

Switzerland points the way

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tantes, alors que les cantons de la Suisse primitive, les petits cantons agricoles qu'habitent "les vieux Suisses aux bras noueux," ont repoussé la loi — sauf Uri — quelques-uns avec une majorité négative qui en dit long sur le mécontentement qui règne dans ces régions du pays. Mécontentement contre le pouvoir fédéral dont la politique économique n'a pas donné les résultats que permettaient d'escompter les mirifiques promesses venues de Berne, notamment en ce qui concerne l'application de la nouvelle législation sur l'alcool. Dans le Valais et à Neuchâtel, l'impôt sur les vins a joué un rôle déterminant, et, sans lui, la majorité acceptante dans le canton de Vaud eût certainement été plus considérable. A souligner que Lausanne, dotée comme on sait d'une majorité socialiste, a donné une majorité d'environ mille voix en faveur de la loi.

Significatif est le résultat du scrutin au Tessin, et plus encore à Schaffhouse. D'une manière générale, les cantons frontiers du nord de la Suisse ont senti, davantage que d'autres, la nécessité d'un renforcement de notre puissance défensive. Et cette attitude en dit plus long que de longs discours sur la mentalité qui règne au bord du Rhin et sur les craintes qu'on y nourrit! Quant au résultat de Genève, point n'est besoin d'insister sur la satisfaction qu'il nous a causée. La campagne avait été particulièrement vive dans notre canton où — M. le conseiller fédéral Pilet-Golaz le relevait lui-même l'autre jour en termes discrets mais suffisamment nets — le scrutin revêtait une importance et une signification particulières. Une victoire des adversaires de la nouvelle loi militaire aurait signifié l'abdication définitive des partis d'ordre; elle aurait été exploitée, et avec quelle ardeur, par le parti au pouvoir, ce qui eût d'ailleurs été de bonne guerre. Mais Genève, qui avait repoussé la loi de 1907, s'est, une fois de plus, ressaisie et son vote d'hier, comme celui du 18 novembre dernier, montre que le redressement nécessaire est en train de s'accomplir.

Enfin, considéré au point de vue international, le résultat du scrutin du 24 février est on ne peut plus réjouissant. La décision que le peuple suisse a prise librement dans le but de renforcer notre défense nationale sera comprise et appréciée à sa juste valeur par nos voisins immédiats. Ils y verront la preuve que notre pays est fermement décidé à se défendre en cas d'agression et à tenir ses engagements. Et chacun d'eux en tirera la leçon pour son propre compte.

La journée de dimanche est donc une bonne journée pour la Suisse et pour la démocratie.

Edgar Junod.
(Tribune de Genève)

NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

SWISS PRESIDENT'S REPLY TO N.S.H. TELEGRAM.

On the occasion of the reception held at the "Foyer Suisse" on the 15th of February, in honour of Mlle. Briod, the following telegram was sent to Monsieur Minger, President of the Swiss Confederation:

"Bundespräsident Minger
Bern.

Die Gruppe London der Neuen Helvetischen Gesellschaft und die übrigen Vertreter der hiesigen Schweizerkolonie ersuchen mich einstimmig dem Schweizervolke gegenüber der Hoffnung Ausdruck zu geben dass dieses Volk am 24. Februar eingedenk seiner Vergangenheit Ihnen die Gefolgschaft nicht versagen und so einstimmig wie möglich seinem festen Willen Ausdruck verleihen möge die geforderten Opfer im Interesse seiner Landesverteidigung zu bringen.

Paravicini."

In reply, Monsieur Minger has addressed the following letter to our Minister:

Der Bundespräsident der
Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft

Bern, den 20. Febr. 1935.

Herr Minister,

Die mir übermittelte Sympathiekundgebung der Gruppe London der Neuen Helvetischen Gesellschaft und der übrigen Vertreter der Schweizerkolonie hat mich mit ganz besonderer Freude erfüllt und bestärkt mich in der Hoffnung, dass das Schweizervolk am kommenden Sonntag einen eindeutigen Entscheid fällen möge, der auch die Schweizer im Auslande mit Stolz erfüllen wird.

Ich bitte Sie, sehr geehrter Herr Minister, meinen warmen Dank für das tatkräftige Eintreten der Schweizer in London zu Gunsten der Wehrvorlage entgegenzunehmen.

Genehmigen Sie, Herr Minister, die Versicherung meiner vorzüglichen Hochachtung.

(sig.) R. Minger
Bundespräsident.

Herrn Minister C. R. Paravicini
Schweizerischer Gesandter
London.

SWISS SPORTS.

A fairly well attended meeting of the delegates took place on Thursday, 21st February, at the premises of the Union Helvetia Club, with Mr. Barbezat, the President, in the Chair.

The programme of the next sports meeting, which is to be held on Saturday, 25th May, at the Herne Hill Athletic ground, was settled in its outlines. A suggestion that future sports meetings might be held in a ground nearer town, and which has now become available, was referred to a committee of three for investigation.

After due consideration, some of the events in last year's programme were dropped, such as the 100 yds. Flat Handicap (Ladies in sports costume) on account of the little interest shown by our fair compatriots, the 880 yds. Flat Handicap for lack of support, and the "Pushball" for insufficient training facilities. The 440 yds. Veteran's walking handicap will be converted into a comic obstacle race.

Two new races for boys of Swiss parentage will be introduced; one will be an obstacle race, and the other a relay race, the different clubs in the London Colony being invited to form teams to run under their respective patronage.

The closing day for entries has been fixed for May 13th, and the next delegates' meeting for May 16th. O.F.B.

CONCERT NEWS.

A Concert will be given on Thursday, March 7th, at 8.30 p.m., at the Pleyel Music Room, 20, Gloucester Place, W.1. by M. Leon Hochloff (Bass Baritone) and Signorina Violetta Montuschi (Pianoforte). Signorina Montuschi is well-known in the Swiss Colony and we hope that our readers will attend this concert. The accompanist will be M. Alex. Alhazova.

A recital will be given by Madeline Jean, (Violin), Florence Bass, (Cello), and Olga Carmine (Piano) on Saturday, the 9th of March, at 8.15 p.m., at St. Peter's Hall, Cricklewood Lane, N.W.2. Mlle Olga Carmine has often appeared at various concerts held in the Swiss Colony, and we are sure that many of our readers would like to renew their acquaintance with this fine artiste.

PERSONAL.

The engagement is announced between Mr. Eric Kessler of 38, Markham Square, Chelsea, and Miss Mary Lily Zaehner of Oak Hill Lodge, Sevenoaks. The marriage will take place quietly early in May.

SWITZERLAND POINTS THE WAY.

Confederacy Shows a Quarrelsome World How Peoples of Diverse Languages and Interests May Yet Live Amicably With One Another and With Their Neighbours.

By MEINRAD SCHNEULIN.

It is a fact known all over the world that during the World War there was in the middle of Europe a small country that did not partake in the war: Switzerland. During the long years of war, the western front of the fighting armies reached from the coast of the North Sea up to the Swiss frontier near Basel, and from the south-east corner of Switzerland down to the Adriatic.

Neutrality in general is defined as the condition of being unengaged in contests between others, a state of taking no part on either side. The Peace Conference of The Hague, in 1907, gave a definition of military neutrality which states that the territory of a neutral power is inviolable, that a neutral power must not tolerate within its borders specific measures in direct connection with the war, that, on the other hand, a neutral country is not obliged to take a number of other measures: if however, the neutral power does do so, both belligerent parties must be treated the same way.

Many countries have remained neutral in wars without making neutrality a principle to be observed in every case. With Switzerland neutrality is different; it is the self-chosen and self-maintained decision of the Swiss of taking no part in conflicts between others in any case. It is therefore, called a perpetual neutrality, and at the same time an armed neutrality, holding itself "ready to resist by force any aggression of either belligerent," as Webster defines it.

A certain understanding of the history and the geographical situation of Switzerland is necessary to comprehend the origin and justification of its neutrality. The Swiss Leagues started in the thirteenth century for the purpose of uniting the forces of their members against powers menacing their idea of and their desire for self-government, and they maintained their stand in a number of wars and many battles, and this they did in spite of their inferiority in number and equipment.

After 1499 there was no more necessity for the Swiss Leagues to go to war, and yet they took

part in the contest over the question of who should be the Duke of Milan in Italy. There the Swiss neither fought for their own liberty nor that of the inhabitants of Lombardy, and in 1515 they experienced an overwhelming defeat at Marignano, due in part to discord among themselves. This event marks a turn in their history: the Swiss decided for neutrality.

The ground was not unprepared for the idea of neutrality. They had had many quarrels among themselves, even a civil war for many years, and when, in 1501, Basel became a member of the Confederacy they stipulated that in conflicts between the members of the League Basel should remain neutral and try to reconcile the quarrelling brothers.

After 1515, Swiss neutrality might have gone to pieces again, if the subsequent historical events had not worked for its preservation. In 1519, the Reformation started in Zurich, and in the course of the following years more than half the inhabitants, but less than half the states, joined this religious movement, the rest remaining Roman Catholic.

This caused a split in the unity of the Swiss, and if in the wars of the neighbours, one of the two camps had joined in, civil war among the Swiss would have been inevitable and this might have led to the extinction of the Confederacy and the self-government of the states. During the Thirty Years War this was several times within a hair's breadth. And yet, they kept out of it: in 1647 they even agreed on a common military organization, called "Defensionale," to resist the aggression of either of the belligerents, and they kept up their neutrality during the wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

(To be continued).

S.M.S. GENERAL MEETING.

An account of the General Meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society Ltd. will appear in our next number.



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