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SWISS AFFAIRS.

By PIERRE BÉGUIN.

"Switzerland and European Integration"

It is often said abroad that Switzerland is an example of successful federalism. Immediately afterwards, however, the speakers add that it seems paradoxical for our country to be so reserved in regard to the tentative efforts made for European integration into the ways leading to European Federalism. People are even inclined to think that, in this way, the Swiss Confederation is not faithful to its profound vocation. Some explanation is required.

Switzerland is neutral. But she is no longer neutral in quite the same way as she was formerly. Her foreign policy in no way resembles that which was practised before 1914. It can no longer be summed up by the term of abstention. It no longer consists of affirming, in all possible circumstances, our total national independence, and of avoiding every formal international liaison. Quite decidedly this policy belongs to the past.

Unquestionably we are still neutral and intend to remain so. But that is not only the policy of our authorities and of our diplomacy; it is a policy which is supported by public opinion as a whole. And this neutrality is resolved by a rule of conduct which is very clear and distinct: we do not want to let ourselves be drawn into political or military alliances.

As far as everything else is concerned, Switzerland is ready to co-operate with the other States. And this to such an extent that our formula is no longer only "neutrality". It has become more complex and can be summed up in two words: neutrality and solidarity. And it is precisely because of the fact that this formula has now been enriched with this new idea of solidarity that we have not hesitated to collaborate closely with other countries and with international organisations, on technical and economic planes.

Thus, Switzerland is not a member of UNO, which is in certain respects a military and political alliance, or — to put it more exactly — it should be, and, more especially, might become so. But this abstention in no way prevents us from close co-operation with all the technical and economic special agencies of UNO.

In the same way our Government and our Parliament, supported once more by public opinion, have not hesitated to play an active part, with certain reservations, within the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation. This organisation, which has already rendered inestimable services, has for its objects the doing away with Customs barriers, the encouragement of trade exchanges, and the facilitating of currency convertibility. These are causes with which we can — and wish to — associate ourselves, for this is a question pertaining to the balance of the free world, with which we are closely allied in feelings of solidarity, without for that letting our political and military line of conduct be inflected to the slightest degree.

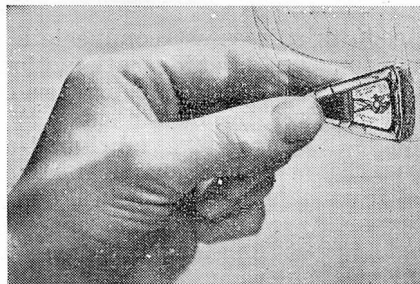
For exactly the same reasons and on condition that we obtain sufficient guarantees, our adherence to

the Free Trade Area should not raise any difficulties. And, anyway, this would only be a logical extension of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation. It would prove an answer to our wishes, for it would anticipate the desires of a country which practises an extremely liberal commercial policy and is convinced that Europe is growing weaker and more anaemic by maintaining such countless obstacles to its internal trade exchanges.

On the other hand, the question of our adherence to the European Common Market is not one that can be answered easily. After all, the Little Europe of the Common Market coincides exactly with a political group and with a military alliance. It tends to organise itself politically, by certain sacrifices consented to in respect of sovereignty and by the institution of super-national authorities. Thus, here we find again the same obstacles which prevented us — and still prevent us — from belonging to UNO.

Our policy is, therefore, quite clear. We are neutral. We also practise solidarity. But this very real solidarity of ours can only manifest itself in certain specified domains, more especially in the domains of economy and of technique. On the other hand, it cannot manifest itself on the political and military planes. This should be sufficient to show that, while preserving a total political independence, there still remains an immense field for an active and fruitful co-operation on our part for the improvement of the internal relations in our continent.

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