

Swiss efforts to resume diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia fail

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OUR FOREIGN MINISTER, FEDERAL COUNCILLOR PILET-GOLAZ, RESIGNS.

On November 10th, before noon, after the regular meeting of the Federal Council, the resignation of our Foreign Minister, Federal Councillor Pilet-Golaz was announced in the following official communique: 'In its session of November 10th the Federal Council has accepted the letter of resignation of Federal Councillor Pilet-Golaz, head of the Federal Political Department in which our Foreign Minister informed the President of the National Council, Mr. Paul Gysler and the Parliament of his retreat as member of the Federal Council. Mr. Pilet-Golaz has taken his decision already before the session of the Federal Council of November 7th, but has held back the announcement of his withdrawal not to influence the discussions regarding Switzerland's relations with Soviet Russia. With greatest regret the Federal Council takes notice of this resignation and also of Mr. Pilet-Golaz's statement that the decision is definite. Today already the Federal Council wishes to express its unrestricted gratefulness for the great and conscientious work Mr. Pilet-Golaz has done for our country in his function as head of the Federal Political Department. In his letter of resignation to the Federal Council, Mr. Pilet-Golaz declares that it has always been his opinion that the Foreign Minister has to clear the way for another man in the present wartime as the new situation calls for a fresh and unused force.'

Mr. Pilet-Golaz has been a member of the Federal Council since 1929, Swiss Foreign Minister since 1940 and President of the Swiss Confederation in the years of 1934 and 1940.'

Comments by Mr. Max Reber, Swiss Radio commentator: "It is sometimes believed in the foreign press that the resignation of Federal Councillor Pilet-Golaz has been the consequence of a certain pressure exercised from abroad. This is not exact. The last few years clearly show that the Swiss people are not willing to give way to any pressure, wherever it may come from. Furthermore, as we have often had the opportunity of telling you, it is not customary in Switzerland that a Federal Councillor should resign because of a failure in his policy. Our democracy demands complete submission to the people's will, even from our highest magistrates. Thus, the refusal of his proposals by the people is to be looked upon as nothing but an invitation by the majority of the people to continue his work and to achieve even better results.

The case is different when a political failure is accompanied by a want of confidence from the part of the majority of the people in the person holding an office, i.e. when the opinion is generally held that the same man, if he remains on the same post will not be able to bring about a successful improvement of the situation. As in all other democracies, in Switzerland, a statesman who is not backed up by the confidence of the majority of his fellow citizens cannot, so to speak, outlive failures of his policy in the long run, regardless of whether they concern home or foreign affairs. In both cases the people's confidence is distinctly a question of internal policy. An actual failure merely precipitates an impending decision.

These fundamental facts must be taken into account if one tries to understand the real reasons for the resignation of Federal Councillor Pilet-Golaz. He has not resigned because his efforts to normalize our relations with Soviet Russia - efforts he made with the full approval of our people - were not crowned by success. He resigned because he felt that he was alone, that the people were doubting his capacity to bring his task to a successful conclusion. This want of confidence had already been aroused by the personal characteristics of Federal Councillor Pilet-Golaz many years ago. He was an outsider."

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SWISS EFFORTS TO RESUME DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SOVIET RUSSIA FAIL.

Saturday, November 4th, late in the day, the Moscow Radio announced that the Soviet government has refused the Swiss government's proposal that diplomatic relations be re-established between Switzerland and the USSR. The Swiss Federal Council has given consideration to this matter in its Tuesday's

(November 7th) regular weekly meeting and the following communique was issued: 'As was pointed out in its declaration before the National Council on March 29, 1944, the Swiss Federal government, desirous of entertaining correct relations with all the states, wanted to have relations between Switzerland and the USSR placed on a normal basis just as soon as circumstances would permit. Preliminary feelers put out at that time brought the impression that positive results could be achieved. The Swiss Minister in London returned to his post last July with instructions to enter into contact with the USSR's embassy in Great Britain and to take steps to this end, right from the start of his mission. On September 7th, the Swiss Minister in London, Mr. Ruegger, informed in detail the Soviet Ambassador of the Swiss Federal government's views, relative to the resumption of normal diplomatic relations between Switzerland and the USSR, stressing, among other points, that the reciprocal interests of the two states was to maintain in force the commercial agreement signed on February 24, 1941, and to strengthen existing relations by a friendly settlement of other questions in suspense. The Ambassador of the USSR, Mr. Gouseff, having asked if this statement could be confirmed in writing, Mr. Ruegger was authorized to set forth the Federal government's viewpoint in a written statement dated October 10, 1944, which was handed to the Soviet Ambassador. In reply to this document, a memorandum was handed to the Swiss Legation on November 1st. This memorandum expressed the refusal and gave as the reason that up to today the Swiss government has not changed in any way its previous hostile policy towards the USSR. The reproach that a hostile policy has been followed towards the USSR cannot be based on reality for any impartial observer directly and completely informed regarding the attitude of Switzerland, of the government and of her people. The facts in this connection are so conclusive that the Soviet government cannot fail to finally convince itself of their importance. Moreover, the Federal Council remains with the same sentiments as those that dictated the negotiations now interrupted and which corresponded with its desire to entertain good and peaceful relations with all states.'

The reaction of the Swiss press as a whole can be stated as follows:

"Switzerland has a perfectly clear conscience. She rejects the reproaches brought against her, nor does she allow herself to be intimidated by a gesture the motives of which are yet unapparent. Switzerland will await coolly and calmly for she has entire confidence that the Federal Council has acted correctly in this matter."

SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The Swiss Delegation to the International Air Conference in Chicago made proposals for Switzerland's participation in the operation of 17 civil airlines. These would include lines connecting Switzerland with the U.S.A., South America and the Far East. Five of these lines were operated already before the war.

On November 6th, the subscriptions for the new Federal loan were closed. The 500 million francs the public was asked to offer were divided into three loans. One for 20 years at 3-1/2%, a second for 10 years at 3-3/4% and a third for 5 years cash bonds at 2-1/2%. Subscriptions reached 683 millions. The success is all the more important because it was the loan for 20 years at 3-1/2% that got the most subscriptions. The Federal authorities have decided to accept the total amount offered for the 3-1/2% loan, and 200 millions for each of the other two loans. This operation will make possible an appreciable consolidation of Switzerland's loans and debts.

The relations between Switzerland and France have proceeded a further step. Mr. Jean Berge has been appointed French Charge d'Affaires to Switzerland and Mr. Ernst Schlatter has been entrusted with the function of Swiss Charge d'Affaires to France.