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mieux assurée que chacun conservera le seul bien qui fasse la vie digne d'être vécue : le travail.

Rapprochons ces deux causes : le blocus qui n'a point d'égards suffisants pour notre situation très particulière et notre ferme volonté de donner du travail à tous, coûte que coûte, et l'on comprendra les principes majeurs de la politique économique de la Suisse. Elle n'est point utilitaire, comme certains osent le prétendre. Elle est dominée par une règle essentielle qui commande toutes nos attitudes : la résolution de rester pleinement indépendants.

*Pierre Béguin.*

### THE GREAT SWISS MYSTERY.

*Under this and similar titles the following article appeared in some of the provincial dailies; it was published first in the "Evening Standard," November 27th. It contains little news matter which is not already known to our readers but underlines the very unsatisfactory state of affairs which exists as far as the despatch and/or receipt of newspapers is concerned. We have recently received Swiss dailies dated August and beginning of October all in one batch and from the postage marks it would appear that the reasons for delay are to be found on this side. Conversely English papers have always been at a high premium in Switzerland; we remember well the exorbitant prices that used to be exacted at the newspaper kiosks in normal times. —*

A Swiss recently asked a German official, "Why is it that you have left us alone?" To which the German replied, "Why shouldn't we? We have four million prisoners, who work for us and who feed themselves." There is some truth in this answer, but only some. Switzerland presents an astonishing picture to-day. For these four million "prisoners" of the Nazis have probably the finest defensive army, with some of the best equipment in all Europe. This army and its fierce spirit of independence has a great deal to do with Swiss immunity, and so has the St. Gotthard Tunnel. This trilogy — the "prisoners," the army and the tunnel — make up the Swiss in the midst of this war.

Switzerland is surrounded by Axis Powers except for a small stretch of Vichy France, but the Germans control all Swiss exports through this gap. All the great engineering factories are working day and night for Germany. . . . The watch industry is making precision instruments for Hitler; factories turning out farm implements are also working for him.

Neither the people nor the workers like the work, but the alternative would be mass unemployment, Nazi propaganda, discontent and a Nazi movement in the country. Whereas now the Swiss — particularly the German-Swiss — make no bones of their opposition to the Nazis and the Nazis know it.

This is all the more surprising as British propaganda is so poor. One Swiss put it to me this way: We are Britain's best friends, but your people make it hard for us. Newspapers arrive in Switzerland three to four weeks old, a very few weeklies about six weeks old. News films do not arrive at all.

Only two documentaries have got through so far: one issued in England before the war, and the other "London Can Take It."

Together with the pictures of bombed London regularly issued, this type of British propaganda has convinced people on the Continent that London is a waste of ruins, that what is left of the population is living in the Tubes or in cellars. The result is that everyone admires the British spirit of defiance and hopes it will win through: but there is no real confidence that this can be done.

The only up-to-date British news is a duplicated Bulletin issued twice weekly by the British Embassy in Berne and which is sent free to subscribers on request. There have been about 25,000 requests for the German edition, but the contents are as dry and uninterestingly presented as an official document; bits of leading articles from the London newspapers and repetitions from the B.B.C. news countering German claims, but never giving any real information about what is happening inside Britain.

To a lesser extent the same criticism is made of the German and French radio transmission from London, which is widely received. Here again, however, the news is mainly international — speeches and long communiqués. These make little impression on listeners in Switzerland. What the Continent seems most anxious to know is what has happened in England since the fall of Chamberlain. Since then they have had no news about our internal development, and a steady flow of information of this kind would do more to counteract the German propaganda that England is ruled by plutocrats than any number of clever replies or counter-sneers.

German business men are constantly crossing the border into Switzerland. In one hotel it is noticeable that the first thing they do is to read the English newspapers — only to find them a month old. They contrast this with the flow of German propaganda. A dozen German illustrated papers are always on sale, some dealing specially with the Luftwaffe, the navy and the army. Then Goebbels publishes every Friday the well-got-up Reich, which is meant for the outside world and which attracts readers by its good maps and interesting-looking matter. There is no British counterpart. New German news films and documentaries arrive every week. Within a week of the fall of Kiev Germans were showing the film of its capture.

Probably the best guarantee for Swiss security is the Gotthard line, which provides a connecting link between Germany and Italy through the heart of Switzerland. It pierces the Alps with 80 tunnels the longest of which is 10 miles long and almost 6,000ft. above sea level; there are also 394 bridges, every one mined by the Swiss army.

The traffic along this line has reached enormous proportions. About 160 trains of German coal trucks cross this line every day. On an average a train comes into Switzerland loaded with coal for Italy every seven minutes. These trains have from 40 to 50 trucks of either 10 or 20 tons. Swiss authorities estimate that every train takes about 600 tons of coal to Italy. Lately there has been an increase of closed goods vans attached to these trains, and there has been much curiosity about their contents and whether they square with the requirements of Swiss neutrality.

The German trucks are in poor condition and have to be overhauled by Swiss before crossing the Alps. They seem to reflect the general condition of the German railways. I heard German business men say the Reich Government now wish they had spent some of

the millions which they used for their autostrassen on improving their rolling-stock.

To-day this is Italy's last life-line. If the Germans should attempt to take the Gotthard by force, they would get it only in ruins. The line is defended by an intricate system of strong points hollowed out in the granite rock, or bunkers defending the narrow gorges.

Since the French collapse the Swiss have revised their defences. A ring of granite and concrete has been drawn around the lower Alps. Along the frontiers and in the plains a chain of bunkers, tank traps and other obstructions have been devised to retard the invader. A.R.P. in the cities has been militarised and is kept at a constant pitch of readiness. Last month every man not in the army was called for a full week's A.R.P. drill and manœuvres.

Commander of the army is General Guisan. He has dealt energetically with suspected fifth columnists among the officers. There are still more than 40,000 Germans living in Switzerland, so the problem is not easy.

Mobilisation is scheduled to be complete within 48 hours. Every man has also alternative orders of what to do if he cannot join his unit.

Altogether, the Swiss are more confident now than they were ever before that Hitler will think twice, before taking on so tough an army as the Swiss. They know that they will be defeated but they reckon that the cost to Hitler will be greater than the gain.

All the same, I found in Switzerland the inevitable atmosphere of uneasiness I met everywhere else I went on the Continent and which may be taken as the hallmark in the Hitler order. Europe in November gave me the feeling of living between two volcanoes, either of which might erupt at any moment. No one knows what Hitler will do next and no one knows — but one can feel it coming — when sorely tried Europe will revolt.

## DEAR FATHER CHRISTMAS,

Excuse me for troubling you with another letter. Mother thinks that I am getting too old for this kind of thing but eventually decided to let me carry on so as to keep me out of mischief elsewhere. So here goes.

This time I am not going to ask you for a lot of presents for myself. Our Sunday School teacher told us to practice self-denial and to help others in these difficult times.

So instead of begging you for boxes of tin soldiers and naval and aerial toys I would like you to supply my big brothers and friends in the armed forces with an abundance of real guns, tanks, ships and 'planes. Give them the tools and they will finish the job.

Please also provide nice Hampers of food and clothing for all the hungry and shivering peoples and children in all the oppressed countries. And don't forget my needy compatriots in London. The Secretary of the Swiss Relief Centre resides at 31, Conway Street, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

To your bighearted brother Franklin Delano Roosevelt I send hearty greetings. Please ask him if he could possibly spare a few shiploads of Cereals and Coals out of his Lease and Lend Bag for Switzerland, whose Government is getting somewhat worried about the rapidly diminishing stocks. If he cannot get it

down the chimney he can shove it through the Gotthard Tunnel.

Personally I don't mind going short of a few mince pies but am of course hoping to be able to make up for it the following Christmas. After all, we are not doing so badly here in England and have much to be thankful for.

However, I should be glad if you would send Lord Woolton a few cows so that he can increase our milk ration. And if you can throw in a few good hens as well, all the better.

I would also like you to bring something nice to that great man Mr. Winston Churchill, whose chimney at No. 10 Downing Street, you cannot miss as it is always smoking. As you probably know the Prime Minister is very fond of a good Cigar. It is said that there is no other man, who, smoking so much, enjoys so many and wastes so few. Please therefore give him a nice box of his special brand.

You will find my Christmas stocking in the usual place but in case you should not be able to squeeze down the chimney I will hang another stocking on the door knob and just for safety put one of fathers Wellington Boots underneath.

I am sorry you won't find things more cheerful on this war-infested Planet but hope that the old Xmas message will come true again soon: Glory be to God on high, Peace on earth and Goodwill among mankind.

Meanwhile, dear Santa Claus, with many thanks in anticipation, yours gratefully,

FREDDIE.

P.S. I also thought of something for Hitler and Mussolini but Mother said it was frightfully rude and asked me to cut it out.

F.I.

## 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.

	1st Dec.	15th Dec.
Bankverein	466	465
Kreditanstalt	530	529
Rückversicherung	3150	3045
Ciba	5950	5980
Nestlé	897	810
Aluminium Neuhausen	3175	3150
Columbus	337	335
Sulzer	1255	1235
Brown Boveri	285	282
Wehranleihe 3% 1936	101.70	101.60
SBB Jura-Simplon	102.—	101.60

## OUR NEXT ISSUE.

The Editor wishes to acknowledge and reciprocate the many expressions of good wishes received from subscribers and to specially thank the following who have added tangible tokens towards the production costs of our publication:— E. Strauli, E. Steiner, G. Bozzini, A. Rueff, F. Zimmermann, W. Breitingger, A. Knapp, E. A. Neuschwander, Paul Bessire, Mlle M. Meyer, E. Fankhauser, A. C. Baume, W. Deutsch, Dr. Ch. Hagenbach, H. Koch, E. Bachofen, J. A. Lanz, Jos. Ecker and Dr. Pluss.

We hope to publish our next issue on January 30th, 1942.