

Letter-box

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CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor,
THE SWISS OBSERVER.

1st December, 1944.

Dear Sir,—In the SWISS OBSERVER of November 24th, 1944, under the heading "News at Random" you state at the end of the second paragraph on page one:

"In the main his (Motta's) policy was based on ideological principles to which at that time every Swiss was prepared to subscribe".

This, surely, is doing the SWISS OBSERVER scant justice!

If you will read through the issues of the SWISS OBSERVER of that time you will find that "Kyburg" pointed out on various occasions that the attitude of the then Swiss Government towards Soviet Russia was not only illogical but also detrimental to the long-view interests of Switzerland. That "Kyburg", at that time, was allowed to express such views was due to the policy of the Editor of the SWISS OBSERVER to allow his collaborators the widest possible independence of thought and expression, a policy which, I am glad to notice, seems to be followed still in our sturdy SWISS OBSERVER of to-day.

"Kyburg's" expressed views may not have "cut much ice"; they at least give him the somewhat melancholy satisfaction that logical thinking and sticking to simple principles are bound to lead to the right conclusion in most cases, even if such conclusions are not very palatable or fashionable at the time. — Ever sincerely yours,

U. BRETSCHER.

[In the SWISS OBSERVER of January 23rd, 1926, p. 1226, "Kyburg" wrote:—

"I have never been able to understand the Swiss attitude towards Russia's recognition. It has always seemed to me, and still seems to me, that the very best thing which can happen to Russia is to let fresh air and light into Russia. As long as you cut them off, they must fester and rot, but as soon as fresh air and light is let in, the more noxious forms of their Government won't have an earthly chance to maintain themselves. It always has been and always will be so. And stubborn sulkiness has never won political battles yet, nor ever struck a blow for Liberalism and progress."

Again on February 6th, 1926, p. 1234, "Kyburg" wrote:—

"No, my dear friend, while thanking you sincerely for sending me the above interesting and blood-curdling articles, while admitting that Swiss opinion on the whole is unfriendly, and quite justifiably and justly unfriendly, against the present rulers of Russia, I still hold my own personal opinion, namely that the Conradi verdict was a miscarriage of justice and a ghastly political mistake, that the non-recognition of Russia is a piece of childish peevishness, a sort of attitude which prevents a man from admitting when he has been wrong and makes him take up an attitude of superior morality instead, and that, sooner or later, our Swiss Government will have to recognise the Soviets or whoever may be in power in Russia, and that, before such recognition is possible, it will cost us a good bit of money and loss of prestige. Wait and see!"

[Many thanks for the letter and the "bouquet" which is some consolation for the loss of an old collaborator gifted with clear-sighted anticipation. The above are extracts from two typical articles.—Ed. S.O.]

Weston-s-Mare,
28th November, 1944

To the Editor,
THE SWISS OBSERVER.

Dear Sir,—I think we can take it as proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that we would all like more contact with Switzerland, and more detailed

information regarding postal services, and especially changes therein.

I cannot conceive myself to be the only one occasionally writing to our Consul for up-to-date information — and although the Consul, as well as the Legation, have shown commendable patience in answering such requests — may I suggest that it would save a lot of their time — apart from being of great service to all your readers — if you allotted a space in your paper (or may I say "our paper"?) to such information as is available and applicable at the time of going to press?

The times and wavelengths of the shortwave transmissions from Switzerland have been changed several times and it has usually been by accident only that I hit upon the right spot.

Some of my letters have obviously never reached Switzerland because I wrongly assumed they would not have to pass German censorship any more. Local post office employees are pardonably ignorant on these subjects.

Current information on such matters could be given regularly in a condensed form and would, I feel sure, meet with great and general approval.

Regarding space: (1) Considering the vast amount of official "Literature" in *minute type* which most of us have to digest these days — a little more small type print in THE SWISS OBSERVER once a month could hardly be objected to. (2) Quite a lot of opening and closing remarks at the various meetings have been said and printed *ad nauseam*, so that the necessary space could easily be saved out of that alone without, I feel sure, offending even the perpetrators of these oratorical gymnastics. — Yours faithfully,

R. SCHMID.

[If you obtain reliable information from the Swiss Consul or the Legation as to the mysterious working of the postal service we cannot but compliment you; we do not enjoy that privilege. We think the latest developments make it superfluous to reprint all the titbits about the mail service abroad collected by the English dailies. So far as we have been able to check up an official statement made in Switzerland, a letter or parcel by ordinary mail from Paris to Berne requires about two days, and we like to believe that the Postmaster General will before long manage to get a letter from London to Paris in half that time. However, the war is still on. We have been shown a telegram last week that took two and a half weeks from Lausanne to reach the London recipient. The other contents of your letter will no doubt be read with interest and perhaps taken to heart by the leading lights in our Colony. —Ed. S.O.]

LETTER-BOX.

Frau R. B. — S.W. We very much doubt whether the replies to the live letter in the "D.M." are meant to release encyclopedic knowledge, but in the case referred to the answer seems to be fairly correct. We have no national language unless Romansch may claim this distinction, as it is not spoken in any other country. The three other idioms we share with our neighbours. Some linguistic scholars have paid us the compliment that in or near Neuchâtel the purest French is current, but we can hardly requisition this language as our original property. Strictly speaking there is no generally recognised Schwyzerdütsch as each canton or locality is tacked to its own variation.—Ed. S.O.

IRENE BERTI †

Few of our young Swiss could have been more widely admired and loved than Irene Berti, whose dear life was so tragically and suddenly ended by enemy action on the 25th November, 1944, while at her place of work.

Born in London nearly 20 years ago, of Ticinese parents, Irene received the benefits and blessing of a very happy home life and of an excellent education. Having obtained the Oxford Senior Certificate and a secretarial diploma she had just launched out on a business career in a solicitor's office and, with her intelligence and keenness, the future held every promise.

Among her numerous interests she belonged to the Swiss Catholic Choir and was a prominent and enthusiastic member of the Ladies' Section of the Unione Ticinese, of which she had been unanimously elected its Vice-Secretary for the last two years. For this Society she had rendered invaluable service, being conscientious, reliable and willing to an unusual degree in one so young. With her passing the Society's loss is irreparable.

The funeral service was held at St. Joseph's Retreat, Highgate, where Irene had regularly attended for many years, and the Revd. Paulinus Fisher, C.P., officiated. The esteem and affection in which Irene had been held was evidenced by the incredibly large throng of mourners present and by the unending profusion of beautiful flowers. At the end of the Mass, the Swiss Catholic Chaplain, the Revd. A. Lanfranchi, made a moving address of sympathy and comfort.

The interment took place at East Finchley Cemetery, spoken tributes being made by two of Irene's colleagues in the Unione Ticinese. Of these tributes the following are fragments.

"Dear Irene, you were so young, so eager for life, so good and so loved by all . . . We shall miss your dear presence more than can ever be expressed and your happy and friendly person can never be replaced. . . But in taking you so soon, we know that God must have done so for his own good purpose. That your happy spirit still lives on, we do not doubt, and we ask that you will pray for comfort and strength to be given to your parents and brothers, that their sorrow may be lessened and that they may realise that the parting is for a short while only. . . We shall not say goodbye, for we know that we shall meet again. Let us then say — arrivederci, Rene".

R.A.

PERSONAL.

We extend our heartiest congratulations to Mr. W. Bachmann, Managing-Director of the West End Fancy Bakery Co. Ltd., 48-54 Dawes Road, S.W. 6, on having been admitted to the Freedom of the City of London, and elected to the Livery of the Bakers' Company at a recent meeting of the Worshipful Company of Bakers, held at Grocers' Hall, Princes Street, E.C. 2.

This company is one of the oldest of the City guilds, and dates as far back as 1155 in the reign of Henry II.

SWISS STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

Through the courtesy of the London Office of the Swiss Bank Corporation we are enabled to publish the quotations of some of the leading stocks in Switzerland.

			18/10/44.	13/12/44.
Confederation	3%	1936	... 101.75	101.60
Confederation	3½%	1932	... 101.80	101.40
Confederation	4%	1931	... 103.50	103
Swiss Bank	...	...	... 522	511
Crédit Suisse	...	...	... 542	530
Industrie Aluminium	...	...	... 1730	1560
Brown Boveri	...	...	... 660	626
Chade ABC	...	...	... 895	900ex.
Chade D	...	...	... 162	165ex.
Ciba (Industrie Chimique)	...	...	... 4830	4700
Fischer	...	...	... 890	805
Nestlé	...	...	... 930	865
Oerlikon	...	...	... 475	422
Suisse Réassurance	...	...	... 3750	3570
Sandoz	...	...	... 8675	8400
Saurer	...	...	... 705	690
Sulzer	...	...	... 1290	1175

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

We hope to go to Press again on January 26th, 1945.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

REQUIRED by Swiss Family with 3 young children, in quiet and healthy Garden City 35 minutes London. Mother's Help or Children's Nurse, or would offer nice accommodation and board to young worker or elderly gentlewoman in return for some help. Box 47, SWISS OBSERVER, 23, Leonard Street, E.C. 2.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

December 31st, 1944 — Catholic Church Service at 3.30 p.m. at St. Peter's Church, Palace Street, W. 1, followed by Christmas Party at Westminster Cathedral Hall.

Saturday, January 6th, 1945, at 2 o'clock p.m. — Société de Secours Mutuels — Annual General Meeting at the Swiss Club, 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

Wednesday, January 10th, 1945, at 5.30 p.m. for 6 o'clock. — City Swiss Club — Monthly Meeting at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1, preceded by a dinner at 6 p.m. (See advert.)

Saturday, January 13th, 1945, at 2.30 p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society Ltd. — Monthly Meeting followed by a social afternoon.

Saturday, January 20th, 1945, at 2.15 p.m. — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Annual General Meeting at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1, preceded by a Luncheon at 1 p.m. sharp.

Saturday, January 27th, 1945, at 2.30 p.m. — London Swiss Philatelic Society — Annual General Meeting. Details to follow.

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