

Hornussen : an old sport of the Bernese peasants

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

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assign one million of the 35 millions voted by the people a month ago for the fight against unemployment in watchmaking centers. Another sum of 8 millions was to be used to provide work and for land improvement throughout the canton,

Damage caused by game in the Canton of Solothurn: Enormous masses of snow are covering parts of the Jura, making it almost impossible for the animals from the woods to find food. The rare case has even occurred that shy animals, like hare and deer, have ventured right up to the first houses of the villages to nibble on young trees and bushes. Considerable damage was done.

The International Bank of Reparations which has its headquarters in Basle has just issued its 13th annual report. This document points out that in carrying out its activity, the bank has respected the principle of strict neutrality as adopted in 1939. The report examines in a special chapter certain questions relative to the reconstruction of countries devastated by the war and to the development of export trade. The opinion is expressed in this report that it will be well to spread important public works very carefully over somewhat long periods and to hold in abeyance the less urgent projects for a time when after a vigorous resumption of economic activity there no doubt will follow a lull and perhaps a slack. Plans should be drawn up which can be adapted to circumstances.

HORNUSSEN - AN OLD SPORT OF THE BERNESE PEASANTS.

When the fields and Alpine pastures in Switzerland have been shorn of their last grass in early autumn the Hornussen or Hornet players, with wheelbarrow piled high with their paraphernalia, appear on the scene. The name of this pastime is derived from "hornet", the connection lying in the buzzing sound made by the wooden disc or puck as it comes flying through the air.

At one end of the pitch they erect a wooden or iron tee about a foot or eighteen inches high, with a guide rail gently sloping up to it from the ground behind. The field is now marked out - beginning a hundred yards from the tee. There are, of course, two teams, composed of men and youths of all ages, one side batting, the other fielding. The yuck, which is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and one inch thick, is stuck on to the tee with a little clay, and now the first batter takes his stance. He wields an ash-wood club, ten or twelve feet long and surprisingly flexible, and with this he "addresses" the puck in the manner of a golfer. Then, suddenly, he swings the club around his head in a complete circle, and crack! - the puck is gone. Immediately the fielders come into action. They stand in single file some distance apart near the other end of the field, each being supplied with a large, flat wooden "shovel". With this they try to "kill" the puck before it reaches the ground. Should one of them succeed, or should the puck leave the fairway three times in succession the respective batter is "out"; otherwise he scores a point for his side. When the batting side is all out, the score for the innings is totalled up and the fielding side goes in.

A good batter can send the "hornet" a distance of from two to three hundred yards, and as it generally rises from twenty to thirty feet from the ground, the fielders have to be on the alert if they want to "kill" it. A great deal of judgment and timing is necessary in this operation. Sometimes the fielders have to run forwards, sometimes sprint backwards; they throw their "shovels" into the air, and the sharp crack as shovel-blade meets hornet in midair is greeted by much applause.

The Emmenthal, in the Bernese district is the traditional home of this ancient Swiss game. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, it has slowly but surely become popular in other parts of Switzerland as well. There are several Hornet Clubs in Zurich, for instance, and in the Valaisan Löttschen Valley, the Prattigau and the Engadine it is played in various forms.