

Separatists hit plans for "Vigilantes"

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FOES OF "OVER-FOREIGNIZATION" INITIATIVE READY FOR ACTION

A number of prominent Swiss have formed an organization to fight the "over-foreignization" initiative launched by a committee headed by Member of Parliament James Schwarzenbach of Zurich.

Mr. Schwarzenbach's committee wants a big compulsory cut in the number of foreigners living in Switzerland so that, with some exceptions, their numbers never exceed 10% of the Swiss population in any single canton.

The initiative gained enough signatures to force a national referendum. But it has been condemned by Government spokesmen, leaders of industry and trade unions.

The new organization, known as "Committee Swiss 80" has been set up by Dr. Anton Schrafl and Dr. Dieter von Schulthess, both of Zurich, Professor Alfred Bürgin of Basel and Professor Pierre Goetschin of Lausanne.

While not denying that there is a real problem, they condemn the Schwarzenbach initiative as "extremely dangerous because it plays with emotions, creates tensions between Swiss and foreigners, and allows no objective solution to the present demographic and economic over-foreignization problems".

"Committee Switzerland 80" says a clear and definite counter-conception is needed. They will draw this up on the basis of 5,000 questionnaires already sent out to political, economic and university personalities and organizations.

The 12-page document seeks views on over-foreignization dangers, immigration policies, distribution of foreigners inside Switzerland, and assimilation and naturalization practices.

They hope to analyze the answers in time to provide "objective arguments" by the time the Government issues its message to Parliament about the initiative. This is expected in the autumn and is sure to urge the two Chambers and the electorate to vote against these proposals of the Schwarzenbach Committee.

Weekly Tribune, Geneva.

SWISS FRANC "UNAFFECTED" BY FRENCH DEVALUATION — BIERI

Along with everyone else in the world, the Swiss government and Swiss banking circles were taken completely by surprise when France announced devaluation last Friday.

A government spokesman in Bern said this was because of the complete absence of signs of, or pressures for, a devaluation at this time, compared to the events which preceded the downward revaluation of sterling two years ago.

Dr. Rudolf Bieri, Director of the Federal Finance Administration said that the Swiss government would not be taking any steps to safeguard the Swiss franc which would be unaffected by the French devaluation.

He added, however, that time would be needed to gauge the effects which it would have on Swiss trade with France.

In a first comment on the devaluation news, Swiss National Bank Director General, Dr. Edwin Stopper, said it was "a move in the right direction."

Stronger support for the move came, however, from another National Bank Director, Mr. Alexandre Hay, who said he thought the action would make any general realignment of international monetary exchange rates unnecessary.

He said that the French had devalued by "just the right amount" and he did not think that the Belgian franc and the pound sterling (the two weakest European currencies at the moment), would be affected.

Director Hay did not, however, rule out the possibility that there would be renewed speculation on an upward revaluation of the mark which might in turn pull the pound down.

Generally, the smooth and quiet handling of the French devaluation brought expressions of admiration from Swiss banking and financial circles.

The only people in difficulty were tourists stranded in Switzerland at the weekend with French francs. Exchanges were unwilling to take large amounts and an absolute ceiling of 1,000 French francs was imposed by the Kloten money exchange.

Rates being offered were 650 Swiss francs for 1,000 French though this later went up to about 700. Previously the rate had been 795 Swiss francs per thousand French.

Weekly Tribune, Geneva.

SEPARATISTS HIT PLANS FOR "VIGILANTES"

A separatist leader has branded suggestions that vigilante groups be set up in the Jura region of Canton Bern to guard private property as yet another attempt to blacken the name of organizations striving for autonomy for the area.

Bernard Terrier, President of the Ajoie section of the *Rassemblement Jurassien* was commenting on a weekend statement by the "Inter-Party Group for Cantonal Unity" in which an offer was made to help set up arms units to protect lives and property in the Jura against what was called "separatist fanaticism".

Mr. Terrier said that his organization had campaigned "eagerly" for more than 20 years to lift the Bernese yoke from the French-speaking Catholic Jura region.

He said that the *Rassemblement* would be meeting soon to discuss the situation created by the call for vigilantes.

In its weekend statement, the Inter-Party Group said that armed units should be set up where the police are unable to keep law and order which would go into action to prevent arson and attempts to blow up property.

Vigilante groups are not an unknown phenomenon in the Jura.

In the mid-1960s, several bomb attacks were made on railway lines federal property and houses belonging to anti-separatists in the area.

In 1967, vigilante groups were set up after anti-separatist newspapers and individuals received threatening letters signed by Marcel Boillet, a member of the Front for the Liberation of the Jura.

The Bernese Government said at that time that it had no power to disband vigilante groups. After Boillet fled to exile in Spain in June 1967, the vigilante groups were dissolved.

At the end of July last year, because of an alleged threat of terrorist activity the Federal Government put troops in the area on a state of alert.

This was called off in October after consultation with the Bern authorities.

Weekly Tribune, Geneva.

YOUR NEXT "SWISS OBSERVER" will be published on . . .

Friday, 12th September. We shall be glad to receive all articles and reports by Monday, 1st September. Short news items only can be accepted later.

The "Swiss Observer" is published every second and fourth Friday of the month, and consequently, your next copy but one will be out on 26th September. Contributions for that issue should be to hand by Monday, 15th September.
