

Swiss Mercantile Society LTD

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SWISS NEUTRALITY. (TIMES 16.5.38).

The spontaneous desire of the Swiss people to recover their ancient neutrality has found a first expression in the request of the Swiss Federal Government, now granted by the Council of the League, to be absolved from participating in any action that may be taken by the League under Article 16, commonly called the "Sanctions" article.

Switzerland on her own application was formally absolved from taking part in military sanctions in 1920 on the ground that Swiss neutrality, the recognition of which dates from 1815, is not governed by particular circumstances, but is a permanent neutrality, lying at the very root of the existence of the Swiss Confederation as "the faithful guardian of the Alpine passes." But for the confirmation of this by the Allied and Associated Powers in Article 455 of the Treaty of Versailles, Switzerland might not have joined the League at all. Exemption was obtained on condition that Switzerland undertook to defend her territory in all circumstances and accepted the obligations of the Covenant in respect of economic and financial "sanctions." Defence may be capable of various interpretations. Switzerland is not a geographical unit, and Swiss independence continues to exist only because it is the will and determination of the Swiss people that it shall do so. The obligations in respect of economic "sanctions" were accepted unwillingly and have never been popular.

"SANCTIONS" DANGER.

The sudden annexation of Austria struck the Swiss people with dismay at the bare thought of what might confront their own land, and added one more argument against the existing relations between Switzerland and the League. Switzerland had originally reckoned that economic and financial "sanctions" would come almost automatically into operation and would be universal, and that there would be no change in her position as a neutral. Abyssinia, which brought her near to a dangerous collision with Italy, showed that this was not so. It is becoming increasingly difficult to separate economic from military "sanctions;" on the outbreak of war the one would almost automatically involve the other and the consequences are likely to be the same.

In Switzerland the belief is firmly held that the *Anschluss* represents only the beginning of a course of action in Central Europe in the process of what Dr. Goebbels called "the decisive moment that may never recur." As part of the undertaking of 1920 Switzerland modernized her army and her defensive system at great sacrifice on the part of her people. She now finds herself with three neighbours instead of four, only one of them being an adherent of the League. What was modernization yesterday is unpreparedness today. The determination to preserve Swiss independence appears stronger than ever; with it goes an equally strong determination to avoid anything that could afford the least excuse for foreign diplomatic interference or intervention.

DEFINING NEUTRALITY.

The question may easily arise what the defence of Swiss neutrality really implies. Does it mean the strict defence of the frontiers against all invasion — *i.e.*, the lines of the Rhine and the Jura and the mountain slopes of the Grisons and the Tessin? Or would it be consistent with the conception of neutrality to withdraw to a line of natural defences, leaving the lowlands undefended against the passage of a possible invader seeking an alternative route? The problem is now the more complicated in that ruthless war has gone into a third dimension.

The necessity for being prepared is unescapable. Recent questions on defence in the Swiss National Council afforded an insight into Swiss misgivings. They embraced the appointment of a Commander-in-Chief in time of war and an Inspector-General of the Forces in peace time; an Inspector of Military Training and the lengthening of the periods of service and subsequent training; the extension of the air arm and the motorizing of units. To these the debate added the problems of officers' training, the re-organization of military administration, and an increase in the professional staff for the training of recruits. The need for an ever-ready striking force, to be thrown in as a screen behind which mobilization would take place, has also begun to be considered.

These are technical military questions and fall within the province of military experts. The Swiss hope to solve them without departing from the Federal military basis of their system, by which the entire army remains a citizen force. It is in the details that the gaps are found, gaps due mainly to the rapidity of modern attack and movement. There will be no time for elections and improvements, no time for the units to march to the scene on foot, or so say the Swiss. The creation of a striking force may be a matter

of organizing the trained recruits still under arms at the time. But the cost of lengthening the recruit period of training to three months and the periods of subsequent training to 20 days (including the days of joining and dispersal) will add very appreciably to the military budget, already a serious burden to Switzerland's finances. The Minister responsible estimated that it would cost at least 200,000,000 Swiss francs to fit out the army with adequate motor transport of its own. Switzerland has greater powers of resistance than had Austria, but by the nature of her neutrality she is committed, to the strategic defensive.

Neutrality carries with it one vital obligation — that it must be 100 per cent. neutral. Whether this is possible under modern conditions has been doubted by high authorities. Perhaps only experience can show how far this is true; and the price of experience is such that any effort is worth while to avoid it.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

The Monthly Meeting was Held at Swiss House on Wednesday, May 11th. A large number of members was present and Mr. A. Steinmann, President of the Society, was in the Chair.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. M. Paschoud, a former President and Honorary Member of the Society, who was in London on business.

The Chairman mentioned that during his recent visit to Switzerland he had called at the Central Secretariat where he had discussed preliminary arrangements for the forthcoming Golden Jubilee Celebrations in October next, when a party would be coming from Switzerland.

Mr. M. Schneider, Hon. Secretary, was elected to represent the Society at the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Swiss Young Men's Christian Association.

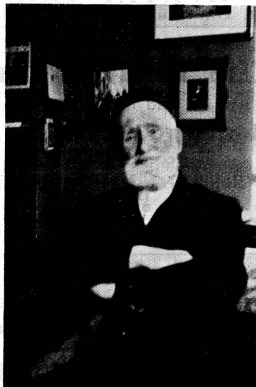
Miss H. Simmen, Matron of the Swiss House, was unanimously elected a Member of the Society and also a Member of the House Committee in place of Mrs. Lunghi, who recently resigned from that office. Miss Simmen will henceforth look after the welfare of the lady students at Swiss House.

The Chairman thereupon informed the Meeting that Mr. A. C. Stahelin, Honorary Member and former President of the Society, would represent the Society at the Delegates' Meeting of the S.K.V. at La Chaux-de-Fonds, on May 21st and 22nd. The Chairman expressed thanks to Mr. Stahelin for having accepted this mission, to which the Meeting responded with hearty acclamation. The Meeting asked Mr. Stahelin to convey to their colleagues in Switzerland the friendly greetings of the London Section and the best wishes to the S.K.V. for a very successful meeting.

Mr. W. Meier, Chairman of the Education Committee, reported on the activities of the College. He was able to record an unusually large influx of new students. About 90 students had commenced their studies at the beginning of May when the number of students on roll had reached 220, the largest for many years. He also announced that the College would pay one of the periodical visits to Fords Motor Works at Dagenham on Wednesday, May 18th. The College Football Team had played 17 matches during the past season of which six had been won. The Chairman expressed thanks to Mr. H. H. Baumann, Vice-Chairman of the Education Com-

(Continued Back Page.)

GEORGE FORRER †.



A descendant of a very old family, was born at Winterthur on 18th January 1844. After his apprenticeship and short stages in Lyons and in a spinning mill in Lombardy, he proceeded to England in 1868 and since that time this country has been his second fatherland. He was engaged in commercial pursuits in the City of London for forty-six years the greater part of which he spent with the private banking firm of Morris Prevost & Co. until their dissolution in 1914, when he retired from business. In those days one of the partners of the firm, Mr. Henri Vernet, was in charge of the Consulate General for Switzerland and the deceased acted as his deputy with the rank of Hon. Vice-Consul from 1876 to 1883.

From the beginning our friend took a lively interest in his countrymen and all their activities. For a while he was a member of the City Swiss Club, but he felt particularly attracted by the *Société de Secours Mutuels*, which he joined in 1877 and of which he was President for very many years.

Some time after its foundation in 1870 our compatriot joined the Committee of the Swiss Benevolent Society. For 33 years he served the cause of the poor as Hon. Treasurer with unflagging zeal, displaying the keenest interest in the work of the Society. In recognition of his distinguished, unselfish and conscientious service, he was, on relinquishing his functions in

1914, presented by his colleagues with an illuminated address and elected Hon. Vice-President.

He was a longstanding member of the *Nouvelle Société Helvétique* and his services to the Swiss Church in an unofficial capacity are perhaps also worthy of mention.

During the last period of his life the deceased was Doyen of the Swiss Colony. It was a proud moment for him, as such, to be invited to sign the congratulatory address presented to Their Majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth on their accession to the throne last year.

On May 11th he passed away peacefully in his 94th year; his loving and faithful life's companion having predeceased him in 1933. He leaves three sons to whom we extend our heartfelt sympathy.

At 1 o'clock on Monday, 16th May, a funeral service took place at the Swiss Church in Endell Street. The Rev. U. Emery officiated and the Rev. C. Th. Hahn played the organ. Mr. Charles de Jenner, Counsellor of Legation, addressed the congregation in the name of the Swiss Minister, as Mr. Paravicini was prevented from attending.

Those of us, who not only worked with him, but also had the privilege to know him in his private life, learnt more and more to appreciate the sterling qualities of Mr. Forrer. He was naturally of a cheerful disposition and if consulted in any difficulty, would always proffer sound advice. He had very decided opinions and in all he did he was most painstaking and neat. This showed itself also in his fine handwriting, which he preserved all through his life.

He did not often go to his friends' houses, as he preferred to receive them at his own home, where he would entertain us with most generous hospitality. He would then proudly show the latest treasure his sons had brought him from Java or the Far East. He had a remarkable memory and would recall the minutest details of events which happened years ago and he knew the life story of every one of his early Swiss contemporaries.

Our friend was and remained to the end a true Swiss who did not spare himself, where the weal of his compatriots was concerned. May he rest in peace and his example serve as an inspiration to us who remain.

T.R.

mittee, for his untiring efforts on behalf of the Football Team. Mr. Baumann had reported most of those matches in the College journal, the "S.M.S. STUDENT" and had acted as referee at many of the games. The Council at its last meeting had decided to share a football ground on alternate Saturdays with a Club in the London Business House League during next season which would afford the College team an opportunity of inviting the many English teams who had so far acted as hosts, to its own ground. Mr. Meier expressed the view that although the notable increase in the number of students could be ascribed in a large measure to the improved economic conditions in Switzerland, the many amenities offered by the College, not fostered elsewhere, also acted as a great attraction.

Mr. J. J. Boos, Chairman of the House Committee, informed the Meeting of the recent improvements at Swiss House. He particularly drew attention to the alterations effected at the Bar which had been a bone of contention for a long time, but which was now more suitable and serviceable for requirements.

Mr. Boos then offered the apologies of Mr. Pfandler, Manager of the Employment Department, who was prevented from being present. He read extracts from the report of the Employment Agencies abroad of the S.K.V. and gave relevant figures of offers and vacancies filled by the London office during the year. The Meeting also took cognizance of the appointment of Mr. W. Deutsch on the Advisory Board of the Employment Department which was heartily applauded.

Mr. W. Fuchs, Chairman of the Philatelic Section, reported on the activities of his group. This new venture has proved an unqualified success and Mr. Fuchs exhorted the members present to take full advantage of the facilities offered and to bring along their friends who are interested in stamps.

The Meeting was followed by a very interesting lecture on the "European Situation" by Dr. G. P. Gooch. The lecture room was filled to its utmost capacity and the audience followed the lecture with rapt attention. A number of questions were asked to which Dr. Gooch replied. A full report of this lecture will appear in the next issue of the "Swiss Observer."

WB.

SWISS SPORTS MEETING.

A meeting of the Swiss Sports Committee was held last week at "Swiss House," 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W., under the Presidency of Mr. R. de Cintra.

On opening the meeting M. de Cintra paid a tribute to the late Mr. Barbezat, who for many years took an active part in the Swiss Sports. The minutes were then read and the treasurer presented his accounts which show a deficit of £11.0.0.

Both minutes and accounts were accepted by the Meeting.

In view that for the last few years, the attendance at the Swiss Sports at Herne Hill, has gradually dwindled down, the committee unanimously decided, some twelve months ago, to dispense with holding a meeting in 1937, but in the meantime to study ways and means to again kindle the interest for a Meeting which at one time proved to be the most popular events in the Swiss Colony.

It was decided to make a change as regard to the ground where the Sports Meeting is to be held, and consequently the Duke of York's Headquarters at Chelsea was booked for Saturday, July 9th. The choice of this ground, seems to be a happy one, as in bad weather most of the events could be held inside the various Drill Halls.

The committee also agreed that this year the Sports Meeting should be linked up with a Garden Party and that a number of special attractions should be provided for young and old. This necessitated a reduction in the items which for many years figured on the Programme, the following events were cancelled:

440 yds. Flat Handicap (Staff of Subscribing firms); 100 yds. Flat Scratch (Ladies in Sports Costume); Throwing the Javelin, Relay Race (Boys); 220 yds. Flat Handicap, Throwing the Discus, Putting the Weight, Boys Obstacle Race, Blindfold Race.

The following events remain:— 100 yds. Flat Handicap (Boys) Heats; 100 yds. Flat Handicap (Men) Heats; 120 yds. Veteran's Handicap, Veteran's 220 Obstacle Race, Tug-o'-War, High Jump, 100 yds. Ladies' Handicap (Town Dress), Girls' 60 yds. Handicap, Pillow Fight, Boys' 80 yds. Handicap, Cigarette Race, Egg-and-Spoon Race, Long Jump, Three-legged Race, Relay Race.

The following attractions have been substituted:

Bottle fishing, Hoopla, Lucky Throw, Coin in the Bath, Dandy Show, Jar of Beans, Guessing the Weight, Staking the claim, etc., etc.

In addition arrangements for dancing will be made and during the afternoon a military band will play. The catering arrangements are in the hands of the authorities at the Duke of York's Headquarters.

The Committee of the Swiss Sports thus hope to have arranged an attractive programme and that the members of the Colony will again support their efforts by attending in large numbers. As in former years, very attractive prizes will be given.

Official Press Reporter.

PERSONAL.

We deeply regret to announce the death, through heart failure, of M. K. A. Nunnemacher, from Basle, a director of the Cosmos Freightways Agency Ltd., of 43/45, Great Tower Street, E.C.3, at the age of 35.

FOOTBALL.

The population of Zurich gave the English soccer team a hearty reception when they arrived in readiness for the International with Switzerland on Saturday, May 21st.

The Swiss team will line up as follows:

Huber, Grasshopper (goal); S. Minelli, captain, Grasshopper (right-back); Lehmann, Grasshopper (left-back); Rauch, Grasshopper (centre-half); Springer, Grasshopper (right-half); Loertscher, Servette, Amado, F.C. Lugano (outside-right); Walacek, Servette (inside-right); Bickel, Grasshopper (centre-forward); Trello Abegglen, Servette (inside-left) Aebi, Servette (outside-left).

Switzerland have played 163 international matches, of which they have won 42, lost 91 and drawn 30, having a goal average of 166 for and 413 against.

HELVETIA SOCIETY

1, GERRARD PLACE, LONDON, W.1.

Announce

The Annual Dinner

will be held in the Club-house on
Monday, 30th May 1938.

Reception 8.30 p.m.

DANCING & MANY ATTRACTIONS
until 2 a.m.

Presentation of Gold Medals and Diplomas.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Monday, May 30th, at 8.30 p.m. to 2 a.m. — The Helvetia Society — Annual Dinner and dance, at 1, Gerrard Place, W.1.

Wednesday, June 1st, at 7.30 p.m. — Société de Secours Mutuels — Monthly Meeting, at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

Tuesday, June 28th, at 7.30 p.m. — City Swiss Club — Dinner and Dance, at Brent Bridge Hotel, Hendon. (See advert.).

Thursday, June 16th — "Fête Suisse" at Westminster Hall, W.

Saturday, July 9th — Swiss Sports and Garden Party — Duke of York's Headquarters at Chelsea.

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Dante. Inferno. C. xxiii.

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Dimanche 22 mai 1938 :

11h. Culte : Mr. Exbrayat, cand. théol.

11h. — Ecole du Dimanche.

7h. — Culte : Mr. Exbrayat, cand. théol.

Service funèbre à l'Eglise suisse le 16 mai 1938 :
Georges Forrer de Winterthur, né le 18 janv.
1844, décédé le 11 mai 1938.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE (Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.
(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 22. Mai 1938.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst und Sonntagsschule.

7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst.

8 Uhr, Chorprobe.

Mittwoch, vor Himmelfahrt, den 25. Mai 1938.

6.30 abends, Gottesdienst und Feiern des Heiligen Abendmahls.

BESTATTUNG.

Am 18. Mai wurde feierbestattet : Marie Hausmann-Kunz von Vugelles-La Mothe (Vaud); geb. am 4.11.1895 — gest. am 12. Mai.

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