

The Gotthard line

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): **- (1941)**

Heft 994

PDF erstellt am: **09.05.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-691465>

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et économique. Il s'agirait en particulier — de nouveau par une transformation adéquate des caisses de compensation — d'accorder, en sus du salaire, des allocations spéciales aux pères de nombreux enfants, ainsi qu'à ceux qui entretiennent leurs vieux parents dans leur ménage. Incontestablement, cette initiative répond à une préoccupation très généralement répandue et l'on peut lui prédire un certain succès, sinon un succès certain.

Tout ceci nous permet de constater que la vie politique normale se poursuit, en dépit des événements, en dépit du régime autoritaire que nous nous sommes momentanément donné, comme le commandaient impérieusement les circonstances. Il faut s'en réjouir. Quelles que soient les exigences de l'époque, il serait dangereux que le peuple se déshabitât d'exercer ses droits et ses prérogatives. Il finirait par perdre sa foi dans l'efficacité et dans l'excellence du régime. S'il doit faire certains sacrifices momentanés à cet égard, il reste opportun qu'il reste attaché à ce qui, depuis si longtemps, fait notre équilibre intérieur. C'est bien pourquoi, toutes les fois que cela est possible, les autorités constituées, loin d'abuser des pouvoirs très étendus qui leur sont confiés, ne manquent pas une occasion d'assurer le libre exercice de ces droits et témoignent par là leur volonté de restaurer aussi vite que possible le fonctionnement normal de la démocratie directe.

Pierre Béguin.

THE GOTTHARD LINE.

(*"Railway Gazette," November 7th, 1941.*)

The doubling of the Brunnen—Flüelen section of the Gotthard main line in Switzerland will provide this important route through the heart of the Alps with 102.5 miles of continuous double line from Immensee to Rivera-Bironico. Doubling is also in progress over the 4.0 miles from Taverne to Lugano, and when these two projects are complete, the only remaining single-line sections will be from Lucerne to Immensee, 11.9 miles; Rivera-Bironico to Taverne, 5.5 miles; and over the Lake of Lugano causeway from Melide to Maroggia, 2.4 miles. The section from Brunnen to Flüelen is of particular interest to travellers in Switzerland, as it lies along the most spectacular part of the Lake of Lucerne, where the lake takes a right-angled bend to the southwards between towering cliffs, backed by snow-capped mountains. The railway here lies in large part beneath the famous Axenstrasse, a road which itself passes through numerous tunnels, and the cliffs to which reference has just been made are responsible for nine railway tunnels, the four longest of which — Hochfluh, Oelberg, Stutzeck, and Axenberg — have lengths of 638, 2,122, 1,080, and 1,224 yds. respectively. A little over 3 miles of the 7.3 miles of line now in course of doubling between Brunnen and Flüelen is carried in tunnel, and this fact, with the awkward lakeside location of the line, is responsible for the high estimated cost of Swiss fr.23,000,000 for this work. The next section to be tackled will probably be from Rivera-Bironico to Taverne, which should present no great difficulty, but the Lucerne—Immensee section is of less importance, as much of the Gotthard traffic, routed *via* Zurich, leaves or joins the main line at Arth-Goldau, and so does not pass between Immensee and Lucerne.

KARL BARTH AGAIN.

A fresh pamphlet vigorously denouncing the effect of the so-called "New Order" on life and conditions in Switzerland has been issued by Dr. Karl Barth. For obvious reasons his warnings find little consideration in the home press. The English monthly "Spiritual Issues of the War" (October 23rd) contains a full English version; the following survey is taken from "Life of Faith" (October 29th):

In a challenging pamphlet, Dr. Karl Barth has warned the people of Switzerland of the dangers of the Nazi "New Order." With devastating outspokenness, he unmasks the Nazi hypocrisy and evil. He stigmatizes the "New Order" as "the establishment of a coercive control over as extensive an area and as many hitherto free peoples as possible, and their exploitation, spoliation and spiritual tutelage." Dr. Barth goes on to liken the present war to those of Napoleon, though "perhaps it resembles more closely those of the ancient kings of the Near East. The Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians are once more on the march." In other words, this is a war of conquest pure and simple. That which threatens Switzerland, Dr. Barth proceeds — and, we might add, threatens the whole world — is intolerable. It is intolerable, he explains, that a Government concentrated in the hands of a small group should not be content with such outward obedience as a legitimate authority responsible for law and order must require, but, assuming divine prerogatives, should demand the complete surrender of everything by all: complete allegiance of the conscience, servile submission, the fettering of every word and thought, the abandonment of every shred of independent responsibility and free collaboration by the individual with the community. It is intolerable that a Government subject to no sort of control should adopt as its principle and daily practice the moral destruction of even the physical reduction to impotence of every opponent, as also the systematic extermination of those who by reason of their weakness cannot be used to further its aims. It is intolerable that the Church should be faced with the alternatives of participating in the worship of this self-deified Government, or confining her witness to a non-committal, whispered contribution to personal piety. To have any hand in such things as the brutal treatment of the Jews, is intolerable and shameful.

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