

Home affairs

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HOME AFFAIRS.

by MAX NEF.

(Issue of New Regulations for the Swiss Army.)

The Federal Council has just approved a new Service Regulation for the Swiss Army. The Orders which have been in force up to the present, date back to 1933. It was necessary to take into consideration the experience gained from Active Military Service during the Second World War. Moreover, new ideas and new requirements had to be taken into account. Work has been going on for eight years now, on the revision of the Service Regulation. In so far as was possible the wishes expressed by the Servicemen, the Instruction Officers, the Service Sections of the Military Department, as well as those of members of Parliament, were recorded one after the other and incorporated in the new Orders. This alone explains why the preparatory work took such a long time.

The Swiss Service Regulation is in no way a collection of military orders, of a technical or tactical nature. It constitutes far more a foundation for all other Army Regulations, in that it is intended to create a uniform idea of the Service and to provide the guiding lines for the action to be taken in respect of all military affairs. The Service Regulation specifies the duties and the rights, the competencies and the responsibilities of every man in the Service, whether he be an ordinary soldier or the Commander-in-Chief.

In a Militia Army, which is built up out of the obligation of every citizen, capable of bearing arms, to serve in the Army, there arise a number of problems which are not to be met with in standing or regular Armies. Thus, the Service Regulation for the Swiss Army is a fundamental Law, which bears a stamp of its own. Even in peace time, every Swiss bears his share in the responsibility for the security of the country, according to one of the first stipulations of the Regulation, which demands from the serviceman a conscientious carrying out of all those military duties which are incumbent upon him, both when on service and in his civilian life. For, the assessment of our capacity for resistance on the part of foreign countries, and the confidence placed in the Army by our own people depend on the seriousness and the conscientiousness with which the serviceman carries out his duties. This is something which he must always keep in his mind's eye.

Military efficiency is stated to be the aim of military training. It is founded partly on discipline and partly on military skill. Discipline is defined as being a soldier's complete spiritual and physical devotion to his duty. The sense of duty must go together with a strong will, which makes the endurance of

privations possible. Lasting discipline can only be maintained, however, where there exists confidence between officers and men, and between brother officers and fellow soldiers. Confidence is instilled, above all, through the personality of the Commanding Officer. He, on the other hand, must pay attention to the personality of his subordinates, and must strive to awaken and to promote their sense of honour. In Orders of this kind one perceives the position of the soldier, who is, at the same time, both a freer and a more responsible citizen of the State.

The idea that a Militia Army is just a people in arms, is completely quashed, when one reads the statement, according to which the establishment and the maintenance of discipline would be facilitated, if there existed an understanding of military measures and requirements among the rank and file. For this reason the Commanding Officer has the duty of discussing questions of a general interest with his men, questions which do not relate to service matters. Furthermore, every subordinate has the right to speak freely on personal matters with his C.O., which may have nothing to do with service questions, and only belong to the general sphere of the Commanding Officer's prescribed duties in regard to the welfare of his unit. As was already the case up to the present, there exists in the Service Regulation, a complementary Order establishing a proper right for complaints, together with the exact rules of procedure.

Even though extremely progressive and understanding Orders have been issued in regard to the personal and human relations within the Army, nevertheless, the General Orders relating to military service, to the duties of the servicemen and to training, guarantee a strict execution of work and of the carrying out of duties, the ultimate object of which is the establishment and maintenance of the military effectiveness of the Army. There is no other country which manages with such relatively short period of military service, as does Switzerland. The peculiarities in the organisation of this military service as well as the inclusion of self-improving activities, engaged in outside the periods of military service, namely in regard to rifle shooting and physical training, but above all the century-old tradition of bearing arms makes it possible — and this is also the opinion of foreign experts in the matter — to achieve a compromise in this direction.

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HOME AFFAIRS.

by PIERRE BÉGUIN.

"A Perfect Wave of Various Claims"

(Again the question of rents, milk prices, etc.)

During these last few years, we have often had the occasion to stress, within the framework of our talks, how very calm are our internal politics and how assured our social peace. We only made one reservation: should the post-war prosperity decline and should a certain amount of unemployment replace the full employment which we are now enjoying, then there might arise disputes of a certain gravity.

It must be confessed, however, that we have proved to be poor prophets, in this respect. Switzerland's prosperity continues to be the same; it is comparable, from all points of view, to that of the last few years. Full employment is still assured and we still require — and this urgently — man-power from abroad. No wave of unemployment is to be discerned on the horizon. Indeed, there has been no modification in the economic situation. And, yet, the political situation would appear to be taking on a slight tension.

We told you, quite recently, how the proposal to relax the control in regard to rents aroused protesta-

tions and how the mere perspective of an adjustment of rents for old apartments to the present situation, had caused an uneasiness in the broad masses of the population. Nor have feelings calmed down yet, in this respect. And, before this problem has been settled, another difficulty has now arisen, in quite another domain, a difficulty which might very well lead to a still greater "malaise".

At the moment, it is even an under-statement to speak of a "malaise" or uneasiness. The situation is more serious. The Swiss farmers, annoyed by the measures recently taken by the Federal Authorities for the purpose of bringing an equilibrium to the milk market, are not satisfied with publishing energetic resolutions, but are organising a vast "march on Berne", which will assemble an enormous crowd in front of the Federal Palace, the seat of the Government. Of course, one must not exaggerate things, and no disorders are anticipated. But, these manifestations of dissatisfaction are taking on such dimensions, that they must be taken very seriously.

The milk problem is extremely complicated. Let us say, simply, that milk production has increased during the last two years to a very considerable extent. The domestic market is no longer capable of absorbing it. Furthermore, export possibilities are growing steadily smaller. In consequence, we find ourselves, at the present moment, in the possession of very important stocks of butter and cheese. In order to solve this difficulty, the Federal Council has not been able to find any other solution except to lower the price of milk, as paid to the producer, without bringing any change to bear on the price paid for milk by the consumer. In this way the Federal Council hopes to discourage a too great production and turn the minds of the farmers towards other activities.

From the arithmetical standpoint, the calculation is quite right. But from the political standpoint it has revealed itself as being difficult to justify. The farmer cannot understand why a sacrifice is being demanded from him, whilst the urban consumer, who lives on industry, should benefit from such great prosperity. He considers that there is no reason for him to make this sacrifice, or, at the very least, that the consumer should also have to "do his bit" in this affair. His feeling of bitterness has no other cause. But, it is more serious than our authorities had evidently expected.

At the bottom, the whole problem is that of Swiss agriculture in general. It cannot live without protection, aid and support. Swiss agriculture prices, which are artificial to a large extent, would give way, without this protection, before foreign competition. As soon as they are measured out somewhat generously, there is an increase in production and one does not know what to do with the surplus. But, it suffices for these prices to be fixed at a too modest figure, for the farmer's income to be compromised in an unequitable manner.

Here, as elsewhere, but even more than elsewhere, everything is a question of measure. If one loses one's sense of measure, then an important class of the population is liable to lose confidence and to rebel. The recent decision of the Federal Council whilst reasonable from the standpoint of logic has proved inopportune, from that of psychology.

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