

Correspondence

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CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor,
THE SWISS OBSERVER.

1st December, 1944.

Dear Sir,—In the SWISS OBSERVER of November 24th, 1944, under the heading "News at Random" you state at the end of the second paragraph on page one:

"In the main his (Motta's) policy was based on ideological principles to which at that time every Swiss was prepared to subscribe".

This, surely, is doing the SWISS OBSERVER scant justice!

If you will read through the issues of the SWISS OBSERVER of that time you will find that "Kyburg" pointed out on various occasions that the attitude of the then Swiss Government towards Soviet Russia was not only illogical but also detrimental to the long-view interests of Switzerland. That "Kyburg", at that time, was allowed to express such views was due to the policy of the Editor of the SWISS OBSERVER to allow his collaborators the widest possible independence of thought and expression, a policy which, I am glad to notice, seems to be followed still in our sturdy SWISS OBSERVER of to-day.

"Kyburg's" expressed views may not have "cut much ice"; they at least give him the somewhat melancholy satisfaction that logical thinking and sticking to simple principles are bound to lead to the right conclusion in most cases, even if such conclusions are not very palatable or fashionable at the time. — Ever sincerely yours,

U. BRETSCHER.

[In the SWISS OBSERVER of January 23rd, 1926, p. 1226, "Kyburg" wrote:—

"I have never been able to understand the Swiss attitude towards Russia's recognition. It has always seemed to me, and still seems to me, that the very best thing which can happen to Russia is to let fresh air and light into Russia. As long as you cut them off, they must fester and rot, but as soon as fresh air and light is let in, the more noxious forms of their Government won't have an earthly chance to maintain themselves. It always has been and always will be so. And stubborn sulkiness has never won political battles yet, nor ever struck a blow for Liberalism and progress."

Again on February 6th, 1926, p. 1234, "Kyburg" wrote:—

"No, my dear friend, while thanking you sincerely for sending me the above interesting and blood-curdling articles, while admitting that Swiss opinion on the whole is unfriendly, and quite justifiably and justly unfriendly, against the present rulers of Russia, I still hold my own personal opinion, namely that the Conradi verdict was a miscarriage of justice and a ghastly political mistake, that the non-recognition of Russia is a piece of childish peevishness, a sort of attitude which prevents a man from admitting when he has been wrong and makes him take up an attitude of superior morality instead, and that, sooner or later, our Swiss Government will have to recognise the Soviets or whoever may be in power in Russia, and that, before such recognition is possible, it will cost us a good bit of money and loss of prestige. Wait and see!"

[Many thanks for the letter and the "bouquet" which is some consolation for the loss of an old collaborator gifted with clear-sighted anticipation. The above are extracts from two typical articles.—Ed. S.O.]

Weston-s-Mare,
28th November, 1944

To the Editor,
THE SWISS OBSERVER.

Dear Sir,—I think we can take it as proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that we would all like more contact with Switzerland, and more detailed

information regarding postal services, and especially changes therein.

I cannot conceive myself to be the only one occasionally writing to our Consul for up-to-date information — and although the Consul, as well as the Legation, have shown commendable patience in answering such requests — may I suggest that it would save a lot of their time — apart from being of great service to all your readers — if you allotted a space in your paper (or may I say "our paper"?) to such information as is available and applicable at the time of going to press?

The times and wavelengths of the shortwave transmissions from Switzerland have been changed several times and it has usually been by accident only that I hit upon the right spot.

Some of my letters have obviously never reached Switzerland because I wrongly assumed they would not have to pass German censorship any more. Local post office employees are pardonably ignorant on these subjects.

Current information on such matters could be given regularly in a condensed form and would, I feel sure, meet with great and general approval.

Regarding space: (1) Considering the vast amount of official "Literature" in *minute type* which most of us have to digest these days — a little more small type print in THE SWISS OBSERVER once a month could hardly be objected to. (2) Quite a lot of opening and closing remarks at the various meetings have been said and printed *ad nauseam*, so that the necessary space could easily be saved out of that alone without, I feel sure, offending even the perpetrators of these oratorical gymnastics. — Yours faithfully,

R. SCHMID.

[If you obtain reliable information from the Swiss Consul or the Legation as to the mysterious working of the postal service we cannot but compliment you; we do not enjoy that privilege. We think the latest developments make it superfluous to reprint all the titbits about the mail service abroad collected by the English dailies. So far as we have been able to check up an official statement made in Switzerland, a letter or parcel by ordinary mail from Paris to Berne requires about two days, and we like to believe that the Postmaster General will before long manage to get a letter from London to Paris in half that time. However, the war is still on. We have been shown a telegram last week that took two and a half weeks from Lausanne to reach the London recipient. The other contents of your letter will no doubt be read with interest and perhaps taken to heart by the leading lights in our Colony. —Ed. S.O.]

LETTER-BOX.

Frau R. B. — S.W. We very much doubt whether the replies to the live letter in the "D.M." are meant to release encyclopedic knowledge, but in the case referred to the answer seems to be fairly correct. We have no national language unless Romansch may claim this distinction, as it is not spoken in any other country. The three other idioms we share with our neighbours. Some linguistic scholars have paid us the compliment that in or near Neuchâtel the purest French is current, but we can hardly requisition this language as our original property. Strictly speaking there is no generally recognised Schwyzerdütsch as each canton or locality is tacked to its own variation.—Ed. S.O.