

Swiss foreign policy

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SWISS FOREIGN POLICY

A few weeks ago the Federal Council issued its 67th report on economic measures with regard to other countries. In it the Council referred to economic co-operation in Europe and remarked that, as a result of the breakdown in negotiations between the Common Market and Great Britain, application made by other EFTA countries had been shelved, as the European Economic Community was at the moment stocktaking and considering questions of principles regarding their relationship with other countries. The Council stated that there was no reason to activate the measures so far taken by the Swiss towards Common Market membership as no clarification of the European integration problem was to be expected in the near future.

The customs measures taken by the E.E.C. as from 1st July brought new difficulties for Swiss exporters, though Swiss exports to Common Market countries had considerably expanded since 1959. In any case the danger of discrimination would affect Swiss exports and it was therefore of the greatest importance that the Swiss prices and cost index should suffer no increase.

In order to strengthen the efforts of the EFTA countries to prevent an economic split of Europe in the meantime, Switzerland was supporting a long-term programme of the Free Trade Association which aimed at exploring methodically the possibilities of development within EFTA.

The Federal Council recalled that the EFTA member states had discussed at ministerial level the position after the collapse of negotiations by Great Britain (Geneva, February 1963) and they had agreed that, as the most important aim was still to create a comprehensive integrated market in Europe, the need was to strengthen EFTA in the meantime. In Lisbon, in May, the Free Trade Nations had set up a programme and decided to form a Council for economic development on which each member state would be represented.

The Federal Council's report next dealt with OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), which was mainly concerned with exchange of information, studies of all kinds and co-ordinating action. The member states had continued to discuss their respective trade relations with developing countries. Amongst other items on which views were exchanged were the position created by the American "Trade Expansion Act" and measures for inter-governmental co-operation in the field of export risk guarantees.

Next, the Federal Council reported on the further economic measures Switzerland had taken *vis-à-vis* other countries.

The already liberal exchange of agricultural products with the Federal German Republic had been improved to a greater extent and further steps were being negotiated.

Under the multilateral arrangement with Finland Swiss exports to that country had increased further. On the other hand it had not yet been possible to enable imports of first-class Swiss apples and pears into France under the bilateral contingent.

Agreement had been foreseen between Greece and Switzerland to free payment restrictions. But as Greek exchange regulations continued to exist, the *status quo* would be maintained. It had been ascertained that payments to Switzerland would not be treated less favourably than when the agreement had first come into force.

For reasons of solidarity Switzerland had several times during the past years co-operated in aid schemes to Turkey in order to help her solve her economic and financial difficulties.

Finally, in the chapter of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) the Federal Council recalled that Switzerland had declared her readiness to participate in a general reduction of customs duties on a linear basis and also to co-operate in schemes aiming at reducing export difficulties of developing countries. Switzerland would also play an active part in the "Committee for Trade Negotiations" which had to prepare the 1964 conference. Federal Councillor Schaffner, incidentally, was Chairman of the GATT Conference in Geneva in May and his task was not an easy one in face of the seemingly insurmountable difficulties between U.S.A. and the European Economic Community.

Switzerland's relation with the Common Market had already been described as the most important problem of her foreign policy in the annual report of the Federal Political Department, the Swiss Foreign Office.

The efforts to strengthen Swiss bonds with other countries were demonstrated in many fields. There was Switzerland's entry into the Council of Europe, Switzerland's participation in the loan to the United Nations, though with the proviso that her contribution should be used for peaceful purposes only. There were increases in money and personnel for Technical Assistance, and a number of new agreements had been made with developing countries. Switzerland also took part in the international agreement on raw materials and in world-wide efforts to stabilise currencies.

Traditionally, Switzerland continued to offer her services as mediator to the community of nations; in 1962 this had been the case in the negotiations between France and Algeria. The Swiss participation in the Neutral Commission in Korea had also continued.

The report also gave details of the recognition of new states. Within three years twenty-eight newly independent

countries had been acknowledged. To several independence celebrations Switzerland had sent official representatives.

The Political Department had received more than 200 invitations to international events. Two international congresses held in Switzerland during 1962 had received some financial support from the Confederation — one the conference on "Allergy" in Basle, and the other that on agricultural work at Seelisberg.

Many were the visitors the Federal Council had to receive in 1962, amongst them the Secretary-General of United Nations, U Thant, Italy's President Giovanni Gronchi, Austria's Federal Chancellor Gorbach, Israel's Foreign Minister Mrs. Golda Meir, and His Majesty King Mwambutsa IV of Burundi.

Apart from Switzerland's active participation in Technical Assistance there were international aid schemes for which the Confederation had granted 4.4 million francs in 1962. These grants had gone to a large part to "Schweizer Auslandhilfe", the Swiss Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross, to UNICEF, to the High Commissioner for Refugees, and to the Inter-State Committee for European Emigration. In addition, 800 metric tons of milk products to the value of a further four million francs had been distributed to these organisations. This did not include the considerable sums collected by the Swiss people direct.

(Based on news received by courtesy of Agence Télégraphique Suisse and "Basler Nachrichten".)

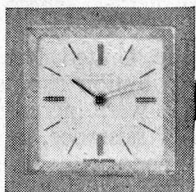
IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE EMBASSY

The Swiss Embassy have asked us to publish the following Communiqué.

Swiss nationals who owned immovable property in Hungary which was nationalized or compulsorily sold in February 1952 should report their claims for compensation to the Federal Political Department in Berne not later than 20th September 1963. Those who have already done so are asked to confirm their claims.

Negotiations between the Swiss and Hungarian authorities on the subject of possible compensation will probably take place at the end of this year.

Further details can be obtained from the Swiss Embassy in London.



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OUTINGS FROM THE CAPITAL

It is a tradition that once a year the Parliamentary Parties go on their summer outings. This year the Radical-Democrats travelled by coach to Grindelwald and then proceeded to Grindelwald-First. Later they visited Spiez. Federal Councillors Schaffner and Chaudet were amongst the guests.

The Socialists travelled by "Red Arrow" train to Schaffhausen, where an official luncheon took place. In the afternoon the members went to Stein am Rhein. Federal Councillor Tschudi was present, but the President of the Confederation, Federal Councillor Spuehler, was prevented through illness from attending.

The Liberals went to Fontainemelon in the Val de Ruz under the guidance of the President of the Council of States, Councillor Frédéric Fauquex. They ended their outing with a visit to the local watch factory.

The Conservative-Christian-Social Party chose Brig for their outing, and the "Blue Arrow" train took them through the Loetschberg. They visited the Stockalper Palace, one of the sights of the Valais. Federal Councillors von Moos and Bonvin were in the party.

The Farmer and Trade Parliamentarians visited Ins, Neuenstadt and Taeuffelen in the Lake District, whilst Spiez and Interlaken were chosen by the Democrats.

The National Councillors of the "Landesring der Unabhängigen" went on a "Fahrt ins Blaue" without a special programme.

A week later the Federal Council invited the foreign diplomats on the traditional biennial excursion. A special train of twelve carriages left the Capital for Lucerne. The two boats, "Stadt Luzern" and "Schiller", both gaily beflagged, took the party to the Ruetli. In the evening there was a reception in Lucerne in honour of the foreign diplomats.

Early in July the Federal Council went on an outing with the purpose of visiting various establishments. The Councillors, together with Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, visited the factories and laboratories of Brown Boveri & Cie at Birrfeld and Baden on the first day. In the afternoon the Councillors went to the Federal research establishment for horticulture at Waedenswil.

The next day they left Berne in four military aeroplanes for Locarno. By car they went to the military station of the grenadiers at Losone. Various high officers were present, and the guests watched some special battle training.

The Council then drove to the highest Ticino village, Bosco-Gurin, a German-speaking Commune, where they visited some of the typical houses and the Walser Museum.

In the afternoon the Councillors returned to Berne via Domodossola.

Now the Federal Councillors have started their staggered holidays, for each of them a well-deserved rest from arduous duties. [A.T.S.]

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