

Neutrality: A necessary aid in building up the Swiss nation

POLITICAL neutrality has long been a tradition in Switzerland. After a disastrous defeat in a battle at Marignano (near Milan, Italy) in 1515, the Swiss cantons slowly grew aware of the advantages of neutrality, which turned out to be the only way to maintain the integrity and independence of a confederation consisting of small cantons surrounded by larger and belligerent powers. Subsequently the Swiss avoided becoming involved in conflicts between surrounding states, especially during the 30 years of religious war in Europe which ended in 1648. It took a long time, however, for the unilateral declaration of neutrality to be recognised by neighbours. It therefore did not prevent the Swiss cantons from being occupied by the French during the years 1798-1802. Things changed after the Vienna Congress of 1815, when the European powers at last recognised the neutrality of the confederation, realising that it was in their interest to use it to preserve the political equilibrium

sought by them. After the creation of the federation Switzerland became able to defend efficiently its neutrality with the help of its armed forces. This was particularly important in the twentieth century, when Switzerland was one of the very few European nations not to be involved in the First and Second World Wars.

Neutrality, historically, has had two main functions: internal integration and external independence: integration through neutrality prevented the cantons

of the old confederation from becoming divided by the conflicts of their neighbours or from being broken up into antagonistic religious and cultural parts. Later, armed neutrality helped to preserve the independence of the Swiss federation.

Today the Swiss idea of neutrality is based on notions of the law of nations formulated in the 'Hague treaty on the rights and duties of neutral powers and persons' of 1907. 'Neutrality in the sense of the law of nations' means nothing more than the neutral nation's non-participation in a war involving other nations. In fulfilling this, first Swiss neutrality is permanent and defended by an army. Second, Switzerland pursues a policy of doing everything to ensure neutrality in a future war. But Switzerland's policy goes far beyond this. After the Second World War its extensive interpretation of 'neutrality' even meant non-participation in the European Community and the United Nations. The reason for this was given as the wish not to participate in economic sanctions or peace-enforcing measures, which were considered to present a threat to Switzerland's neutrality.

In recent years, following the end of the East-West conflict and the cold war, Switzerland's policy has changed: neutrality is no longer an obstacle to membership of the UN, nor for participation in economic sanctions or peace-keeping operations, decided by a universal organisation such as the UN.

The chemical and pharmaceuticals industry in Switzerland

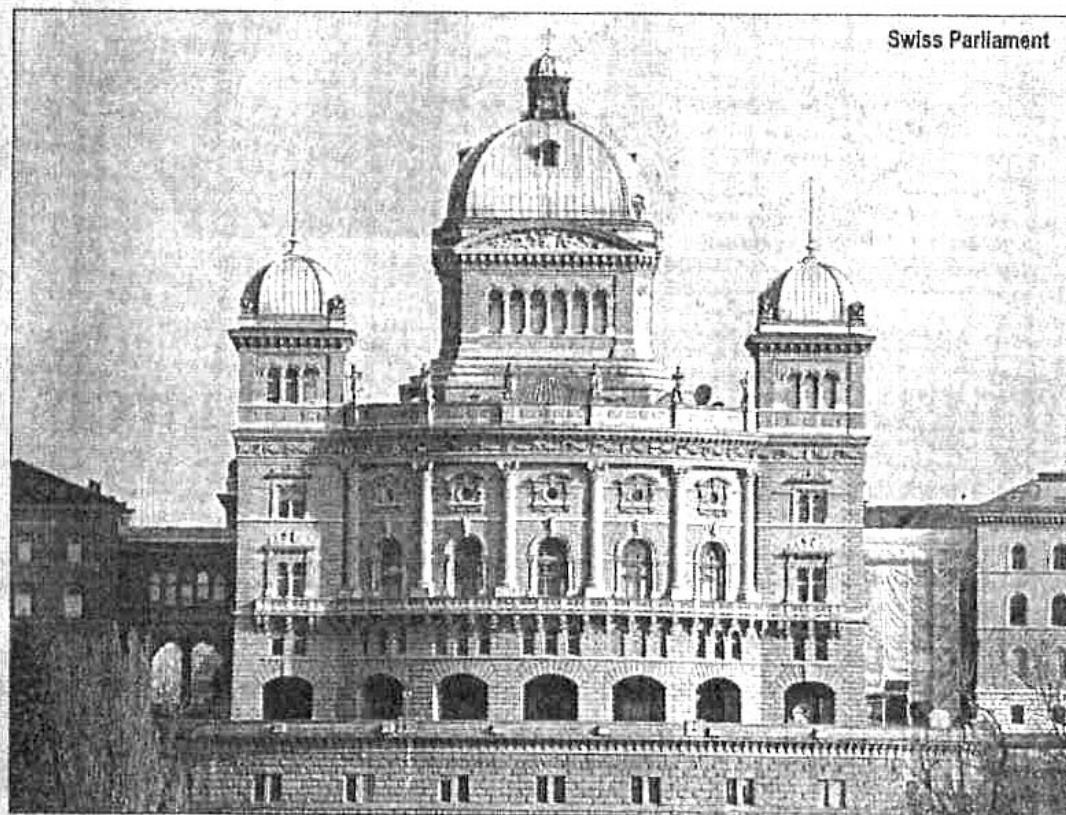
THE Swiss chemical and pharmaceutical industry has its roots in the silk and textile industry. What began with production of dyes is now a world-leading chemical industry, especially in pharmaceuticals. The industry is primarily based in the Basle area. Like all other branches, raw materials and basic products have to be imported. The chemical industry was the first Swiss branch to set up foreign subsidiaries and go into international production. In this way it was possible to avoid import restrictions in other countries. Other factors were also involved, such as the labour shortage in Switzerland and the increase in the exchange rate of the franc which increased the prices of exported products. Many countries demanded that companies not only produce, but also carry out research and development on their territory, for the benefit of the other sectors of their economy.

The trend towards decentralisation and globalisation was accompanied by a worldwide wave of mergers. A major surprise came in 1996 when Ciba-Geigy, which was already the product of the fusion of two Basle companies, merged with Sandoz to form Novartis, ensuring that one of the world's largest pharmaceuticals companies remained in Swiss hands.

The success of the Swiss chemical and pharmaceuticals industry, which generates almost all its turnover outside Switzerland, is based on the enormous sums invested in research into new substances and the development of new products. Almost 20,000 people are engaged in research and development throughout the world, swallowing more than 8 billion Franks, approximately 8% of turnover each year. By the time one new product reaches the market between 8,000 and 10,000 substances have been tested, which



can take anything from 10 to 12 years. The Swiss dye industry is also one of the largest in the world and supplies products for dying and printing textiles, for the leather and paper industry, lacquers and varnishes, ink for the printing industry and dyes for the construction sector. Geneva is a centre for the manufacture of perfumes and food flavourings. The Swiss agro-chemical industry has achieved a high position world-wide mainly thanks to its plant protection products.



Swiss Parliament

Continued Swiss development assistance to Bangladesh

SWISS Agency for Development & Cooperation (SDC) is a long-standing development partner of Bangladesh since independence, supporting in its economic development towards poverty reduction, employment creation and self-sufficiency. Over the last decades, SDC has supported development projects in various sectors of rural development of Bangladesh. The projects have been implemented in collaboration with a variety of partners, including Government of Bangladesh, national and local NGOs, civil society organizations, research institutions, private sector etc.

SDC has recently confirmed its

continued commitment for development assistance to Bangladesh for another 5 years (2008-2012). SDC's focus will be on 1) Employment & Income and 2) Local Governance.

In the area of Employment and Income, SDC aims at improving living conditions of the poor and poorest, in particular young people, by enhancing their potential, skills and capacities as well as their access to opportunities. The objectives are to increase employment and income, to make markets accessible and to improve local economic framework conditions favorable for the poor and poorest.

The second priority aims at contributing to effective and pro-

poor local governance. The objectives are to enable poor and poorest groups to negotiate their interests and take their responsibilities as citizens and access public services. SDC will contribute also to improve capacity of the local government to deliver services in a responsive and accountable manner and support policy reform in this area focused on pro-poor issues.

During the last 5 years (2003-2007), SDC's main areas of cooperation were non-formal education, sustainable use of natural resources, micro and small enterprise promotion and local governance. Within these thematic areas, SDC supported initiatives and organizations to reach the

socially and economically underprivileged people and communities to their self sufficiency and better livelihood. For instance, through such cooperation, SDC was able to provide basic education or skills training to several million children and adults and contribute to

enhance income of thousands of families in underserved regions of the country. At the national level, SDC contributed the policy dialogue on important issues such as non-formal education, integrating its learning and knowledge from the field experience.

How Swiss chocolate conquered the world

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Upon his return to Switzerland, he opened mechanised chocolate factory in 1819. Jacques Foulquier (1799-1865) began manually producing chocolate in Geneva in 1826. His son-in-law and successor, Jean-Samuel Favarger, gave the brand that is still famous today its name. Philippe Suchard (1797-1884) from Boudry in the canton of Neuchâtel opened a chocolate factory that became famous far beyond the country's borders. A look at the industry in 1883 shows that Suchard accounted for 50 percent of the chocolate produced in Switzerland. In 1831, Charles Amédée Kohler (1790-1874), a wholesale grocer who also sold cocoa, decided to open his own chocolate factory. His most important creation was nut chocolate. Daniel Peter (1836-1919), a son-in-law of F.-L. Cailler and a close friend of Henri Nestlé, founded the Peter-Cailler company in 1867. In 1875, he succeeded in mixing cocoa paste with condensed milk, thereby creating the world's first milk chocolate, which he dubbed "Gala Peter". The result was so successful that the entire industry switched to this production method from 1880 onwards. Daniel Peter therefore played a pivotal role in helping Swiss chocolate reach the supremacy it enjoys today.

Although chemist and pharmacist Henri Nestlé (1814-1890) did not produce chocolate himself, his company was responsible for the global marketing of Peter's milk chocolate from 1904. Rudolf Lindt (1855-1909) opened a chocolate factory in Berne in 1879. A born tinkerer, Lindt constantly improved his mixing and grating machines until he had developed a method for producing a soft melting chocolate, which he called "chocolat surfin". It was the first chocolate that melted in the mouth, and signalled the birth of modern chocolate. Also in Berne, Jean Tobler (1830-1905) ran a confectionery shop in which he sold his own specialities alongside chocolate made by producers like Lindt. In 1899, he founded the Tobler chocolate factory. We have his son Theodor to thank for inventing Toblerone, the most famous of all Swiss chocolates, in 1908.

The years 1890-1920 were the heyday of Switzerland's chocolate

industry, as it earned a reputation far beyond the country's borders. Tourism was booming, and members of the international high society, who spent their holidays in Switzerland, became the world's ambassadors for Swiss chocolate. Switzerland thus became something of a chocolate superpower, and by 1912 it had cornered 55 percent of the world's chocolate export market. International competition forced the Swiss chocolate industry to streamline its production while at the same time sticking to and further improving the tried and tested recipes on which Swiss chocolate had built its excellent reputation.

Our warmest felicitations to the government and the friendly people of Switzerland on the auspicious occasion of SWISS NATIONAL DAY

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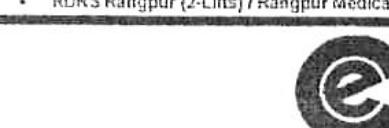
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