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Official Communications

Message from the President of the Confederation to the Swiss Abroad, 1 August 1974

Dear compatriots abroad, Each year on August the first we Swiss think of the founding of our state, the Confederation. I am particularly happy, dear fellow citizens, that today I may talk to you. I send you my warmest greetings and convey to you the best wishes of the Federal Government and your fellow-countrymen and women here in Switzerland. With our attention being held by present-day problems, we scarcely find time to look back into the past and celebrate with solemn respect the anniversary of the birth of our nation. I say this, knowing that we cannot wisely shape the future without a respectful appreciation of what has been achieved up until now. But lately there have been so many changes and upheavals that we must summon all our strength together if we are to overcome the difficulties of the present and of the future. Following a long period in which stability, economic growth, industrial peace and full employment seemed firmly assured, much is now being put in question. Great efforts will be necessary if this development is to yield positive results.

We are confronted in a very direct way with the question of economic growth, the limitations of prosperity and the harsh realities of voluntary restrictions. The shortage of energy, raw materials and certain types of foodstuffs has made us aware of our precarious state of dependence. It forces us to reconsider our situation and to accept this as a challenge. Above all, the oil crisis has proved in an emphatic way how difficult it is to steer a structure as complex as the modern world economy on a

changing course. The efforts towards a reform of the monetary system, the liberalization of world trade, the intelligent adjustment of international investment activity, and the development of the Third World – all these have without doubt suffered a setback. Storm clouds are gathering and are threatening the liberal world economic order, accomplished during the last 30 years in intricate and painstaking detail. What this means for a country like Switzerland, which is so strongly interconnected with the world, can perhaps be even more readily understood by you who live abroad.

Closely connected with this situation is the inflation – which we partly import and partly create ourselves. Inflation may be to the benefit of some, but it is also to the disadvantage of others; it undermines stability, creates a climate of speculation, and inevitably leads to increased social tension. Despite all efforts, attempts to break out of the vicious circle of the increasing cost of living have until now been unsuccessful. Yet we must not give up our efforts, for it would be disastrous to relax in the fight against this unfortunate trend and the spreading of an inflation-mentality. It would mean living at the expense of our economic future, and that sooner or later we would have to foot the bill – in both the social and political fields. Up until now the strength of our economic system was measured by the growth of our prosperity. And in the wise management of our prosperity we shall in future have to prove the enduring qualities of our political



system. We shall have to give up many creature-comforts if the price is too high or if they create unacceptable dependencies for us. These are evolutions which go far beyond pure economics. They raise as much the question of solidarity within our national community as they demand a cutback of a hectic development which has gone beyond the natural limits of the human mind and spirit.

Although the future thus holds all kinds of difficulties for us, we do not want to face it with too much pessimism. There are many people who have recognised this precarious situation and are prepared to work together to overcome it. And there is no reason why we should not continue to have faith in our peoples proven strength and determination to master its own destiny. From this strength and determination springs our Federal Constitution, which this year is one hundred years old. Its outward appearance may have grown somewhat outdated – which is why we are at present in the process of overhauling it from top to bottom.

But the very inadequacies and contradictions of our basic nation-

al laws reflect the active determination of our people always to adapt our institutions to the needs of the day – the aim being to strengthen the position of our small neutral country abroad and to enrich the life of our community through tolerance, solidarity and the legal provisions of our constitution.

I know the mere words of the constitution and of the existence of democratic institutions are not

enough. What is needed is also a human involvement that enables us to break out of the narrow circle of our own personal interests and to understand the fundamental truths of our Swiss existence with clarity and alacrity.

From my contacts with many of you, fellow citizens abroad, I gather that this is the sort of attitude you expect of us. Let us hope that this expectation can be fulfilled, and that in this way we can

truly express our gratitude to those Swiss abroad who with great loyalty share with us our problems, and efforts aimed at preserving the well-being of our common homeland.

To you and yours I wish health and prosperity, success and satisfaction in your work, and happiness and peace of mind in your family.

*Ernst Brugger
President of the
Swiss Confederation*

Issue of a Commemorative Coin

In remembrance of the revision of the Swiss Constitution in 1874 a commemorative coin will be issued in December 1974. The Swiss Government's cash-desk, the branch-offices of the Swiss National Bank and some private

banks are prepared to book orders. The coin stamped by the Swiss Mint in cupronickel bears the same face value and the same diameter as the normal five franc piece, but can be recognized by the different design. Some drafts of design are

under examination at the time being. The result will be published in one of our next issues.

The creation of a new coin can also be regarded as a kindness to the collectors, who had no occasion to add a novelty to their

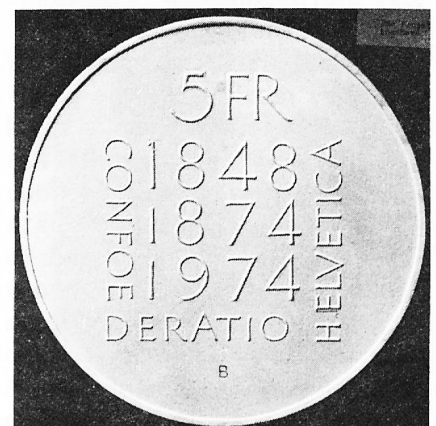
Franz Fischer, Zurich



Battista Ratti, Malvaglia (TI)



Max Weber, Geneva



collections since 1963, when a commemorative coin was produced in connection with the foundation of the Red Cross in 1863.

The coins will be issued at their face value of five francs each with the exception of a small edition with better quality (proof). These special coins shall be packed in cases and sold at a higher price. The commemorative coins will have legal tender and might be used for payments. But it is supposed that the entire edition of one million pieces will be bought by people for the purpose of collecting or making presents and therefore will not appear in money circulation. The law orders the Government to take back the coins at any time at par.

Voluntary Old-age, survivors' and disability insurance (OASDI)

– Swiss citizens residing abroad may, up to the date of their 51st birthday, insure themselves with the voluntary scheme of the Federal *old-age, survivors' and disability insurance system* (OASDI).

Remain reserved the cases of transfer from the compulsory to the voluntary scheme and the cases of affiliation under particular circumstances. Benefits are awarded only if contributions have been paid for one full year to the scheme.

– A double monthly benefit has been paid in September 1974 to beneficiaries of OASDI scheme, to offset the increased cost of living occurred in 1974.

– Beginning January 1975, full OASDI pensions will be increased by approximately 25%. As the case may be, partial OASDI pensions may not be subject to such in-

crease to a full extent and may even not be increased at all.

Swiss travel with a single ticket

Switzerland's transport systems have for some time been offering a completely new kind of ticket that can be obtained outside Switzerland. What makes this ticket so special is that it makes no mention of place of departure or arrival. The tourist can plan his own route, either at home before he starts out or when he gets to Switzerland. The *Swiss Holiday Pass* is the key to the unlimited use of all Swiss transportation facilities (except for mountain railways and aerial cableways which do, however, offer big reductions for Holiday Pass holders).

Available for one, two or four week periods, the Swiss Holiday Pass enables the tourist to plan his holiday absolutely to his own inclinations. The idea is to encourage visitors not just to go to one tiny part, one place in Switzerland and stay there but to go on voyages of discovery all over the country. And this has now been made really easy for him. With the Holiday Pass he can take a train, boat or postcoach whenever and wherever he pleases. Back from his holidays he'll be able to say he's been to Switzerland. And if asked whereabouts in Switzerland, he'll be able to reply: everywhere! Not just Zermatt, Geneva or Lucerne, not just the German, French, Italian or Romansch speaking part, but really everywhere.

He can get acquainted with the Swiss Alps, or the Jura region, take a trip on the Lake of Lucerne, get to know the famous San Bernardino Pass or any other place he wants to see in Switzerland.

A Holiday Pass for, say, two weeks, costs less than making the Zurich–

Geneva return tripp three times (which theoretically can be done in a single day). Swiss holidays are good value ... thanks to the Holiday Pass.

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