

# Notes and gleanings

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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The final figures of the Federal Budget for 1922 have now been published, and they register a deficit of 79.4 million francs, against an anticipated amount of 99.4 millions. Taking into account 34 million supplementary credits voted during the last year, 54 million seem to have been economised as compared with the amount originally estimated.

At the request of National Councillor Reinhard, the Federal Council has examined the question of keeping the children of unemployed immune from the consequences of possible under-nourishment. A consultation with the cantonal governments and the result of exhaustive enquiries have shown that, with the special assistance given by communes in necessitous cases, any further dispositions in this direction would not be justified.

In the elections for the Regierungsrat of the canton of Grisons, Dr. Walser (Liberal), Dr. Bezola (Liberal) and Dr. Willi (Conservative) obtained the requisite number of votes, the absolute majority being 8,000. Stadtrat Ottinger (Socialist) was at the bottom of the list with 1,600 votes.

For the 125 seats of the Basle Grosse Rat, the elections for which are fixed for April 23rd and 24th, no less than 566 candidates are proposed by eight political parties.

According to an official statement, the German deliveries of coal from the occupied districts have come up to the quantities contracted for.

Half a million francs have been allocated by the Federal Council for the purpose of assisting the emigration of agricultural workers into Canada; the scheme has been studied and prepared by the Association for Inland Colonisation in Zurich, which has also been responsible for placing a considerable number of Swiss farmers and farm hands in France. In order further to relieve unemployment, the possibility of a systematic emigration to North and South America is having the attention of our home authorities.

Owing to unfavourable atmospheric conditions during last summer, civic aviation in Switzerland records a considerable decrease in the number of passengers carried, i.e., 4,665 against 7,224 in 1921.

39,217 permits were issued to commercial travellers in Switzerland during 1922, of which 1,421 represented foreign firms.

Half a million francs has been spent by the Confederation during last year in order to assist necessitous Swiss abroad, Germany heading the list with 3,099 cases, and France being second with 1,438. In addition, collective assistance has been organised for compatriots residing in countries still suffering from the after-effects of the war, one such scheme benefitting at present about 12,000 Swiss living in Germany.

According to official figures, unemployment in Switzerland has, in a marked degree, decreased during the month of March.

After a concert, which the Gesangverein "Harmonie" from Zurich gave at the Vatican, the Pope received the president and conductor and subsequently conferred his benediction upon the members of the choir.

A large farmstead in Grellingen (Laufental), called the "Hollehof," was destroyed by fire on Sunday (March 25th); no human life was lost, but a considerable amount of live stock perished in the flames.

Considerable damage, estimated at Frs. 100,000, was done on Friday (April 6th) by a fire which broke out in a factory manufacturing wooden articles, situated at Wald (Appenzell) and belonging to Mr. Ernst Müller.

The Ticinese hunt clubs are protesting vigorously against a proposal—recommended by a com-

mission of the National Council—to prohibit hunting on Sundays all over Switzerland.

National Councillor Paul Mosimann from La Chaux-de-Fonds died at the Lindenhof clinic in Berne, at the age of 65. He took great interest in the municipal work of his native town, and, a watchmaker by trade, was at the time of his death president of the Chambre Suisse d'Horlogerie.

By the death of Lieut.-Colonel Aloys Huber, who died at Altdorf at the age of 70, Uri loses a well-known citizen, who occupied a large number of public offices.

Giovanni Dazzoni, a former National Councillor, died in Faido at the age of 72; he was the uncle of Federal Councillor Motta.

Victor Favrat, a well-known journalist and author of dialect compositions, died in Lausanne at the age of 63.

Dr. Albert Lüthi, teacher of French and German at the Sleaford (Lincs) Grammar School, has been appointed professor of languages at the Kantonschule in Schaffhausen.

## AUSLANDSCHWEIZERTAG AT THE BASLE FAIR.

More than twenty Swiss are travelling with our special Basle Fair party, and most of them will assist at the official functions of the Auslandschweizertag on Monday, April 16th. Our compatriots, residing in countries adjoining Switzerland, have long recognized the importance of this gathering for Swiss abroad, but the English Colony, on account of the distance, has up till now been poorly represented as far as numbers are concerned. One reason is, of course, that we have little cause to lodge complaints to remedy which our Federal authorities are in most cases powerless. The following London societies will be officially represented:

Swiss Mercantile Society,  
by its president, Mr. G. E. De Brunner;  
City Swiss Club,  
by Mr. P. F. Boehringer, a former president;  
Nouvelle Société Helvétique,  
by Mr. Th. Schaerer, a member of the council.  
and we hear that the Attaché Commercial of our Legation, M. Henri Martin, who has been unsparing in his efforts to arouse interest in the Basle Fair in this country, intends to make a flying visit to our proud city on the Rhine.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

### Franco-Swiss Free Zone Dispute.

I have met several compatriots who, in discussing the above, have had to admit that they really knew very little about the historical details and merits of the case, and I, therefore, give my readers the following from the *Manchester Guardian* (31st March):—

"We have been told this week of the 'painful surprise' with which Switzerland has received the French Note of March 21st on the subject of the free zones. A glance at the latest Swiss papers shows that the expression is not exaggerated. Is Switzerland a province of France? it is indignantly asked. Is the Federal Council to set at naught the plainly declared wishes of the Swiss people and to accept with humility the dictatorial demands of M. Poincaré? The question around which the dispute has arisen is historically interesting. When, at the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars, the Council of Vienna remade the map of Europe, it took note of the position of Geneva, which, lying sandwiched between the French frontier and the lake, would be deprived of the hinterland economically necessary to any great town, unless some special privilege of free access to the French border lands were secured to it. Partly as compensation for Switzerland's sufferings in the wars, a line was, therefore, traced round Geneva, embracing territories within the French political boundaries; this zone was declared free of all Customs duties, and became a source of great wealth to the Canton of Geneva. Forty-five years later France annexed Upper Savoy, previously part of the kingdom of Sardinia, as a reward for her services to Victor Emmanuel II. against Austria in the war of 1859. The inhabitants of Upper Savoy themselves voted for the union with France, but on the express condition that a second free zone should be created, to enjoy the same privileges as the first.

An arrangement to this effect lasted without any serious hitch up to 1919, when France took advantage of her prestige as a victor to insert in the Peace Treaty a statement that the agreements of 1815 and 1860 were obsolete, and that France and Switzerland should contract a new agreement respecting the zones. Two years' conversations ensued, and in 1921 France persuaded President Ador to sign a treaty, renouncing these economically valuable rights. The Swiss Parliament ratified the treaty by a small majority, and early in February last the French Parliament did the same, though the Savoyard deputies strongly protested. Application of the treaty being then



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imminent. Swiss public opinion was suddenly aroused, and Geneva demanded a referendum, which was held on February 20th and reversed the Swiss ratification by no less than 400,000 to 90,000 votes. This immense majority is doubtless attributable to Swiss indignation at the French Ruhr policy, which is hitting Switzerland very hard, and at the refusal of the Reparations Commission to recognise a recent German-Swiss Insurance Treaty. M. Poincaré, however, sent a peremptory Note, refusing to recognise the referendum decision on the grounds that, when the agreement was signed, the referendum had not been part of the Swiss Constitution. It is this Note which has caused such indignation. If each country maintains its present position obstinately, the result will presumably be tariff warfare. This, however, would be far more harmful to France than to Swiss trade, for Switzerland sells little to France, while importing large quantities of French goods. M. Poincaré may, therefore, find that he has overreached himself in speaking so dictatorially to a proud, if small, neighbour, even if it be found that Switzerland has technically put herself in a false position.

With regard to the concluding remark in the above article, there can, of course, be no question of "Switzerland being technically in a false position." Either Mr. Poincaré allows us to have a Constitution of our own, in which case the right of exercising the Referendum is obvious, or he does not, in which case he will have to put in 'sanctions' against the neighbour who does not fall in with his own brand of political thought. I am quite happy about it all, however, because if History teaches one thing it is that Right is Might, and not vice versa. The French nation, as distinct from the French Government, feels the same way and has proved it. To the French nation we must look in the end, not to their present Government, which succeeded in making Mr. Ador, who already once before (if I remember aright) preferred French political thinking to our robust and more simple-minded Swiss way of looking at things, agree to a convention which, as events proved, was against the wishes of our people.

### Swiss Immigrants to Canada.

According to the *Daily Telegraph* (March 6th) the first party of Swiss immigrants to Canada do not seem to have met with an enthusiastic welcome, the system of reception and distribution adopted by the Canadian immigration authorities having given cause for much dissatisfaction. Our compatriots—remember, they are farmers who wish to settle in Canada, where the need of more farmers is a crying one—were subjected to close examination, being compelled, among other things, to answer such questions as "whether they had ever taken part in pacific demonstrations—whether they had done military service during the war—whether they had ever been employed by a Pan-German Banking Institution," etc. I can't quite see the connecting link between farming and banking; at least, I think that German banks have evolved a system of helping farmers which was quite good and might be copied with marked success by other countries. I also know of at least one young Swiss, and a French Swiss at that, whose patriotic zeal I had occasion to admire quite recently and who, I am told, is employed in a banking institution which bears a world-renowned German name and yet is located within five miles of Charing Cross, London! Canadian authorities are evidently a bit young yet, and if they persist in their vexatious

attitude towards intending Swiss immigrants, the latter will easily find healthier lands and more tolerant and congenial people. It is understood that the Swiss Government is looking into the matter.

#### I Hope Not!

The Liverpool *Journal of Commerce* (April 4th) states that, according to its Brussels correspondent—  
"It is reported that the Swiss Government are considering a project for the purchase of a fleet of vessels ranging from 200 to 4,000 tons each. Under the scheme arrangements will be made to utilise the port of Marseilles for Mediterranean, traffic and Antwerp for North Sea and Atlantic traffic."

The Ruhr occupation—by the way, why do we all call it the Ruhr occupation, seeing that from Basle to the Dutch frontier the whole line is full of French soldiers and that many places outside the Ruhr have been occupied? A case of blindly repeating what the people who pull the strings want us to repeat, I suppose—the Ruhr occupation ought to have opened our eyes as to what will be the Swiss Government's worries and the consequential dangers to the Swiss nation, if in case of war between any of the larger Powers we should wish to continue our "Mercantile Marine." Are we going to protect our Mercantile Marine by Men-o-War? Or are we simply going to register the humiliations inflicted upon us by stronger Powers, as we are forced to do now? Are we going to war against those who would not take the slightest notice of our rights in case of war? I should have thought that our Government, if not private individuals, who, of course, may see a profitable business in the matter, would take a very firm attitude and have absolutely nothing to do with any such adventure, which we do not need and which, even if the need might be demonstrated, would inevitably increase our chances of international political friction to an incalculable degree. We are an inland country. We need no marine. Either there is peace, in which case we can always find carriers for our goods, or there is war, in which case a marine would be a tremendous liability and most certainly no help to our people. I am a passionate advocate of the League of Nations, but that does not make me blind to the fact that, for the moment, Treaties are simply *aide-memoires* and expressions of hopes that the arrangements which they cover may be carried through, until it suits one or the other of the contracting parties to denounce them.

#### Swiss Holiday Accidents.

The Times (4th April):—  
"On Saturday, while ski-ing down with two friends from the Damastock (11,920 feet), above the Furka Pass, a well-known Basle merchant and Alpinist, Mr. Kurt Straumann, fell in a crevasse on the Rhone Glacier. A man was lowered and found Mr. Straumann lying buried in the snow at a depth of 50 feet and unconscious. After two hours' work he was brought to the surface of the glacier, but all efforts to restore life were vain. With the help of a party of soldiers the body was brought down to the valley on Sunday. On the St. Gothard line, near Faido, yesterday, one of the engines of a special train exploded, killing the stoker and seriously injuring the driver, who, however, managed to stop the train just in time to avoid a catastrophe."

Yesterday, on the Lake of Zurich, a young man and woman were drowned through the capsizing of their boat.  
Those of us in London who, early in the war, were guarding the Gotthard Railway line from Rodi Fiesso down to Bellinzona, will know what a frightful disaster might have occurred if the brave driver, although grievously wounded, had not been able to bring that train to a standstill. I well remember the sensation I had when, for the first time, I stood on the railway bridge just above Biasca and a Gotthard Express came thundering over it. It was night, you could not see more than a couple of yards in front of you, the raging waters of the river underneath produced a noise which made hearing difficult—then, all of a sudden, the iron monster came tearing down upon us, the bridge swayed, we pressed back against the parapet as much as we could, then came an impression of blurred light rushing past us, a thunder which made us feel limp, a mighty gust of wind, and, a few moments afterwards, a mighty silence. I distinctly remember that it was difficult afterwards to hear the rush of the river. Such was the contrast. I thought of that night when I read of the accident at Lavorgo and felt thankful that that train was stopped in time.

#### Iodine and Goitre.

Strenuous efforts are being made to stamp out various forms of disease which are seriously affecting our people. One of our specialities in that line, a real "home product," is *goitre*. Everyone of us can probably think of at least a few people he knows or has known who have been afflicted with this unsightly and, as it happens, very insidious and dangerous complaint. The following may, therefore, be of interest to my readers, because to many of them it will be new, as it was to me. From the *Lancet* 31st March):—

"Since the war Switzerland has been attacking with good will the domestic problem of goitre. Its prevalence is obvious, even to the casual visitor, in almost all cantons, but especially in those of Aarau, Berne, Fribourg, and Valais. Arising early in life, the affection tends to be regarded lightly by the population, which does not feel its inconvenience as a rule until the later decades; but the turning-point in the campaign has been the very serious deterioration of national

physique in the offspring of goitrous persons, brought home by the act of mobilisation. Some 1900 Swiss recruits are discarded each year on account of lowly stature, due in large part to cretinoid change, and Prof. A. Oswald, of Zurich, has recently estimated at 50,000 the number of cretins recognisable at sight. Cretinoid idiots and deaf-mutes fill the asylums; 600 to 700 cretins are under institutional care in the canton of Berne alone, being 1 in 1,000 of the inhabitants. And, short of the need for segregation, there must be many degrees of thyroid insufficiency with more or less apathy and mental hebetude. Some there are who contend that it was this that kept Switzerland out of the war. The Swiss Commission on goitre, which sat last June, gave up its time largely to prophylaxis, and while some still maintained the infective origin of goitre and saw in the boiling of drinking water the means of prevention, Chatin's hypothesis, enunciated in 1850, held the field—that simple goitre is correlated with a low iodine content of drinking water."

Heretofore iodine has been given for goitre in doses vastly in excess of those required for prevention. The treatment, in fact, has itself been in danger. Hyperthyroidism is distinctly rare in Switzerland, but at least one-half of the cases of Graves's disease which do occur are attributed to excessive medical prescription of iodine. The amount of iodine required in the daily economy of the thyroid is, in fact, exceedingly small. Hunziker suggests that, whereas goitrous patients formerly received as much as 1 g. daily of potassium iodide for weeks, in point of fact a 10,000th part of this daily dose, or 0.1 mg., had an anti-goitrous action, and, used in this way, 1 g. of potassium iodide would last 10,000 days or 27 years, and 3g. suffice for a lifetime. In a patient, taking 5–6 drops daily of Coinde's tincture, free iodine can be demonstrated in the urine, and the same has been shown for children after using the well-known chocolate iodo-starin tablets. The quantity needed being so small and the time over which it should be taken so long, the natural course is to incorporate iodine in some common article of diet. Table salt is the obvious carrier. Its advantages as a medium lie in the facts that all civilised persons daily take a certain definite quantity of NaCl, varying from 5–20 g., that over-dosage is impossible, and that, while table salt is not dear, it possesses a certain market value and is therefore not likely to be wasted. Chlorided and iodides occur together in nature and agree well. After an intensive campaign of education by the Red Cross, the canton of Appenzell decided last February to introduce the general use of so-called Vollsatz, containing an addition of 0.25 t. 0.5 g. KI to every 100 kilos. With an average individual consumption of 10 g. a day, this gives a daily dose of 0.025 to 0.05 mg. KI. The cost of prophylaxis on this scale would not exceed 1 centime a year for each inhabitant, and the cost for the whole of Switzerland not more than 40,000 francs. Should this simple measure succeed, not only in hindering the development of goitre with its 2,000 palliative operations each year, but also the cretinoid degenerations of all kinds in the offspring, its value can hardly be exaggerated."

#### FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The Federal Treasury have now agreed with the Cartel of Swiss Banks, regarding the terms on which the new Federal Railways Loan is to be issued. The Federal Council have approved this arrangement, and the banks are to take over Frs. 100,000,000 firm and to have an option on a further Frs. 80,000,000. The interest is at the rate of 4% and the price of issue will be 94½%. The loan will be redeemable in 15 years.

The report of the Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Co. for the year 1922 shows a net profit of Frs. 3,100,938, as compared with the loss of Frs. 93,184,240 which had to be registered last year. The report outlines the retrenchments and readjustments which were effected in connection with the writing down of the ordinary capital from Frs. 160 million to Frs. 80 million. The profit now shown is not large, but the report indicates an assurance that on the revised footing on which the company now stands, the present year may well see a return to something like the normal level of profits and business.

The report points out that in general the policy pursued by the company during the year has been, as regards distribution, to bring the organisation into harmony with the actual volume of business by closing down agencies in markets where the business done was not paying its way, and by an overhaul of expenses; and as regards production, to cut down output so as to allow of the liquidation of excess stocks.

The development, as compared with the preceding year, is best illustrated by the following table:—

|                                | 1921<br>Fr. | 1922<br>Fr. |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Cr.                            |             |             |
| Balance of trading accounts    | 18,349,601  | 62,389,142  |
| Dividends on securities        | 1,847,583   | 2,643,142   |
| Net loss                       | 93,184,241  | —           |
|                                | 113,381,425 | 65,032,284  |
| Dr.                            |             |             |
| Selling expenses & advertising | 25,652,066  | 21,569,243  |
| Freight and charges            | 26,206,744  | 18,239,828  |
| General expenses               | 4,388,964   | 3,736,974   |
| Improvements                   | 171,190     | 208,916     |
| Depreciation                   | 1,323,174   | 248,929     |
| Direct losses                  | 1,102,633   | 2,431,714   |
| Interest                       | 23,651,860  | 15,493,741  |
| Differences on exchange        | 30,884,792  | —           |
| Net profit                     | —           | 3,100,938   |
|                                | 113,381,425 | 65,032,284  |

Sales show a decrease of about 20 per cent. on the figures of 1921, but they are still about 40 per cent. above the figures of the pre-war period in the principal markets. In England there was some decrease in consumption of condensed milk, attributed to the large quantities of competitors' milk from all parts of the world, while the serious un-

employment situation has also caused a great diminution in purchasing power among a class of consumer which is of great importance to the company.

The preference dividend on the 8 per cent. shares issued in London is again unpaid, and there are now two years of dividend in arrears. With the current year's preference dividend, the total amount required to be paid on these shares will be Frs. 10,800,000. The prospect is, therefore, not at all discouraging.

Another Swiss condensed milk concern to issue its report is the Berneralpen Milchgesellschaft in Stalden, which shows a net profit of Frs. 364,132, as compared with Frs. 311,156 last year. The dividend is to be 6%, as compared with 5% for the year 1921.

#### STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

| BONDS.                             |         | Apr. 3      | Apr. 10 |
|------------------------------------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Swiss Confederation 3% 1903        | ...     | 79.00%      | 80.05%  |
| Swiss Confed. 9th Mob. Loan 5%     | ...     | 102.90%     | 103.50% |
| Federal Railways A & K 3½%         | ...     | 84.65%      | 84.40%  |
| Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921        | ...     | 105.25%     | 105.35% |
| Canton Fribourg 3% 1892            | ...     | 75.50%      | 75.00%  |
| Zurich (Stadt) 4% 1909             | ...     | 100.50%     | 100.50% |
| SHARES.                            |         | Nom. Apr. 3 | Apr. 10 |
| Swiss Bank Corporation             | Fr. 500 | Fr. 628     | Fr. 632 |
| Crédit Suisse                      | 500     | 656         | 675     |
| Union de Banques Suisses...        | 500     | 530         | 537     |
| Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz   | 1000    | 2085        | 2225    |
| Société pour l'Industrie Chimique  | 1000    | 1625        | 1700    |
| C. F. Bally S.A.                   | 1000    | 985         | 985     |
| Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon...   | 500     | 639         | 647     |
| Entreprises Sulzer                 | 1000    | 692         | 615     |
| S. A. Brown Boveri (new)           | 500     | 319         | 322     |
| Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co. | 200     | 182         | 181     |
| Choc. Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler | 100     | 105         | 105     |
| Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman  | 500     | 460         | 460     |

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