

La politique : L'enterrement d'un projet funeste

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nini, Bruno Walter, Rachmaninoff, Fritz Busch, and Adrian Boult.

Lucerne is becoming a favourite resort of musical celebrities. Toscanini has a chalet at Kastienbaum, Paderevski lives in the neighbourhood, and close by is Tribtschen, for years the home of Wagner, and now a place of pilgrimage for musicians. It was in Wagner's garden that Toscanini gave a performance of the "Siegfried Idyll" last year.

Toscanini, in fact, has been adopted by Switzerland and is to be made an honorary citizen of Lucerne this week. He is to conduct five recitals at the festival, one of which, along with that directed by Sir Adrian Boult, is to be broadcast.

Two Famous Choirs.

Sir Adrian is to conduct the fantasia by Vaughan-Williams on the theme of Thomas Tallis. Tallis, the 16th-century English composer, is known as the "father of English cathedral music." He served in the Chapel Royal under four Sovereigns — Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth — and had William Byrd for one of his pupils. It was to Tallis and Byrd jointly that Queen Elizabeth granted the exclusive right of printing music.

Two famous choirs to be heard at Lucerne are those of the Sistine Chapel and Strassburg Cathedral. The Sistine Choir, which rarely appears outside the Vatican, is to sing the choral music of Palestrina, who was a member of that choir about the same time that Tallis was at the Chapel Royal.

A very interesting article on

Journalism at the Zurich Exhibition — *Newspaper World*, 15th inst., will give many of our Readers for the first time a peep behind the scenery in this Swiss Industry.

In the three languages of the country — German, French, and Italian — this legend appears over the Press Pavilion of the Swiss National Exhibition at Zurich: "The Swiss Press Fights for Liberty and Social Progress."

That the authorities consider a "good Press" of outstanding importance is shown by the large amount of space devoted to native journalism and newspaper production. On the splendid model printing press at the exhibition a special newspaper is daily produced in the three languages.

A remarkably comprehensive exhibit of daily and weekly newspapers, trade journals, monthly reviews, etc., is staged in one room, while giant photographic cut-outs, charts, and paintings on walls and ceilings present in vivid fashion the part which journalism plays in the national life.

Altogether, 1,600 periodicals appear in Switzerland, apart from over 2,000 occasional publications, a large number for a population of only 4½ millions. These 1,600 include 400 daily and weekly newspapers.

460 trained journalists work on dailies, of whom nearly three-quarters are in the Swiss Journalists' Association. An analysis of their ages shows that the bulk of daily journalism in Switzerland is produced by men and women of between 30 and 50. Minimum wages are £15 to £20 per month, according to locality.

Women journalists do good work, and it is to be noted that the official Press bureau at the exhibition, with a staff of 40, is mostly peopled by women, who command two, three, and four languages each.

Pooling Press Services.

Due to the necessarily small circulation of Swiss newspapers, much pooling of services and resources goes on, and printing plants are called on to produce several journals. Paper is invariably of a poor quality and little attempt is made at attractive make-up, except in the case of picture weeklies like the *Schweizerische Illustrierte Zeitung*, produced at Zurich Verlag Ringer and Co., a big printing concern which employs over 800 people and has a model four-colour rotogravure in action at the exhibition.

By pooling, the dailies are able to make use of all forms of rapid reception of news and production.

Tagesanzeiger, with 90,000, enjoys the biggest circulation in Switzerland, and has as runners-up the *National Zeitung* (Basle), the *Zurich Tagblatt*, and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*.

Only six newspapers have circulations over 60,000. Two-thirds of the 400 dailies and weeklies sell 5,000 copies or fewer, 51 sell up to 10,000, 26 sell up to 20,000, and only 11 sell up to 50,000. Nevertheless the trains and coaches of the Swiss Post Office handle nearly 429 million copies yearly, and 88,348 tons of paper are consumed yearly for news.

As three-quarters of the population speak German, it is understandable that 281 of the newspapers should be in German. Of the rest 95 are in French, 20 are in Italian, and four are in Romansch, which is the fourth official language of Switzerland, a direct derivative of Latin, spoken by about 45,000 inhabitants of the Gsöken.

The Part Of Politics.

Politics play a more considerable part in Swiss local journalism than in ours. This is explained by the fact that Switzerland is a federation of 22 separate cantons or states, each with administrative autonomy. Liberal Democrats lead with 135 newspapers, followed by the Catholic Conservatives with 79. Social Democrats have 20, while the various peasant parties control 39 papers among them. Non-party organs number 120.

The chief school of journalism in the country is that at Zurich University, founded by Dr. O. Wettstein. Here are taught the gathering and handling of news, editorship and collaboration, the legal rights of the Press, work of the news agencies, and economics of publication. The school library contains 4,500 volumes on the Press and houses a great collection of Swiss and foreign newspapers.

Press publicity also has its place at the Exhibition, a joint exhibit in the form of a sliding screen having been arranged by the four leading advertising agencies — Publicitas, Rudolf Mosse, Orell Füssli, and Schweizer Annoncen. Illustrations and Photopress Co., who serve 140 journals in and out of Switzerland with news pictures, are likewise represented.

Switzerland has no sea frontier, but in the case of native journalism this geographical misfortune has its advantages, for a substantial circulation finds its way into the neighbouring countries of Germany, France, and Italy.

And, under-lining our Swiss Nation's Will to be prepared, I quote from the "Economist" 15th inst.

Entrenched Neutrality:

Not long ago the Swiss electorate adopted, by 444,200 votes to 195,000, an official proposal authorising the Federal Government to spend about 400 million francs (£=20.77 Swiss francs at current rates) on the strengthening of national defence and on important public works. Some 171 millions will go on defence and 157 millions on public works.

The necessary funds will be supplied, in the first place, by the "Crisis Tax," levied for a further period of three years; secondly, by a credit of 75 million francs supplied by the National Bank, which will use for this purpose a part of the profit of 658 million francs made on the devaluation of the Swiss currency; thirdly, by a new tax ranging from 1½ per cent. to 7½ per cent. levied on those commercial concerns which have numerous branches, and on big shops, on one-price shops and co-operative societies whose yearly sales exceed 200 million francs.

The ordinary military Budget rose from 91 million francs in 1933 to 132 millions in 1939. Extraordinary expenses for the same period totalled about 782 million francs; and to this should be added the 171 millions voted the other day. This makes a total of 953 millions. To the last man, the Swiss are resolved to maintain their neutrality and to defend their territory against any aggression.

This expenditure has made possible the reorganisation of the Army within a short period, development of the Air Corps, and supply of the various Army units with modern and powerful weapons. Several hundred million francs have also been spent on frontier fortifications; these forts, manned by 3,000 to

4,000 men, and powerfully armed, are capable of resisting for several days against any invading force, thus giving the Army time to mobilise. A second fortified line has been erected at some distance behind the frontier "Maginot" line.

As no referendum was demanded, the Bill extending from six to eight weeks the initial period of military service came into force six weeks ago; at the same time, the serving age is extended to include men between the ages of 18 and 60. The Army now consists of three army corps, nine divisions and three mountain divisions with all auxiliary units, so that Switzerland can put about 400,000 soldiers into the field. In addition to this, Switzerland will soon possess some 400,000 auxiliaries, men and women, for A.R.P. defence, Red Cross, transport and industry.

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LA POLITIQUE.

L'enterrement d'un projet funeste.

Le Conseil fédéral a pris une sage décision, mardi, en renonçant à créer au Palais un service de presse centralisé.

A la vérité, l'idée — dont nous avons déjà entretenu nos lecteurs — n'était point nouvelle. Un pareil service a fonctionné durant la guerre (sans avoir rien de commun avec la censure). On l'avait confié à un excellent homme, bon journaliste, M. Schaeppi, correspondant de Bâle à la "Neue Zürcher Zeitung." Son rôle était celui d'un intermédiaire entre les divers départements et la presse accréditée. Il devait aussi rédiger lui-même des articles, qu'il remettait aux journaux... et qui prenaient souvent le chemin de la corbeille à papier; car on s'est toujours méfié et se méfiera toujours, chez nous, d'un semblable nivellement, d'une telle "standardisation," pour employer le terme à la mode aujourd'hui.

Le pauvre M. Schaeppi, ruisselant de bonne volonté, fut le plus malheureux des hommes. Il n'obtenait pas des bureaux les renseignements nécessaires pour qu'il pût à son tour informer les journalistes.

Ceux-ci, de leur côté, voyaient de mauvais œil cette innovation. Ils redoutaient que la centralisation n'eût pour effet de diminuer leur contact avec les membres du Conseil fédéral; et c'était un risque réel. En 1917 déjà — le service avait été créé en 1916 — M. Schaeppi demanda à être relevé de ses fonctions; et l'on fit aussitôt droit à sa requête.

Les années ont passé; mais les conditions n'ont pas changé de telle manière qu'un bureau de presse devint plus sympathique à ceux qui auraient à traiter avec lui.

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Il est vrai qu'un petit nombre — très petit — de chroniqueurs du Palais ont multiplié, dans ce sens, d'instantes démarches; c'est justement ce qui a obligé le Conseil fédéral à examiner derechef la question. Mais la très grande majorité de nos confrères sont résolument hostiles à une institution qui, estiment-ils, présenterait une foule d'inconvénients, sans avantage appréciable. L'Association de la presse de la ville fédérale a voté une résolution contre le service de presse. Des entrevues ont eu lieu avec des représentants des autorités, dernièrement encore avec M. Etter, Président de la Confédération.

Le gouvernement a parfaitement compris l'opposition des principaux intéressés et n'a pas voulu aller à l'encontre. Il n'a pas admis non plus la suggestion de créer un service de presse dans chaque département. Nous tenons à l'en remercier.

En matière d'information, au Palais fédéral, il faut distinguer l'information purement administrative et celle qui a un caractère politique.

La première se fait normalement par le canal de la chancellerie, qui est renseignée immédiatement sur toute décision gouvernementale, puisque le chancelier et le vice-chancelier assistent aux délibérations. Après la séance, on communique aux journalistes, réunis dans leur salle, ce que le Conseil fédéral juge opportun de publier. Les agences sont aussi représentées lorsqu'un lieu ce rapport; les nouvelles sont donc rapidement transmises aux quatre coins de la Suisse.

Mais l'information politique, bien plus importante et intéressante, ne peut se faire que par le truchement des membres mêmes du directoire. Cela tombe sous le sens: seuls responsables de la politique générale, intérieure et extérieure, ils sont seuls qualifiés pour apprécier avec autorité les événements et fournir, parfois avec réserves et précautions, la matière aux commentaires qu'attendent les lecteurs. Il va de soi, d'ailleurs, que les journalistes gardent le droit d'exprimer leur propre opinion, et qu'ils ne font point là l'office de sténographes.

Comme tous n'ont pas, du moins le plus souvent, les mêmes relations personnelles avec les mêmes magistrats, il y a plus de variété et de liberté de jugement dans ce qui sort de ces entretiens privés. Jamais fonctionnaire, si haut placé soit-il, ne pourrait prendre la responsabilité de certaines confidences ou de certains avis. Au demeurant, son opinion n'aurait pas le poids de celle d'un membre du gouvernement.

Tout cela est clair. Il a néanmoins fallu la croix et la bannière pour enterrer le fameux projet de centralisation, dont, répétons-le, le Conseil fédéral n'avait pas pris l'initiative. L'attaché de presse déjà en fonction au département politique poursuivra cependant son activité. De ce côté, personne, croyons-nous, n'a formulé d'objection. Ainsi, tout est bien qui finit bien.

Léon Savary.
(Tribune de Genève.)

LATE SWISS FLOWERS.

Discoveries to be made in July and August.

The rarer Alpine flowers are not uncovered until the snow leaves the higher levels in July and August. The beautiful Alpine garden on the Rocher de Naye (6,710ft.), for example, is still deep in snow when the narcissi are in flower in April and May.

For sheer beauty it would be difficult to find anything to equal the narcissus slopes above Les Avants or the rounded hilltop of Les Pléiades — nodding white loveliness, incomparably sweet-scented. The brilliant fields of deep blue trumpet gentians and carmine primulas too, are at their best in May and June. In spring, also, come the delicate crocuses, as evanescent as the melting snow which uncovers them.

Later flowers grow less profusely, and the joy of finding them is thereby increased. In the exhilaration of an altitude of 7,000 or 8,000 feet, with some amazing vista of white peaks or glacier before you, it is a rare delight to find at your feet, emerging from a patch of snow, the rose-pink, buttercup-shaped flowers of the glacier crowfoot, or the drooping, tiny head of the

soldanella. The Alpine toadflax is a strange little plant, which likes limestone debris; and the tiny primula integrifolia, bearing a purple flower as large as itself, is also a lime-lover near melting snow.

Plants that Like Height.

The cushion mosses like a height of 6,000 to 9,000 feet, as, for example, the Gemmi Pass, where their compact mats of colour glow against the rocks. Edelweiss, too, will take you up to from 6,000 to 10,000 feet, and is at its best in July and August. The rock roses love hot, rocky crevices at a height of about 4,000 to 8,000 feet, where they make glowing patches of colour in July and August, and at about the same level you may find a smaller, eight-petalled white flower creeping over the rocks and basking in the sunshine — dryas octopetala.

The beautiful Alpine lily, the Alpine aster, the field gentian and the Alpine anemone are some of the many other flowers to be found in July and August.

Flower-lovers may have sudden surprises. There is a wood not far from the narcissus slopes which is completely withered. Every tree is stripped and lifeless, and below them is a treacherous, black bog. But, when the white flowers have faded from the hill, the blood-red flowers of the sarracenia — the insect-eating pitcher plant — gleam from the blackness of the bog.

It is perhaps incredible to the holiday-maker that the Swiss people should have cause for anxiety in the diminishing numbers of their flowers. Yet it is so. They view with disfavour the lavish sale of gentians in the market places. Posters ask for tourists' help in preserving wild flowers. It is even thought locally that the narcissi are gradually going farther up the hills above Vevey and Montreux, but it is difficult to share any anxiety on this point as basket after basket is filled and refilled and the hills remain the same — as white and lovely as the distant white Dents du Midi.

P.B.A.
(B'ham Post.)

TO OUR READERS.

The Editor of the Swiss Observer would be greatly obliged if readers would supply him with addresses of likely subscribers, so that specimen copies could be posted to them.

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