

# Correspondence

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selected because it is little affected by moisture: the holes were tamped with damp sand. All the 29 mines were exploded (by electricity) at the same moment. Though the tamping proved sufficiently strong to break up the mattresses of brush wood which had been placed on the river side of the dam, the Rhine level had sunk by 0.75 m. (2 ft. 6 in.) within the three days that elapsed between the laying of the mines and the explosion, and the rush of the water through the gaps created by the explosion was not so powerful as had been expected. But the Rhine will itself soon finish the work. A strong dam had been erected, because sudden thaws in the mountains and Rhine floods had always been feared.

How many of my readers remember the poem we had to learn in the long ago, and which dealt with the "Rheinüberschwemmung" which had the Diepoldsau district for a background?

#### Swiss-Indian.

*The Spectator* (May 19th):—The death of Colonel John Henry Rivett-Carnac at Vevey on Friday, May 11th, is a matter of especial regret to readers of the "Spectator," who will remember the many letters from him that we have published. In accordance with the family tradition of the Rivetts he spent most of his life in India, where he had a very distinguished career, in both civil and military capacities. In addition to his public life in the Indian Civil Service, he had many private hobbies of a more purely intellectual nature, in any of which he would have obtained eminence had it held his somewhat over-verse attention for longer than a few years at a time. One of the practical results of his interest in archaeology is the possession of several valuable coins by the British Museum, a gift from him. The latter part of his life, practically since his retirement, he spent in Switzerland, where he did valuable work during the War for British prisoners. His death has deprived us of one of those all too rare combinations of personal charm and practical ability.

#### The New Swiss Five-Franc Pieces.

*The Times* Trade and Engineering Supplement of May 19th publishes a number of pictures which appeared originally in the *Schweizer Illustrierte Zeitung*, Zofingen, showing various stages in the manufacture of these new five-franc pieces. They are being minted at Berne and are of the same quality as the old coins (900 fine, 25 grammes). Reaching Basle one morning, some weeks ago, I was given in exchange one of these new pieces, and, at first, would not take it, thinking it was one of the "Schaubuden-Medaillen" of the Basler Messe! It took me some time to grasp the fact that this ugly coin could be our new five-franc piece. Why we cannot have a better coin I do not know. The picture of Mother Helvetia was conventional, but at least not ugly. Then we had various beautiful heads on various medals issued at rifle festivals. Why not choose one from among those? I suppose some modern influence was at work and decreed that our taste wanted modernising. Perhaps, also, our authorities acted upon the old slogan, "*ars est celare artem*." If so, they have certainly succeeded amazingly well, because these new five-franc pieces assuredly do "hide their artistic merit." At the same time, any reader who, having read the above, is thoroughly disgusted with the look of these coins he has hoarded up and wants to get rid of them, please communicate with the Editor, who has instructions to forward all such incoming coins to "Kyburg" for disposal.

#### Electrical Developments in Switzerland.

*Electrician* (May 18th):—The Commercial Secretary to H.M. Legation at Berne, Mr. E. C. D. Rawlins, in his report on the economic and financial conditions in Switzerland, states that the electrification of the Federal railway system is proceeding in accordance with the programme established in 1918, which provides for the electrification of the whole system within a period of thirty years. During last year 357 km. of railways were electrified and in operation. The lines so operating are Iselle-Brigue (22 km.), Brigue-Sion (53 km.), Berne-Scherzlingen (34 km.), Chiasso-Lucerne (25 km.), Arth-Goldau-Zong (16 km.), and Immensee-Kothkreuz (7 km.), whilst electrification work is in hand on the following lines:—Lucerne-Zurich (55 km.), Lucerne-Basle (92 km.), and Sion-Lausanne (92 km.). It is anticipated that in the near future electrification work will also be undertaken in connection with the Zurich-Olten-Berne (130 km.), Thalwil-Richterswil (27 km.), Lausanne-Dailles-Vallorbe and Dailles-Yverdon lines. In 1924 approximately 536 km. of railway will be operated electrically, representing 20.9 per cent. of the total length of the Swiss Federal railway system (2,543 km.).

With regard to private railways, there have been no new extensions, with the exception of the Rhetian Railways (Canton Grisons), who have completed the electrification of their whole system by the opening of the electrically operated Reichenau-Disentis line (49 km.). The cost of the electrification of the 277 km. of line operated by this company is estimated at approximately 120 million francs.

Commenting on the Swiss electrical industry generally, Mr. Rawlins remarks that the most characteristic fact of the past year has been the decrease in the number of new orders. But for import restrictions over the German and Austrian frontiers, and the electrification of the railways, matters would have been worse. In the heavy electrical industry, the cost of labour is now about 100 per cent. above pre-war level. In the electro-technical industry 1922 was the worst year ever experienced, though matters have now improved somewhat owing to the fall in the price of raw materials and coal. Silk has risen in price, but rubber is now below pre-war level.

The general lack of confidence, the tendency of workmen to work less, and the unsound state of foreign exchange are undoubtedly the cause of the present crisis.

The total imports of electrical machinery during the first nine months of 1922 amounted to 349 tons (value 1,287,000 fr.) as against 418 tons (value 1,785,000 fr.) for the corresponding period of 1921. Exports were in 1922 3,575 tons (value 18,994,000 francs), and in 1921 5,359 tons (value 32,467,000 fr.). The chief buyers were France, Spain and the United Kingdom.

#### STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.		May 22	May 29
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	...	79.50%	78.00%
Swiss Confed. 9th Mob. Loan 5%	...	102.55%	101.25%
Federal Railways A-K 3½%	...	83.65%	81.45%
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921	...	104.50%	103.75%
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892	...	74.25%	73.00%
Zurich (Stadt) 4% 1909	...	99.00%	99.00%

  

SHARES.		Nom.	May 22	May 29
		Frs.	Frs.	Frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation	...	500	647	645
Crédit Suisse	...	500	680	675
Union de Banques Suisses	...	500	545	545
Fabrique Chimique et-dev. Sandoz	1000	3200	3075	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2117	2122	
C. F. Bally S.A.	1000	1045	1050	
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon	500	680	676	
Entreprises Sulzer	...	1000	690	675
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	...	500	350	348
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	176	183	
Choc. Suisses Peter-Cailler-Köhler	100	113	110	
Comp. de Nav'g'n sur le Lac Léman	500	495	490	

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43, Lothbury, E.C.2 & 11c, Regent St., S.W.1.

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#### CITY SWISS CLUB.

Le Comité porte à la connaissance des membres que la prochaine Assemblée aura lieu le MARDI 12 JUIN, à Kingston au Restaurant Nuthall. Cette Assemblée sera précédée d'un souper familial à 7 h. (sh. 6/6 par couvert) et suivie d'une danse, auxquels les dames sont cordialement invitées.

Pour faciliter les arrangements, le Comité recommande que les participants s'annoncent au plus tôt à M. Georges Dimier, 46, Cannon Street, E.C. 4. (Téléphone: Central 1321).

#### Ordre du Jour.

Procès-verbal. Admissions. Démonstrations. Divers.

Trains pour Kingston: de Waterloo, Perrons 1 à 6

Un char-à-banc partira à 6.15 h. précises de Mansion House Place, E.C. et quittera Kingston à 11 h. pour Trafalgar Square. (Prix du billet aller et retour: sh. 3s.)

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E. R. HARTMANN (Swiss).

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by his Correspondents

#### RE FRIDAY BANQUETS.

To the Editor of *The Swiss Observer*.

Sir,—Mr. Cusi seems to think there ought to be no Friday banquets, because some people object to eating meat on Friday. What about the vegetarians, who object to eating it at any time? According to Mr. Cusi, then, there ought not to be any banquets at all. If vegetarians go to banquets, they simply refuse the meat, but eat everything else. Catholics have a further advantage: they can eat fish, and at most banquets there is fish; furthermore, after the age of 60 they can eat fish and meat. Still better, they can have a dispensation, which is never refused, to eat meat on Fridays.

Yours faithfully, A. ALTHOUSE.

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