

Echo regarding the conclusion of allied trade negotiations with Switzerland

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An American review discussing the future of the free world, published an attack on Switzerland which, to put it mildly, was unexpected. The Swiss press was said to be pro-fascist! The poor ignoramus who wrote this monstrosity could not have been acquainted with the Swiss press except perhaps for one or two inconsequential sheets minus influence of circulation. He could not have heard of William Martin, the master of international journalism of the "Gazette of Zurich" - one of the three or four outstanding newspapers in the world. Nor could he have heard of the "Gazette de Lausanne!"

No matter where we may look, if the seat of the new League of Nations is to be in Europe, Switzerland is the only country truly suitable for such a purpose. Everything about her makes it so, - her history, her tri-lingual culture, her geographical position in the very heart of the continent, at the cross-roads of the St. Gothard, - her democratic tradition.

But the extravagant press campaign did not confine itself to the choice of a new international capital. Switzerland is accused of lacking in firmness with her German neighbor. She is reproached for not breaking off commercial relations with Germany. "Reporters," who have never looked at a map of Europe, speak gravely of the "tremendous economic aid" which Switzerland is giving to Germany.

At a time when Switzerland did not have enough to provide for her own children she sent food to French and Belgian children, and to bomb victims in London. She invited the children of war prisoners to come to her mountain resorts as honor guests.

The food which the Quakers and the Red Cross were able to ship to France and other occupied countries, could be obtained only with Switzerland's help.

Today, due to stringent restrictions in Allied shipping, and since she can ask nothing of liberated France or Italy (both starved and ruined), Switzerland gallantly struggles with the most serious difficulties.

Without access to the sea, unable to depend on coal or raw materials from overseas, Switzerland fights hunger, cold and destitution as grimly as she fought totalitarian contagion.

Doubtless there will be no sequel to the press polemics. There will be no "sanctions" against Switzerland. Tomorrow those news writers in quest of sensations will discover other subjects.

As for me, whenever I hear people talk of post war Europe, my thoughts go back to the past, to those years which I was privileged to spend in Switzerland, and I ask myself: "Will they not try to find in Europe a constitution on the pattern of the Helvetic Confederation? And will the day ever come when the world shall be blessed with this spirit of tolerance, this respect for what is right, this happy synthesis which embodies at once national sentiment and a keen understanding of the multiplicity of languages and cultures, and has made of tiny Switzerland a country of which all Europeans may justly be proud!"

ECHO REGARDING THE CONCLUSION OF ALLIED TRADE NEGOTIATIONS WITH SWITZERLAND.

1. Statement by Lauchlin Currie, Chief of the American Mission.

Mr. Lauchlin Currie who led the American delegation during the recent economic negotiations in Berne said on March 19th in the course of a press conference that in his opinion a perfect agreement was reached on all points. The agreement was in all respects in harmony with Switzerland's policy of neutrality.

2. Through the Eyes of the Swiss Press (Swiss Radio Broadcast to New Zealand).

The Swiss press gave considerable space to the economic agreements recently drawn up between Switzerland and the Allies. We read about this in the "Nouveau Zurcher Zeitung": "True, the comprehension of our partners was deepened by the several weeks stay in our country of the special delegations. However, it is also embedded in the determined will made necessary by the unprecedented totalization of war. Switzerland's resolve to maintain economic life in the teeth of all the

emergencies arises from her determination to hold successfully to her neutrality. The Swiss people are convinced that their contribution will involve restrictions of all kinds and often a painful sacrifice. The existence of Switzerland is interwoven with world economy. In any case, the laws of world economy do not allow for one country a greater share of this world's goods than is granted through mutual exchange with other partners to the world collective bargaining contract. This can be deducted from the official communique issued on the agreements in which it is stated that efforts are being made to insure Switzerland the share of world stocks belonging to her'.

The Berno "Bund": 'It must be emphasized that general developments in Europe have facilitated the conclusion of the Berno agreements and that Swiss interests are in harmony with the requirements of the Allies. Trade with Germany based on the principle of an exchange of goods is due to the constant drop in German production and production possibilities in a state of insecurity and dissolution. This is also the reason why the commercial agreements with the Reich could not be renewed. Just now anything like a solid foundation for an understanding is lacking. Therefore, Switzerland has had to draw conclusions in harmony with a just defense of her own interests. The situation would become unbearable and would not get the approval of Swiss public opinion should German transit of coal and iron to the north of Italy be permitted at a time when on the basis of "you give, I give" Germany's payments show heavy arrears. It would also be unbearable morally if the Gotthard line would be allowed to be used for the transportation of goods confiscated by the Germans in Italy and sent northward. Here too, Switzerland wants a clear situation. Our people look at these matters not only from an international viewpoint, but also from a political, economic and moral viewpoint as well.'

The "Gazette de Lausanne" writes: 'Our neutrality, our independence and the good reputation of Switzerland have emerged from the negotiations fully intact. At no time did our neutrality become a bargaining point or a matter for concessions. This in particular allows us to envisage the future with courage, on the conditions of course that interior peace shall continue to prevail throughout the country, for nothing would be more damaging to the country in the present critical circumstances than a period of trouble and dissension among us Swiss.'

The "Tribune de Lausanne" remarks on the relations with France: 'Switzerland has always manifested a firm desire to co-operate in the measure of her strength and her resources in the reconstruction of countries that have been devastated by invasion and ruined by foreign occupation. This desire is particularly strong when our close neighbour is involved. Therefore, if Swiss industry is in a position to facilitate the re-equipment of factories on the other sides of the Jura, and furnish French agriculture and tradesmen with the machinery and instruments they need, we shall be very willing to do all we can. And, inasmuch as under present circumstances, cash payments are out of the question, very logically credits will have to be extended. Before the war Switzerland was by far the best per capita client France had. Our desire is that these excellent relations shall soon be resumed again. If the granting of certain facilities to our Western neighbour can hasten this resumption, all the better.'

75TH BIRTHDAY.

Probably in the quietest manner imaginable, our greatly esteemed friend and compatriot Mr. L. Mettan, recently celebrated his 75th birthday on his Farm "Helvetia" in Riverside, Whangarei. The same day he completed 40 years of sojourn in New Zealand, as he landed on his birthday in Auckland. Few of our fellow-members respect and love Switzerland as he does. This he has expressed in many of his letters sent to the Benevolent Society, as well as in practical manner. Every year Mr. Mettan makes by far the largest donation towards the funds of our Society, which are invariably made with genuine expression of pleasure and beneficence.

We have been fortunate in obtaining a short description of Mr. Mettan's early travels, which we are happy to publish below. The Committee of the S.B.S. is the same time taking the opportunity of congratulating Mr. Mettan and especially expressing hearty thanks for the great practical interest taken by him in our cause. We all wish him "MANY HAPPY RETURNS".