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Letter from Switzerland

By Gottfried Keller

THE BUSIPO IS IN THE MAKING

BuSiPo is a new (and ugly) word which has started appearing in various messages in the Swiss Press. It is an abbreviation and stands for "Bundes Sicherheits Polizei" or Federal Security Police. It is felt in Berne that in our present times of terror and violence the creation of such a force, consisting of about 600 men, has become a sad necessity.

All the Police Chiefs of the Cantonal Governments have already been informed about Berne's plans for creating such an organisation and have been given an opportunity to put forward their own ideas on the subject at a meeting between Federal Councillor Furgler and themselves which took place in Berne early in February. The exact details are still treated as an official secret but it is known that as late as last November the Federal Council discussed the possibility and outlines of a new federal law relating to strengthening the police security measures.

According to reports available there are still some differences of opinion regarding the actual organisation and powers of the new force, differences which arise out of the federal structure of Switzerland, with Berne aiming at centralisation, but the cantonal governments fighting for the principle of their

cantonal sovereignty. No doubt in due course a compromise will be found, as is usually the case, but on the principle there seems to be agreement between all concerned. The Police forces of the Federal Capital, Berne, are, it is said, already snowed-under with work, since it falls to them to provide security for all the foreign Embassies. Moreover the Swiss Federal Offices have to be protected, international conferences have to be guarded and in times like the present it has even sometimes become necessary to detail men to protect members of the

Federal Government.

There are still a good many points of detail which remain to be decided: the question for example whether Berne should have the central command over the new force, moreover whether the Confederation or the Cantons have to foot the bill for sending detachments from the cantonal forces to such a federal unit. According to the conception of some of the cantonal governments the BuSiPo should not be a permanent standing force, but should be quickly formed out of specially detailed cantonal policemen in cases of emergency or need. But all in all there can be no doubt that the BuSiPo is in the making.

SWITCH ON YOUR RADIO ON 24th APRIL

A selection of programmes designed to cast doubt on the propositions that Switzerland's main contributions to the modern world are the cuckoo clock and the numbered bank account, and that "if Switzerland did not exist you would not need to invent it". (BBC TV, quoted by the Swiss historian, J. R. de Salis). The programmes will be broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 24th April from 5.30 – 11.30 p.m.

Jonathan Steinberg of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and the author of *Why Switzerland?*, will discuss and illustrate the linguistic complexity of the country, which has four national languages and a wide range of flourishing dialects.

Brian Beedham of the *Economist* will examine aspects of the Swiss political system, from which he believes the rest of

the world can learn useful lessons.

Jacques Freymond, Director of the Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes Internationales in Geneva, will interpret the Swiss official commitment to neutrality in the light of modern pressures.

Drama will be represented by the first British broadcast of *Hercules and the Augean Stables* by Friedrich Dürrenmatt, which offers a satirical view by a Swiss of some of the social and political attitudes of his own countrymen.

As to music, there will be a concert given by the BBC NSO under Erich Schmid, who has chosen works by Frank Martin, Honegger, and a composer popular in his own country but less well known here, Otmar Schoeck.

The evening will be presented by Nigel Douglas, the opera singer, who lived and worked in Switzerland for ten years.

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