Rationing preparations

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National Councillor Charles Albert Favrod-Coune died in Berne at the age of 62; it was only last Monday week that he attended the opening of the Swiss Parliament.

* * *

It is officially stated in Basle that none of the civil population has so far been evacuated; should war operations be brought close to the frontier some threatened outlying districts may have to submit to this measure.

* * *

Peculiar and at the same time intricate conditions are ruling in the little village of St. Gingolph on the lake of Geneva. Half of the hamlet is in Switzerland while the other half extends into French territory. Through the closing of the frontier families have been separated and farmers are prevented from looking after their cattle where stables are on the other side of the line. The only church and cemetery is on the French side. The French Maire and the Swiss Syndic are striving hard to amend the imperfections.

* * *

"Konstanz liegt am Bodesee — wers nicht glaubt kas selber gseh" we were taught in our school-days. The "Daily Telegraph" (Sept. 26th) has improved on this by boldly stating that this town lies "partly in Germany and partly in Switzerland."

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"Se non e vero e ben trovato" is probably a fitting description of the following tit-bit which appeared in the "*Evening Standard*" (Sept. 26th): A newshawk had been sent to the German Embassy where he was directed, by a typewritten notice, to a side door by the Duke of York's Steps. Here a wooden notice now identifies the building as "Special Division, Swiss Legation."

The notice has been nailed over the top of a brass plate inscribed "Deutsche Botschaft." While this was being done a policeman asked the responsible Swiss official why he did not remove the brass plate altogether.

"They told us to leave it," was the reply. "They said they expected to be back before long."

CITY SWISS CLUB.

We understand from the Secretary that he has arranged with the Institut Français that they will kindly allow members of our Colony, both ladies and gentlemen, to attend a series of lectures on the International Situation by Professor Denis Saurat of the University of London (King's College) and Principal of the Institut. The opening lecture on the Causes of the War was extraordinarily interesting, presenting quite new lines of thought, and each week different phases and new developments will be treated, running concurrently with the all-important question of Construction for Peace. It is planned to throw the meetings open to general discussion which will naturally add to the interest of this already outstanding opportunity.

This gesture of the Institut Français is very much appreciated, and it is hoped that many of our members will take advantage of it and attend regularly. The lectures are in English on Wednesdays at 5 p.m., or in French on Fridays at 5 p.m., and they last about an hour.

There will also be a free course on First Aid by the famous Dr. J. Moore, on Fridays at 3.30 p.m.

Please let the Secretary know which lectures you can attend so that he may arrange for reservations as far as possible. Just drop a note to Mr. Henry Bingguely, Bulle House, 187a, Tottenham Court Road, W.1.

The next monthly meeting takes place on Tuesday, October 3rd at 6 *p.m.*, this time being set in view of the War. No official dinner has been organized, but those who wish to dine will find accommodation after the meeting if they will kindly reserve their seats by telephoning Mr. Boehringer (Tel: CLErkenwell 2321) not later than Monday.

It is hoped that as many members as possible will attend so that decisions may be arrived at concerning the Club's activities during the War.

Considering the number of compatriots who have left England it is the earnest wish of the Committee that all those who are fortunate enough to remain here for the time being, will pull together and preserve the patriotic feelings of the Colony.

Bee.

RATIONING PREPARATIONS.

The Swiss Government, as soon as war was declared, took drastic measures to restrict or prohibit the sale of various categories of foodstuffs and fuel.

Wheat, flour, macaroni, and similar products, fats and oils, methylated spirit and alcohol cannot be sold in the shops; coffee, sugar, coal, petrol, and oil can be had only in small quantities pending the issue of ration cards. Motorists are so far allowed 13 gallons of petrol a month and motor traffic is now prohibited on Sundays except for military use, public transport, and medical services.

This does not mean that a dearth of these products is threatened. Stocks in the country are sufficient for at least 18 months, but the Government wisely decided to prevent hoarding, such as flourished in 1914 and resulted in an increase of prices and in destruction of products badly stored by individuals. These measures are also intended to accustom the population to reduce to the lowest possible level the consumption of food and fuel, and thus avoid the error made at the beginning of the last War, when the people continued to live as usual until, after 1915, there was a real dearth consequent on the stoppage of imports.

Each family has been instructed to store certain foodstuffs so as to be able to live for three months without making new purchases, and that order has been generally followed. This will enable the Government to organize a general rationing scheme within the next two months and to issue the ration cards.

"The Times" 21/9/39.

CORRESPONDENCE.

(In encouraging and publishing correspondence on any matter of interest to our readers we wish to stress that we do not necessarily subscribe to the opinions expressed therein. ED. S.O.)

55, Firsby Avenue,
Shirley — Croydon,
25th September, 1939.

The Editor,
THE SWISS OBSERVER,
23, Leonard Street,
E.C.2.

SWISS NEUTRALITY.

Sir,

In reply to Mr. Tosio's letter I will readily admit that on purely theoretical grounds the attitude of Switzerland deserves full marks.

As I pointed out before, I am fully aware that Switzerland's neutrality is a matter of international agreement which should not lightly be violated, least of all by Switzerland herself. Her neutrality, however, dates back to the time when agreements carried some weight, whereas in these days of international gangsterdom such agreements are apt to go by the board, and to judge by the huge expenditure of money that the Swiss Government felt justified in incurring for military purposes, it appears that our Government does not place too much confidence in this guaranteed neutrality being respected by all parties.

I will say that what I hold of Switzerland also applies to other neutral countries, and chiefly to those in the immediate path of German ambition, but Switzerland's attitude is particularly disappointing to me because the Swiss never tire of praising their freedom and independence in song and speech, and I, for one, would have expected them to be eager to assist in the maintenance of these blessings, instead of which I find that their immediate immunity from war is much dearer to them.

Mr. Tosio says that Switzerland did not ask the Western Powers to fight German aggression, but when Czechoslovakia was sacrificed on the altar of peace, there was in Switzerland, as elsewhere, an outcry of disappointment that the Western Democracies should have abandoned Czechoslovakia to her fate. I gather from this that the neutral nations are all in favour of, and indeed expect, Great Britain and France to do the dirty work, while they themselves look on.

Mr. Tosio "believes" that Great Britain and France are fighting for a principle, and I admire his caution. He lets himself go to the extent of stating that Swiss public opinion may approve of that principle. Now, if it is good enough for those two countries to fight for a principle, it should be equally good enough for all nations that value this principle. If, after all, the two Western Democracies were animated by the same considerations of selfish expediency, as is the case with the neutral countries, they could hold out against Germany long after these neutral countries had disappeared as separate entities.

If logic is to be the guiding star, and if logic demands that Switzerland should wait for an attack, then it is grossly illogical of Great Britian and France to fight until their turn comes in the German scheme of world domination.

As to Mr. Tosio's contention that my forebodings for Switzerland's future in the event of a German victory are hypothetical, and a presumption, I would point out to him that "circumstantial evidence," although not looked upon with favour, is nevertheless occasionally admitted in a Court of Law, and the circumstantial evidence accumulated over the last few years should have convinced the most stubborn sceptic.

Yours faithfully,

J. FREI.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Monthly Meeting of the Society was held at Swiss House on Saturday, September 23rd. Mr. J. J. Boos, President, was in the Chair and about thirty members were present. The Chairman in opening the proceedings referred to the exceptional circumstances under which the Society was meeting and expressed his gratitude that so many members made it convenient to attend. He explained that the Meeting had been convened for a Saturday afternoon as meetings during evenings were to be deprecated owing to black-out restrictions and difficulties of travelling. Little was it thought, the Chairman pointed out, when last the Society met in June, that the war clouds which had already then gathered over Europe, would break loose into a storm, the end of which no one could foresee. The Chairman expressed the fervent hope that our country may be spared the ravages wrought by the unleashed elements and that the day may not be too distant when we could all return to our normal lives and occupations.

The Chairman then made a survey of recent events. He said that towards the end of August, when the tension was increasing daily, lady students were strongly urged on the advice of the Swiss Legation to return to Switzerland immediately and party arrangements were subsequently made for about 50 students who left London on Sunday, August 27th and had a safe journey