

Swiss contribution to America and to the world [continuation]

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CHEESE-PARING AT GENEVA.

The penny-wise people who have been so active in the League of Nations these last few years have had their way, and it is an impoverished organization and depleted staff which waits upon the fifteenth Assembly. No fewer than fifty-eight posts in the Secretariat, out of six hundred or so, have been suppressed, at an annual saving of 500,000 Swiss francs, and the budget for 1935 is down by a corresponding amount. Despite this large reduction of staff, entailing the disappearance of some high officials who have been with the League since its beginning, we are assured that efficiency — blessed word! — has been maintained. The expenditure on the International Health Organization is only two-thirds of what it was in 1931, and it is frankly stated that any further reduction in its budget can only be obtained by serious curtailment of fundamental activities. But still the economizers — chiefly delegates from the British and Dominion Governments, for the Continental mind seems to be more emancipated in this respect — remain on the warpath. Politicians

who in their own parliaments vote for a new battleship without a blush are querying at Geneva the cost of repairs to a chimney flue or the family allowance of a clerk. To judge from some expressions of imperial opinion at the present Assembly, the most magnificent contribution which the League could make towards peace would be to reduce its annual expenditure on that object. International good will, apparently, is worthy of lip service, but not of any odd change that happens to be in the pocket. The actual figures ought to be stated as boldly as possible. The total expenditure of the League as estimated for 1935 is, roughly, 30 million Swiss francs, or, at the present low value of the pound, £2,000,000 sterling, and of this amount the United Kingdom pays one-ninth. All the fuss and fury of a certain section of English opinion over the extravagance of Geneva concerns a matter of a quarter of a million pounds, or an annual tax of something like one penny farthing on each British citizen. Taking the International Health Organization alone, which is a field where the League might expect to have no critics, except those who urge it on to bigger endeavour, the total expenditure for 1934 was 1,650,000 Swiss francs, and for 1935 the estimate is 1,185,000, the

chief savings being on the work of the technical committees, the experts, the collective and individual studies, and the contribution to the Singapore bureau. The amount mentioned includes grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, with the result that the net expenditure chargeable to the League for international health work for 1935 is only some 800,000 Swiss francs, or about £50,000, of which the British contribution is equal to the salary of a Cabinet Minister. For this modest sum many expert inquiries are set on foot, a service of epidemiological intelligence is undertaken, missions to parts of the world where public health is backward are conducted, and the system of liaison between the various health services is maintained. The Rockefeller Foundation provides the salary of the chief of the epidemiological service and of fourteen other officials. It is certainly a little depressing to hear the Secretary-General declare apologetically that since 1932 the budget for these and other League services has been progressively reduced, and still more melancholy to find the delegates, instead of rising up in wrath, accepting the fact complacently as a tribute to the business acumen of themselves and their predecessors.

British Medical Journal.

SWISS CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICA AND TO THE WORLD.

(Continuation).

Although the Swiss Constitution does not contain a separate Bill of Rights such as is incorporated in the Constitution of the United States, there are many articles scattered throughout the documents which are designed to preserve the liberties of the citizens. As in the United States all Citizens in Switzerland are equal before the law and every citizen of one of the States is a citizen of the federation of Union. Likewise the freedom of faith and conscience are held inviolable and compulsory education is the rule in both countries. Illiteracy is negligible in Switzerland.

While the Swiss have universal compulsory military training and service as compared with the voluntary system in the United States, in time of peace there is a striking parallel between the military organisations of the two countries in that both armies are "Armies of the people." The training for national defence in Switzerland is the foundation of the training for Swiss Democratic citizenship. In this connection it is interesting to recall that General George Washington proposed just such a defensive system as Switzerland has when he declared that "A free people ought not only to be armed but disciplined." As a matter of fact the draft system adopted by the United States in 1917 is the Swiss system minus the long period of preparatory training.

Some one has said that the key note of the Swiss Republic is sturdy independence, freedom of action, and avoidance of foreign entanglements. I can think of no more appropriate phraseology with which to describe the ideals of the American Republic.

The remarkable similarity of ideals and aims between the American and the Swiss was probably the chief contributing factor in the emigration to America of many thousands of Swiss citizens during the formative period of this country. The contributions of the Swiss emigration to American life have not been fully appreciated in this country because the Swiss immigrants, having no common or national language, were usually considered as Germans or Frenchmen or Italians according to their speech. In other words the Swiss of America were in some extent absorbed by corresponding racial groups. The Swiss-American Historical Society, which was formed in Chicago in 1927, is entitled to much credit for the compilation of historical and biographical information concerning Swiss settlers in the United States.

Individually and collectively you and your forebears, my friends, have made splendid contributions to the upbuilding of America in four great fields of endeavour, the political, economic, scientific and cultural. The first Swiss immigrant to America was presumably a soldier who died in Florida while in the service of Spain in the year 1562. The roster of the first settlers at Jamestown, Virginia, includes several Swiss names. The first distinct Swiss settlement was apparently that established near Charlestown, South Carolina, in 1670. The settlement in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1710 and the founding of New Bern, North Carolina, by Christopher de Graffenrid the same year bear witness to the successful activity of Swiss settlers in America.

Some of the most distinguished citizens of the United States were either native born Swiss or of Swiss descent. Among these are statesmen,

theologians, soldiers, physicians, and surgeons, merchants and bankers, scientists, engineers and journalists. Time does not permit me to list more than a few of the names of the long roll of eminent Swiss-Americans. Among the early pioneers were Henry Louis Bouquet who was with Washington and Braddock in the campaign against the French and Indians, and who later was Commandant of the Southern Colonies of British America prior to the Revolution; Jean Pierre Purry, early colonizer of South Carolina; and the famous Negley (Nägeli) family who settled in Pennsylvania in 1739. Charles Gratiot Sr. Pioneer merchant and patriot materially aided General George Rogers Clark by supplying him and his men with food and clothing in the Illinois country and the Mississippi region. Jean Jacques Dufour, pioneer of Indiana, introduced grape vine culture into America.

Among the statesmen Henry Wisner and the Reverend John Jakob Zubli were members of the Continental Congress. Albert Gallatin was a member of Congress, Secretary of the Treasury, Minister to France and Envoy Extraordinary to England. William Wirt, was Attorney General of the United States throughout the administration of Presidents Monroe and John Quincy Adams. In our own times the Swiss have contributed a President of the United States, Herbert Hoover, a Secretary of War, the late James Good, and a State Governor, Emanuel Philipp of Wisconsin.

Among the theologians are Michael Schlatter founder of the Reform Church in America and Father Martin Kuentig, hero of the great cholera epidemic in Detroit, Michigan, in 1834.

Felix Kirk Zollieffer, descendant of an ancient Swiss family of the Canton of St. Gall was Journalist, Congressman, and General in the Confederate Army. Edward Walter Eberle of Texas was Admiral in the United States Navy and Chief of Naval Operations.

From the long list of Swiss-American Scientists I pause to mention three: Dr. Henry Banga, born at Liestal, Switzerland in 1848, surgeon and pioneer in Antisepsis; Ferdinand Rudolf Hassler, born at Aarau, Switzerland, superintendent of the United States Coast Survey, astronomer and Mathematician; and Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz, born at Moutier in the Canton of Fribourg, Naturalist, Geologist, Zoologist, and founder of the National Academy of Science. Agassiz, the scholar and Gallatin, the Statesman, are generally regarded as the two outstanding men of Swiss birth in America.

Profoundly influencing the life and culture of America were also Swiss Citizens who never reached these shores. There are Jean Jacques Rousseau, the great Genevese, political philosopher of the 18th century; John Calvin and Zwingli, leaders of the Reformation, and Henri Pestalozzi, to whom we are indebted for the first practical system of primary method in teaching.

I have referred to the Swiss contribution to the cause of Democracy. In another great field, international relations, Switzerland occupies a unique position and offers the example of peace programme upon which a troubled world might well ponder. Swiss neutrality dates from the beginning of the 16th Century, when the little country surrounded on all sides by great powers, having achieved its independence and equality voluntarily withdrew itself from the quarrels of Europe. The principle of "perpetual neutrality" was guaranteed by the great powers at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. A severe test of this neutrality occurred at the outbreak of the World War. It is sufficient to state that in four days in August, 1914, the Swiss had mobilised a modern army of three hundred thousand men to

defend their borders and to keep inviolable the principle of neutrality. The Swiss principle was respected by the warring powers throughout the great conflict. And thus the theory that the Swiss Army was created not to engage in war but to keep war out of Switzerland was successfully applied. No Swiss citizen for more than a century has had to die on the field of battle in the defence of his country.

The neutrality of Switzerland and her central situation, which has been often referred to as the "Roof of Europe," has resulted in the establishment within her borders of the headquarters of several official and semi-official international organisations of great importance.

The Red Cross, whose flag is the duplicate of the Swiss national flag with the colours reversed, a red cross on a white field, was established at Geneva in 1864. In recognition of the peculiar position of Switzerland in the family of nations, President Woodrow Wilson in 1919 suggested that the seat of the League of Nations should be established at Geneva. The idea was accepted and to-day the beautiful Swiss city is the Mecca for the representatives of the members of the League. In Switzerland also are the seats of the famous International Postal Union, the International Labour Office, the United Telegraph Administration the International Railway Administration, and the unions for the protection of trademarks and patents and of literary and artistic property.

One hundred and fifty-eight years ago this month patriots representing thirteen American colonies met in Philadelphia and there proclaimed, "That these United Colonies are and of Right out to be free and independent States." Six hundred and forty years ago this month the men of the three forest regions in what is now Switzerland came together to proclaim a Confederation for the promotion of mutual accord and in order the better to withstand the attacks of enemies from without. Out of these proclamations of the early patriots of Switzerland and of America, have developed two strong federal Republics whose citizens believe sincerely in the philosophy of "live and let live." The people of both nations earnestly desire to preserve their own political integrity and freedom of action and at the same time to live in peace and harmony with their neighbours. By example therefore these two Democratic Republics so ably represented here to-day by members of the Swiss Societies are capable of exerting a powerful influence upon world opinion in the formulation and maintenance of a practical and forward-looking world programme characterised by international good will and co-operation.

Never in the History of the world has such a programme been more sorely needed than to-day when nations large and small, are speaking to find a way out of economic chaos which has brought bankruptcy and unemployment to millions of worthy and patriotic citizens.

International co-operation comprises the promotion of international trade. The Roosevelt Administration believes that the restoration of international trade which has been seriously disrupted by a wave of economic nationalism would contribute largely to the solution of the ills which beset the world to-day. To this end President Roosevelt has been granted authority by the American Congress to negotiate trade agreements with other countries.

Let us hope that the nations of the world will approach this problem in the same spirit which inspired the early Swiss pioneers to sweep away the barriers to mutual accord and understanding.

Finis.