

Berne, March 7th, 1945.

My dear Mr President,

Your kind letter bears witness to the esteem and friendliness which the Greatest Democracy of the world feels towards Switzerland.

It is with satisfaction that the Federal Council has taken note of the recognition of our traditional neutrality and that it has realized the comprehension you show for our difficulties.

Switzerland never delivered the products of its industries with the intention of bringing a partial aid to one or the other of the belligerents. However, commercial exchange carried out within the limits of international law were necessary to cover vital needs whose satisfaction is a condition of our independence. Besides, preventive measures against unemployment are one of the best means of making our small nation able to resist anti-democratic influences. This aspect of the question is not negligible. It will have to be taken account of also in the future.

The Swiss citizen harbours innate feelings of consideration and sympathy for all those who are fighting for Law and Freedom. However, the immutable policy of neutrality followed by the Federal Council does not allow it to regulate its actions according to its feelings.

As long as the other States do not commit any infringement of the principles of international to its prejudice, Switzerland has the duty to observe a similar line of conduct towards each of them. It is only by its own strict observance of the rules of international law by honoring

His Excellency
Mr Franklin D. Roosevelt,
President of the United States of America,

Washington.



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its engagements that Switzerland can deserve and retain the general confidence without which it would not be able to accomplish its humanitarian mission.

But we shall never take any share in the protecting and keeping of illegally acquired property. Nor shall we tolerate that any action be prepared or committed on our territory with a view to reducing freedom to servitude. We are too much attached to Right and Independence to do otherwise.

We were glad to learn that Switzerland will also be called upon to collaborate in the building of a new world organization which will protect the freedom and ensure the prosperity of the peoples. I believe I am entitled to assume that this collaboration will be expected of us within the limits of our secular neutrality and with due respect to our national independence.

I am convinced that the Delegation you sent to Switzerland and its Head, Mr Laughlin Currie, whose visit has been a great honour and a real pleasure to us, will carry with them the impression that Switzerland is defending with constancy its liberty and neutrality, and I hope that the reports they will make will convey that impression to you.

The handing-over of your Inauguration medal is a courtesy which I appreciate very highly and for which I am particularly grateful to you. This medal will be kept in the Federal archives where any Swiss citizen who may so desire will be able to admire it.

On the reverse of the effigy of the Statesman in whom the people of the United States of North America have placed their trust for the watching over of their destinies during several terms of office, the medal shows a proud

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sail-ship surrounded by these words of a well-known American poet: "Thou Sail on O Ship of State Sail on O Union strong and great".

The United States of America, from which we have borrowed so many ideas and conceptions for our democratic institutions and for our own constitution, understands that the route of a small State's Ship must not be uncertain. Your letter bears witness thereto.

May I also, through the intermediary of Mr Laughlin Currie, offer you a medal as a modest token of my high esteem ? It is my own copy of the coin which was stamped for the Swiss people a few months ago in commemoration of the battle of Saint-Jacques-sur-la-Birse which was fought in the year 1444.

For every Swiss citizen this date means that the honour freedom and independence of his country are more important than life itself.

Believe me, my dear Mr President, with the assurances of my highest consideration,

Very sincerely yours,

(sig.) Ed. v. Steiger