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(Currie Mission)

for Mr Currie
(Currie File)

MEMORANDUM

February 9, 1945

Subject: Observations on coming economic negotiations.

In general discussion of the coming economic negotiations in the Swiss press, the tone of the comment in the conservative press has not been too favorable to the American delegation. There are, for example, occasional observations such as that by Aeschmann in the GAZETTE DE LAUSANNE of February 9, wherein the writer implies that the British have consistently followed a more lenient and understanding policy toward Switzerland than has the United States. In other instances the commentary has assumed almost a tone of defiance, depending, of course, on the individual point of view of the writer.

However, from the point of view of the Swiss themselves, I have an impression that their publicity has been overplayed. The excitement of the general public over the forthcoming visit of the American and British delegations is almost feverish. The anticipations of the public may have been too much aroused so that if they ultimately find that they do not benefit as a result of the negotiations, their disappointment may be in proportion. This would, of course, react unfavorably on our general relations for a time at least. Swiss officials who have participated in the earlier series of negotiations do not, however, share the general enthusiasm.

For the moment Minister Walter Stucki seems to have jumped on the conference horse and galloped away in all directions. It is suspected that the big play in the Swiss press of February 8 regarding the expected arrival of the foreign delegations and plans made for their reception was due to his initiative. It is also likely that the supplementary committee of experts under his presidency was named at his instance. In conversations with me he has remarked several times that as Chief of the Division of Foreign Affairs it would be necessary for him to interest himself in the negotiations and more or less generally supervise them. His reason was that they would have certain political aspects. In explaining these "political aspects", he referred to transport and transit problems.

It is well to keep in mind that Minister Stucki was once in the Federal Department of Public Economy and that,

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according to local reports, his headstrong disposition resulted in his ultimate removal. Ever since he assumed his position as Chief of the Division of Foreign Affairs, he has publicly indicated that he would interest himself greatly in economic matters, referring to his own qualifications and previous experience. Just how far his assistance (or interference?) will be tolerated by Professor Dr. Keller and his associates on the Swiss delegation remains to be seen. Whether M. Stucki will cooperate with the economic delegation in the same manner that M. Pilet-Golaz did also is to be demonstrated. In one development or another our delegations may well observe the situation watchfully.

J. Klahr Huddle,
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.