

The Stone of Unspunnen

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According to Swiss opinion liberalization of trade would best have been carried out within the framework of the OEEC. When the EEC was founded with a tariff wall around Little Europe, we joined the EFTA with the other European neutrals, the Scandinavians and the British, hoping thus to save enough breathing space for our world trade. When the British decided to apply for full membership in the EEC we nourished the hope — now unfortunately disappointed — that together with other liberal-minded governments Great Britain would be able to give the EEC an outward-looking character and to create understanding for the neutrals' special needs of association. We consider the United States' Trade Expansion Act as an important move in the right direction.

No other European country perhaps has shown so little susceptibility to anti-American stirrings after the war as Switzerland. We are aware of the supreme importance of the American engagement this side of the Atlantic. As we did not need any Marshall Plan or armaments aid, we feel no resentment against the rich, powerful friend. If Americans are aggressive, tough businessmen, we are too. There were, to be sure, some moments of doubt — which were overcome. At the time of the Washington Agreement on German property in Switzerland we felt unduly forced to apply illiberal principles. Also, in the course of the past few years it sometimes seemed to us that some elements in Washington had too little understanding for the international value and the special needs of our neutral status. As we see it, the old national diversities of Europe cannot grow together in quite the way those of the United States did. Only when enough allowance is made for the specific character of her individual nations, as developed through centuries, can Europe rise to new importance.

Our neutrality does not give us a bad conscience. We can look straight into the eyes of the Americans, Canadians and the British whose troops are stationed at the Central European front. Our army of twelve well trained and well-equipped conventional divisions which can be mobilized in forty-eight hours has cost a great many Swiss francs, but not a single dollar. It does not belong to NATO; but, as far as is within our power, it protects our narrow Alpine sector of free Europe against any aggressor. *And what's wrong with that?*

(Reprinted from "A small country re-examines itself" by courtesy of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique.)

THE STONE OF UNSPUNNEN

On the occasion of the Federal Alpine Meet (Eidgenössisches Schwing- und Aelplerfest) which will take place in Aarau on 15th/16th August, the strongest men will also compete in throwing the "Unspunnen stone". This block of gneiss weighing 183.7 lbs. was, according to tradition, thrown for the first time during the Unspunnen Feast, at the foot of the Unspunnen ruin near Interlaken, on 17th August 1805. It was Niklaus Friedrich von Müllinen, "Schultheiss" of Berne, who brought about that meeting. This custom is kept up at the Alpine Meets. While only a very strong man can even lift the stone of Unspunnen to the height of his head, it certainly takes a good deal to throw it over a distance of a few metres. The cowherds from Central Switzerland, from the Muota Valley in particular, have proven special ability in this weighty sport, direct descendants as they are of the victors at Morgarten who launched boulders and trees down on the Habsburg army in 1315.

[S.N.T.O.]

FEDERAL NEWS

The **revenue of the Confederation** for the first six months of the year has increased by 391.8 to 2,236.4 million francs compared with the same period in 1963. The highest amount was produced by the turnover tax (561.1 million francs).

Revenue from customs duties for the first six months amounted to 670 million francs, 79.2 million francs more than in the first half of 1963.

The Federal Council decided to answer the appeal by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for a further grant towards the **U.N. Campaign in Cyprus**, by allocating 80,000 dollars for the next three months.

The **oil refinery** at Collombey-Muraz in the Valais has run into difficulties and has appealed to the Confederation for help. This has been refused by the Federal Council. Already in 1959, the undertaking had been warned that no financial help would be forthcoming if difficulties arose.

The "**Peace Treaty**" in the Swiss Machine and metal industry has been renewed for a further five years, the agreement providing for even better pay and holiday conditions.

A **new agreement with Poland** concerning compensation in nationalisation schemes was signed in Warsaw on 26th June and accepted by the Federal Council at its last meeting before the summer interval.

[A.T.S.]

IMPORTANT VISITORS

The Austrian Federal Chancellor Dr. Josef Klaus and his retinue paid an official visit to the Confederation in July. The Chancellor and the Austrian Foreign Minister engaged in friendly discussions with the federal authorities in Berne. The visitors also went to Fribourg and to the EXPO, accompanied by Federal Councillor Bonvin.

The premiers of Dahomey and of Trinidad and Tobago visited Switzerland in July. Another illustrious visitor to Berne was the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Peter Smithers.

[A.T.S.]

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