

Our fatherland [continued]

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Voting on New Articles Proposed to be Added to the Swiss Constitution

The Swiss electorate voted recently on the new articles that the Government proposed to add to the Constitution. The first—accepted by 670,747 votes to 158,333—enables the Federal Government to take the necessary measures against water pollution, which has dangerously increased in lakes and rivers.

The Swiss are the only European people who are called upon to vote on financial questions, and who can decide on the amount of taxes they are willing to pay.

Recently, for the second time in 18 months, they rejected—this time by 487,364 votes to 353,962—the scheme submitted to them for supplying the Federal Government with the financial means it needs.

On account of the Swiss electorate having rejected the Government's plan for federal income tax, Federal Councillor Dr. Max Weber, head of the Federal Finance Department, has tendered his resignation.

Dr. Weber was elected a member of the Swiss Government in 1952, in succession to Mr. Ernst Nobs.

He was born in Zurich, and studied economics and afterwards became Editor of the Socialist paper "Volksstimme" of St. Gall. From 1926-1940, he was an active collaborator of the "Schweizerischen Gewerkschaftsbundes" (Trade Union Council) of which he became its secretary and in 1944 its president. In 1948 Dr. Weber was appointed Professor of National Economy at the University of Berne. He has sat in Parliament (National Council) since 1939 as a Socialist.

Another example of "Fair Play" in politics was the National reception of a proposal by the Government during the last war, to exact a capital levy. This would have affected the wealthier Swiss but it was turned down by the country as a whole, for the Swiss have a profound dislike of any law or financial exaction which is not equally applicable to all members of the community.

OUR FATHERLAND

[Continuation]

ZURICH and SCHAFFHAUSEN. With a population figure (1953) just above 400,000 people, Zurich is Switzerland's largest city. It is the centre of banking, industrial, and trading

activity and rivals Geneva as a city of learning, with its Institute of Technology and the vast new University.

Today you walk along beautiful lake promenades, past luxurious hotels and the Opera House, the very spot where back in prehistoric times men built their high-stilted lake dwellings on the shore. Upon a little hill The Lindenhof, the Helvetians erected the first fortress and called it "Turicum," which in the year 50 B.C. fell to the Romans. When they withdrew after hard battles, the Alemanni became masters of the city and the Roman "Turicum" became the Alemannia "Zurich."

However, Zurich's history as an independent community begins in the year 1218 when Duke Berchtold of Zahringen who had ruled over the city, died childless. Then Zurich during her rise of importance, became the centre of culture for North-west Switzerland.

Later, under the influence of the Reformer Zwingli, Zurich became involved in serious quarrels with the Central Cantons. The dread of civil war hung heavily over all involved and a simple human incident occurred as the two armies lay facing each other, which is quite an historical event. The men of the Central Cantons had no bread and so they carried their tub of milk out before the Zurich lines, crying that they had soup but no bread to break into it. Then the Zurchers came out and broke break into the milk and ate with them, but if anyone stretched his hand over the middle of the pot, he was sharply rapped over the knuckles by a spoon of the other side, and told to eat on his own land. And the soup was so tasty that the two adversaries declared peace there and then.

Incidentally, Zwingli founded a school 400 years ago which formed the backbone of the intellectual life of Zurich for 300 years, and finally culminated in the building of the University. Over the main entrance was engraved the inscription "By the Will of the People," for it was the people of Zurich who created the University by public vote in 1833. A second vote in 1911 provided funds for the impressive main building with the great tower which has become the dominating feature in any view of the town. At this university there has always been a spirit of unrestrained intellectual freedom, so much so, that certain German Princes forbade their subjects to attend so notorious a home of free thought and free research.

Zurich's Opera and the Playhouse at the Pfauen are both known for their very high standard. The city's audiences are well known for their sound critical judgment and today world-famous musicians, singers and actors feel flattered if they

create enthusiastic applause from Zurich's experts and extremely critical audiences. Then the "Cornichon" Cabaret also achieved an excellent reputation, particularly through their witty sketches and short acts. These artists make fun of everyone and everything both within and beyond the Swiss frontiers, and for many years now the fun has been kept at a highly entertaining level. The wonderful concerts of all descriptions staged at the famous "Tonhalle" are also well known and musicians, conductors like Toscanini, and singers of world repute are often heard in this fine temple of art.

Leaving Zurich in a northerly direction one quickly reaches Schaffhausen, a most interesting town with its medieval streets and charming buildings. The "Munoth," an interesting circular tower used as a refuge during the critical history of the town from 1564 to 1585. The fine Cathedral has a bell cast in 1486 which inspired Schiller to write the famous poem "Song of the Bell." Schaffhausen was accidentally bombed by American Flying Fortresses on April 1st, 1944, causing great havoc and many deaths.

The Falls of the Rhine nearby are doubtless the finest cascades in Central Europe. The small canton of Schaffhausen gives the impression of openness and of sunny charm, and it seems to us that the following expression by a well-known English traveller aptly describes the town and district: "I feel great delight in breathing the air of liberty; every person here apparently has the mien of content and satisfaction. The cleanliness of the homes and of the people is particularly striking and I can trace in all their manners, behaviour and dress, some strong outlines which distinguish this happy people from neighbouring nations. Perhaps I may be prejudiced but I am the more pleased because their first appearance reminds me of my own countrymen and I could almost think for a moment that I am in England."

GASTRONOMY: Nowhere in Switzerland can you eat better than in Zurich. Apart from being the largest town, it has a constant stream of visitors from all parts of the world, giving ample scope to excel. One can dine in countless small but excellent restaurants, in large and highly fashionable hotels, but apart from dishes of international popularity, there are always Zurich specialities on the menu.

"Geschnetzeltes Kalbfleisch" and "Leberspiessli" are probably the best known. The former is made from a good piece of veal, which is cut up into small bits, broiled and then served with cream or white wine sauce, together with "Rosti" our national potato dish. The latter is made of calf's

liver cut in squares and wrapped in sage leaves, then speared on thin needles of wood, alternately with pieces of bacon, the whole being cooked in a frying pan with butter and onions.

NOTICE

On the occasion of the National Day the Consul will receive the Swiss Colony at 4 p.m. on Sunday, August 1st, in his home, 11 Salamanca Road, (top of Bolton Street).

NOTICE TO INTENDING TRAVELLERS

Due to the difficulties experienced in the past by Swiss nationals who have travelled away from New Zealand, and who subsequently have wished to return, it is thought desirable to draw the attention of all intending travellers to the fact that before leaving New Zealand they should make application to a Collector of Customs for a Certificate of Registration authorising their readmission to New Zealand. The procedure is for the travellers to produce their passport with two photographs of passport size and complete a written application. The period of validity of the certificate granted is shown on the face of the certificate, and the holder is permitted to return to New Zealand provided that on arrival back at a New Zealand port they establish their identity and the certificate is still valid.

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