. The French had lost their main proponents through injury and Austria's Karl Schranz, who would probably have won the Men's Downhill event, was disqualified amid a highly publicised controversy on the amateur status of Olympic skiers. He was greeted on his return to Vienna by a frantic crowd and by the Austrian Head of State. Similar, although necessarily more modest, scenes of popular jubilation took place in Flums when its people learnt of Marie-Therese Nadig's exploits. All Switzerland prayed that she would win the treble and win the Slalom as well, but that was not to be.

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