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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

**The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.**

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

Between August 28th and September 4th there have been two more violations of Swiss territory. The Army Command announced on September 2nd that in the previous night foreign 'planes had again been sighted flying over Swiss territory. The trespass occurred in the western part of Switzerland; in St. Gall too an alarm was given, lasting from 12 p.m. to 1 a.m. In Au, St. Gall, bombs were dropped on open country. Anti-aircraft guns went into action. Enquiries as to the nationality of the airmen are being instituted.

During the following night Swiss neutrality was again violated by 'planes flying over Switzerland. They flew over Geneva and left again in the direction Geneva—Chiasso; they also flew over Nyon. Anti-aircraft fire was in evidence. The way in which the flights were carried out and the course taken by the 'planes point to a further breach of neutrality by British airmen, said the Swiss Radio on September 3rd. The 'planes were flying at a height of about 4-5,000m.

On the 3rd September the President of the Confederation reported to the Federal Council on the various breaches of Swiss neutrality. He was able to give his colleagues a compte-rendu of the several demarches undertaken by himself and the Swiss Minister in London. He informed the Federal Council that the British Legation had promised an early answer to his protest.

\* \* \*

The Federal Council has granted a credit of Frs. 1,000,000 for the erection of barracks for Internees.

\* \* \*

The "Times" published an article on the economic situation in Switzerland last Tuesday of which we give a resumé:—

*From a Correspondent Lately in Switzerland.*

Every minor European State has its peculiar war-time problems, even if not at war, but the position of Switzerland within the blockade is unique.

A new commercial express transport service by lorry was recently opened between Switzerland and

Portugal. The first of these lorries arrived in Lisbon after four days on the road and shipped a consignment of goods by the American Export Line to the United States. On the return journey they will carry a quantity of merchandise brought by the same ship from America. This new feature in European war-time trade routes brings into relief the peculiar position of Switzerland since the entry of Italy into the war and the collapse of France.

In fact, Switzerland is now suffering under the blockade equally with the belligerent Powers themselves. She is almost completely cut off from her foreign oversea markets, as well as from many of her sources of supply. The new transport service will do something to relieve Swiss difficulties. It should be stated at once that both the inward and outward traffic has the good will of the British authorities. Nevertheless, the position of Switzerland is an unhappy one. She finds herself almost entirely at the mercy of Germany, who, if she cared, could deprive her of most of the commodities she requires.

The German-Swiss clearing agreement expired in June last. Since that date commercial relations between the two countries have been put on a completely different footing.

Switzerland wants the coal, and the only country which can provide it is Germany. In return for this coal Switzerland is surrendering great quantities of her reserve stocks.

Apart from petrol, the main German concern is fats and cheeses. It is possible that they may try to provide the Swiss with the necessary feeding-stuffs from Hungary and Rumania, as they are stated to be doing in the case of Denmark and Holland, so as to keep the Swiss dairy industry going.

The Germans may find it in their interests to make use of the Swiss railway equipment industry to make up their own glaring deficiencies.

Switzerland is in a critical situation economically. The demobilization of her Army presents a formidable unemployment problem. It is further aggravated by the difficulties of her watch-making industry, which provided chiefly for English and American markets, and by the disappearance of her profitable tourist traffic, which again was supported largely by the Anglo-Saxon world. Schemes of public work are in abeyance.

Switzerland is not solely a German preserve. The Italians have interests in the south. They have shown a helpful attitude towards Swiss economic difficulties. Before the Italian entry into the war they assisted in the shipment of petrol and other commodities to Switzerland. They would continue to do so now if the British blockade permitted.

There seems good evidence to show that the Italians would prefer an independent Switzerland, even as a buffer State against their Nordic friends. In more ways than one Italy would be the loser if Germany assumed control of German-speaking Switzerland.

\* \* \*

The "Times" reports that the Swiss Consulates in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have been withdrawn. As Switzerland has no diplomatic relations with Soviet-Russia this measure had become inevitable with the incorporation of the three Baltic States into the Union of Soviet Republics.

\* \* \*

The "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" published a report about the Swiss in Lithuania on July 31st, from which we gather that the majority of those established in that country were engaged in Dairy-Farming. However, there were some Swiss Professors, Architects and Engineers living in Kaunas, one of the best-known being Professor von Regel of Zürich, whose Grandfather had created the botanical gardens in St. Petersburg. He himself was the founder and director of the botanical gardens in Kaunas.

At the end of July 24th, Swiss had already left Lithuania and it is expected that very few will be able to go on living there.

\* \* \*

During the last week a great number of Swiss who had been living in Alsace up to the outbreak of the offensive in the West have returned to their homes.

Prof. Walter Minder's discovery of the last or missing element is referred to in an article in the "Manchester Guardian," September 2nd, though no particulars about the nature or practical use of this new substance are given:—

Physicists in Switzerland and America are claiming the discovery of a new element. The chemical

elements may be conveniently numbered according to the electric charge on their nuclei. Hydrogen has a charge of one unit and is therefore described as element 1, while uranium has a charge of 92 units, and is element 92. There are ninety other possible elements between these two, according to the numbers 2, 3, 4, &c., up to 91. All of them have been discovered except element 85, though there is doubt about element 61.

W. Minder, of Berne, now confidently claims the existence of element 85, and has named it helvetium, after his native country. He has found that the emission of electrons by radium emanation and its products of decomposition is higher than theory would indicate, and ascribes the excess to extra electrons released in a further decomposition which leads to the formation of element 85.

Meanwhile Corson, Mackenzie, and Segré in California have been bombarding bismuth with particles shot with an energy of 32,000,000 volts from a cyclotron. They obtained an unknown substance which they believed might be element 85. As it is known that element 85 ought to resemble iodine, they tried injecting some of the unknown substance into two hyperthyroid guinea-pigs on the chance that it might act on them like iodine. The thyroid gland of one of the animals was about 100 times as active as other parts of the body, but the results were inconclusive.

\* \* \*

A bit of Swiss history — or is it fiction — probably unknown to our readers is given by the "Irish News," August 27th, which says:—

As a hoary fall-back of the comedian and a symbol of non-existence, the "Swiss Navy" has helped. Switzerland did at one time have a fleet and an Englishman of high-pressure salesmanship persuaded the Swiss Government to take the step.

At the end of the eighteenth century a British officer, Colonel Williams, offered his services to Switzerland to organise naval defences. He insisted that the country's lakes should be patrolled by warships, and was commissioned to build a small fleet to guard Lake Zurich. He took the title of Admiral of the Swiss Navy.

When in 1799, the French army met the Russian and Austrian troops on the shores of Lake Zurich, the Admiral set his warships to work. To his great disgust the battle-ground was just beyond the range of his guns.

Very angry and disappointed, he dismissed his crews, and scuttled the whole Swiss Navy before leaving the country.

\* \* \*

The capricious movement of our glaciers is a phenomenon that still awaits elucidating; recent observations are recorded by "The Times," August 31st:—

Observations made on the Swiss Alpine glaciers during the glacial year 1938-39 under the direction of Dr. P. L. Mercanton show that the retreating movement somewhat abated. Winter snows were rather abundant, but they melted rapidly, and the limit of snow was on the average nearly 120ft. higher than during the previous year.

Among the retreating glaciers, the Allalin glacier moved backwards by 111ft., the Valsorey

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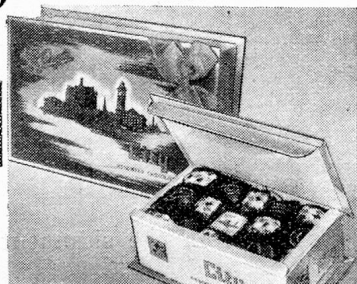
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glacier by 180ft., the Rosenlauri glacier by 78ft., the Stein glacier by 129ft., the Morteratsch glacier by 102ft. A small number of glaciers moved forwards, among them the Moiry glacier by 42ft., the Duran glacier (Zinal) by 33ft., the Basodino glacier by 45ft. Out of 100 glaciers observed 14 were advancing (four in 1938), five were stationary (eight in 1938), and 81 were retreating (88 in 1938).

\* \* \*

An air invasion which so far does not lead to international complications is dwelt upon by the

“*Evening Standard*,” September 3rd:—

Scientists who throughout the year occupy a little observatory 12,000 feet above sea level on the Jungfrau, in the Swiss Alps, found big red patches on the snow one morning.

The crevasses of the neighbouring Aletsch glacier, instead of being deep green or blue in colour, also showed a reddish-brown tint.

Investigation revealed that these red patches had been caused by tiny sand particles blown from the Sahara desert 1,500 miles across the Mediterranean and Italy, into Switzerland.

## APPEL A L'OCCASION DU JEUNE FEDERAL.

Chers Compatriotes,

“ Au milieu de la vie, nous sommes entourés de la mort,  
Qui donc vient à notre secours, nous accorde sa grâce  
C'est toi, SEIGNEUR, toi seul!”

Ainsi chantaient nos ancêtres lorsqu'ils tentaient de repousser les hordes pillardes des Hongrois. Ce cantique, les Confédérés l'entonnaient à Sempach, alors qu'ils se trouvaient en face de la forêt de lances ennemies.

Qu'en est-il aujourd'hui? Ne sommes-nous pas plus que jamais exposés à la mort? Comme Confédérés aussi, nous sommes mortels. Notre existence en tant qu'Etat n'est assurée que par la grâce de Dieu. Ce ne sont pas nos aptitudes, nos qualités, pas même nos défenses et nos armes, si nécessaires soient-elles, qui en sont la cause finale; en dernière analyse, nous le devons au DIEU TOUT PUISSANT, qui nous a accordé son secours.

Etre Confédérés et Suisses, c'est reconnaître que nous sommes débiteurs et pécheurs, si pénible que soit cette constatation. Dieu a permis à notre Confédération d'exister, malgré la misère des hommes: c'est un don de Dieu. Mais tout ce que nous recevons de la main de Dieu est motif à vraie reconnaissance. Ce n'est pas en nous séparant des autres peuples, en étant présomptueux et vaniteux que nous témoignerons notre joie d'être Suisses; c'est simplement en reconnaissant les grâces infinies de Dieu.

Un tel don nous oblige en même temps à nous humilier pour notre indignité, nos fautes et nos déficits, tant comme individus que comme Colonie et comme Peuple. Mais il y a aussi une invitation à demander à Dieu, dans une ardente prière, de nous accorder sa grâce, à nous et à notre peuple, et, en un temps aussi sérieux, aussi décisif, d'assurer le maintien de notre patrie.

C'est pourquoi nous vous invitons, chers compatriotes, à venir aussi nombreux que possible à nos cultes du JEUNE FEDERAL,

*Dimanche 15 septembre 1940, à 11 heures.*

Ils auront lieu dans nos deux églises, à 79, Endell Street, W.C.2 et à St. Anne's, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

Au nom de l'Eglise Suisse:

*Le Consistoire.*

## AUFRUF.

### Zum Eidgenössischen Dank-Buss-und Bettag.

Liebe Landsleute!

“ Mitten wir im Leben sind vom Tod umfängen,  
Wer ist's, der uns Hilfe tut, dass wir Gnad erlangen?”

Du bists, HERR, alleine!”

So haben unsere Vorfahren gesungen, als sie den Einbruch der räuberischen Ungarn abzuwehren suchten. So haben es unsere Eidgenossen angestimmt bei Sempach der kleinen Stadt, als sie dem mörderischen Speerwald der Feinde gegenüberstanden. Wie steht es heute? Sind wir nicht alle mehr denn je dem Tode verfallen? Auch als Eidgenossen sind wir Kinder des Todes. Unser Staatswesen hat die Gewähr seines Bestehens nicht in sich selber, sondern allein in der Tatsache, dass GOTT in seiner Gnade es erhält. Nicht unsere Tüchtigkeit, nicht unsere Qualitäten, auch nicht Wehr und Waffen, so dringlich notwendig wir sie auch haben, sind es die uns erhalten, sondern im letzten Grund ist es der ALLMAECHTIGE GOTT, der uns Hilfe schafft.

Eidgenosse und Schweizer sein, heisst zunächst nichts anderes als Schuldiger, als Sünder sein, so ungern wir dies auch hören mögen. GOTT hat unsere Eidgenossenschaft werden lassen trotz der Verkehrtheit der Menschen. Es ist ganz Gottes Gabe. Alles aber, was wir aus Gottes Hand entgegennehmen, ist Anlass und Verpflichtung zu aufrichtiger Dankbarkeit. Wir bezeugen unsere tiefe Freude und Dankbarkeit, dass wir Schweizer sind, nicht aus hochmütiger Abgrenzung gegenüber andern Völkern, nicht aus törichter Einbildung und Eitelkeit, sondern einfach darum, weil wir in dieser Tatsache Gnade und Geschenk Gottes erkennen.

Ein solches Gnadengeschenk verpflichtet uns aber gleichzeitig zur Busse für unsere Unwürdigkeit und für unsere Fehler und Zukurzkommen als Einzelne, als Kolonie und als Volk, ebenso zum dringlichen Gebet, dass GOTT der HERR uns und unserem Land auch fernerhin gnädiglich beistehe und es ganz besonders in einer so ersten und wichtigen Zeit, wie der heutigen, weiterhin erhalten möge.

Darum laden wir unsere Landsleute herzlich ein, sich so zahlreich wie möglich zu unseren Gottesdiensten am *EIDGENOESSICHEN DANK-BUSS-und BETTAG*,

*Sonntag, den 15 SEPTEMBER 1940, morgens 11 Uhr einzufinden. Dieselben finden in beiden Kirchgebäuden, d.h. in 79, Endell Street W.C.2 und in St. Anne's 9, Gresham Street E.C.2 statt.*

Im Namen der SCHWEIZERKIRCHE  
*Die Kirchenpflege.*