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LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND

It goes without saying that the Swiss mass media have been following the dramatic events which finally led to the resignation of ex-President Nixon in the United States with great interest. The Television Services transmitted Mr. Nixon's resignation speech live, and thousands of people had instructed the PTT alarm-system to wake them up just before 2 a.m. in order not to miss this historic event.

In connection with all this several Swiss newspapers have investigated the interesting problem: "Would an impeachment procedure be possible in Switzerland"? The conclusion the legal experts have come to is that under Swiss State Law it would be possible to initiate impeachment proceedings in ten different Cantons, but not on the Federal level. Such proceedings could be decided on by the respective cantonal parliaments and could be directed against either the whole Executive or against one or several of its members, as well as against the judicial authorities. Fortunately all this is theory which has never once been put into practice, but it seems nonetheless worth putting on record that in ten Cantons such a safeguard against misuse of power by the Executive and/or the Judiciary does exist.

While mentioning legal matters it may also be of interest to report that on 9th September the once famous Jaccoud affair will once again be in the limelight. In 1958 the former head of the Geneva Bar, Pierre Jaccoud, was found guilty of murdering André Zumbach, the father of Jaccoud's ex-mistress, and sentenced to seven years penitentiary imprisonment. Throughout the long investigation and trial Maître Jaccoud had protested his innocence and he has done so ever since. All the eloquence of his two defence lawyers, one of them a "Super-Star" from Paris, Maître Floriot, was of no avail, and the circumstantial evidence, as presented

by the prosecution, seemed to be so overwhelming that the jury found the accused guilty. Ever since Jaccoud's release in 1963 — part of the sentence was remitted on account of good conduct in prison — he has not only protested his innocence, but tried to have his case reopened, basing his claim on alleged new evidence. The Geneva "Cour de Cassation" thus has the last word in this sombre affair. But according to published press messages the legal circles in Geneva are very sceptical concerning Jaccoud's chances of acquittal and rehabilitation.

On a totally different level the reader will, I think, be sorry to learn that this summer's high season has not been a brilliant one for our hotels. Well-known holiday resorts with world-famous hotels, such as St. Moritz, Lucerne, Lugano, Locarno, Interlaken, Pontresina and others have suffered a reduction in the number of guests (and guest-beds rented out) of between 20 to 25%, compared with the same period in 1973. The Americans have not come over in great numbers and those who have come complain bitterly about the high prices in Switzerland. In the Upper-Engadine, where I have spent nearly four weeks, the Italians who have always come up in masses to escape the heat of Milan and the Lombardy have been conspicuously absent and on the roads foreign cars are few and far between. If, on my journeys up to and back from the Engadine I have seen, all in all, 5 or 6 cars with GB number plates, this has been the lot. A sad lot, I would like to add. Even the Germans have, this summer, not inundated our holiday resorts and many of those one saw had caravans attached to their vehicles.

The reason for all this was by no means the weather. In fact the sun has,

during the last few weeks, been shining from cloudless skies, at least in the southern parts of the country. The reason for many visitors staying away has been the crisis! The dollar having been devalued and the proud sterling hovering around 6 francs 80–90 centimes, this in combination with high prices in Switzerland, dearer and dearer petrol for example, has undoubtedly influenced many people to go to Yugoslavia where prices are said to be still reasonable. According to official figures the price-inflation in Switzerland was running at 9.8 per cent per annum at the end of July, with foodstuffs, bread, sugar, cheese, meat and edible oils having gone up considerably.

On top of this there has also been a change in the style of holiday-making. A good many Swiss people who formerly used to populate the hotels, have either bought or built bungalows or chalets in their favourite holiday region, or are renting small houses or flats for a period. This may have the disadvantage that the housewife still has to do some shopping, cooking and "householding", but it has the advantage that one is not tied to fixed meal-times, that one can live in casual-wear and jeans throughout the day and in the evening, and that occasionally eating-out in a hotel may be a special treat. Be that as it may: the summer season 1974 has not been one of the best the Swiss hoteliers have seen.

Gottfried Keller

New Machines for the Corrugated Cardboard industry

A firm in Lausanne, specializing in the production of machinery for the graphic arts, has introduced a new device for the corrugated cardboard industry: a combined printing and cutting machine, specially designed for the processing of corrugated cardboard and comprising a flexo multicolour printer and a high-speed cutting press; the hourly output amounts to 4,500 sheets of cardboard printed in several colours, shaped, cut and stacked in counted packets. Equipment of this type has already been installed in a big German works specializing in the manufacture of packaging for foodstuffs; fitted with three printing units, it allows the rational production of high standard polychrome packages.

Swiss Timing at the Olympic Games in Montreal

The Board of Directors of the Games of the 21st Olympiad have decided to entrust the official timing of the Games to be held in Montreal in July and August, 1976, to "Chronométrage Suisse SA" — more commonly known under the international name "Swiss Timing". This firm was founded in July, 1972, at the instigation of the Swiss Watch Federation and the Longines and Omega watch firms, both of which have specialized in sports timing for over twenty years.

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