

Home news

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HOME NEWS

The Basle Samples Fair had a brilliant official opening last Saturday in the presence of a large gathering of representatives from the home and foreign Press. Many Swiss Colonies were represented at the General Meeting of the "Ausland-schweizertag," which took place on Monday.

The International Central Commission for the Rhine Navigation opened its session at Strasbourg on the 15th inst. Several important decisions of the greatest importance for our country are expected to be taken there. The Swiss Delegation submitted a scheme for the regularisation of the Rhine from Basle to Strasbourg.

The Federal Council has called the attention of the Washington Government to what is considered a violation of International Common Law on the part of U.S.A. agents, instructed by their Government to control on the spot the cost of production of goods destined for export to U.S.A., these agents usually insisting on obtaining from the firms in question a sight of their books. Great Britain, France and Sweden have made similar representations at Washington.

The Press campaign in connection with the Rothenberger Initiative for an Invalidity, Old-Age and Dependents' Insurance is now in full swing, and the voting will take place on the 23rd and 24th May next.

Our National Debt has increased in 1924 from Frs. 2,271,515,639 to Frs. 2,303,382,619.

Last Sunday's elections in the Canton of Neuchâtel have given the following results:—37 Socialists, 30 Radicals, 22 Liberals, and 16 Progressives have been elected to the Grand Conseil, whilst MM. Calame, Clottu, Béguin, Renaud and Antoine Borel will constitute the new Government, the Socialist candidate, Mr. Graber, failing to secure the necessary quota. The elections showed a remarkable stability in the strength of the parties.

Professor Eugène Borel has handed to the Secretariat of the League of Nations his arbitration award in the matter of the settlement of the Turkish Debt. This award is a volume of 120 pages and deals with all the points involved in the dispute between the interested nations.

The new Diesel-motor-boat "Rheinfelden," destined for passenger service between Basle and Rheinfelden, was launched last week at Augst. The boat, which is 31 metres long and 5 metres wide, and will be able to carry 200 passengers, cost 160,000 francs.

At Olten Railway Station a buffet stewardess picked up on the platform a portfolio containing 485,000 gold marks.

The accounts of the Swiss Alpine Club for last year show a surplus of Frs. 46,368 (income Frs. 267,313, expenditure Frs. 220,955). The funds of the Club on the 31st December, 1924, amounted to Frs. 227,449, and the Guides' Assistance Fund Frs. 21,832. The fund for the building of new premises for the Alpine Museum amounts to Frs. 31,100.

In Zurich the Association football match between Switzerland and Holland ended in a 4-1 victory for the home team.

Last Sunday a fire, developing with extreme rapidity owing to the fochin, destroyed part of the village Sûs (Lower Engadine) on the River Inn, rendering homeless about 40 families, who have had to take refuge in neighbouring villages.

From Basle the death is announced, at the age of 70, of Dr. Prof. R. Wackernagel, Chancellor of State for Basle-Town from 1878 to 1917.

The funeral of the late Dr. Jakobus Stammeler, Bishop of Basle and Lugano, took place on the 16th inst. in Soleure in the presence of the Papal Nunzio, Monsignor Maglione, the Soleure Government, and a large assembly of civil and Church dignitaries.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

Swiss Wireless Laws.

I am very pleased that Mr. O. Braga has taken the trouble to correct my erroneous and, I'm afraid, misplacely flippant remarks in our issue of the 11th inst. Besides stating the position fairly, Mr. Braga has shown me how easily one falls into the error of suspecting things which do not, in fact, exist. One falls all the easier into such error when one is apt to do real injustice to servants of the State who cannot defend themselves. I am, therefore, deeply grateful that Mr. Braga by his letter, which was published in our last issue, has corrected any misapprehension which my incautious remarks might easily have caused, and I take the rap over my knuckles which he has administered to heart, feeling glad that I got off so lightly and resolving to be more careful in future.

At the same time, Mr. Braga's letter has given me keen pleasure, because it proved that at least one of our readers was not too tired to protest against one of my remarks, and I hope and trust that other readers will follow his example and send in protests whenever they disagree with my views or opinions. Not only will this be of interest to other readers, but it will make my work ever so much more interesting and militate against that staleness which is bound to afflict the unopposed writings of "Kyburg," as it is bound to afflict the unopposed preachings of the man in the pulpit, unless he be a superman. "Kyburg" certainly is not.

Arbitration Grows.

The *Manchester Guardian* (11th April) has the following comments anent the recent Arbitration Treaty, come to between France and Switzerland:—

Despite Mr. Austen Chamberlain's repeated declarations that this country cannot agree to compulsory arbitration, the number of arbitration treaties which are being signed by different Continental Powers is not passing unnoticed in London.

The fact that this week a treaty has been signed between France and Switzerland, providing for obligatory arbitration in all disputes between them, is particularly interesting when one remembers how steadily the Poincaré Government refused to submit the dispute over the "neutral zones" near Geneva to any procedure of conciliation or arbitration. This Franco-Swiss treaty goes even farther than the arbitration treaties signed by Germany with Switzerland, Finland, and other European States.

Germany, as well as the Scandinavian countries, has modelled her arbitration treaties on the proposals for committees of conciliation that were adopted by the League of Nations Assembly in 1922. Some of these treaties provide for arbitration in every dispute, others make exceptions for "vital interests," but all of them indicate an increasing desire in Europe to abolish war as a means of settling quarrels—a desire that has not been entirely damped by Mr. Chamberlain's cold sponge in Geneva last month.

Zepps to be built in Switzerland?

Daily Express (13th April):—

The Zeppelin Company has asked the Swiss Government's permission to transfer the factory, with the staff and machinery, from Friedrichshafen to the Swiss shore of Lake Constance. The company seems confident of a favourable reply, and has already sent agents to inspect sites.

It is intended to construct monster commercial airships, capable of flying safely across the world's continents and oceans. It is stated that, owing to the success of ZR 3, America is ready to place an order for a larger and faster airship.

Under the Treaty of Versailles the Zeppelin works at Friedrichshafen must be dismantled, and it is a question whether the Allies will sanction the new scheme.

I take it that the *Daily Express* knows that Switzerland is a free and independent State, and am, therefore, surprised to read the last paragraph of the above. I wonder what the D.E. would say if our Swiss authorities took it into their heads to veto the building of men-of-war in this country?

Control of Arms Traffic.

Daily Telegraph (13th April):—

The United States Government has appointed Mr. Theodore Burton, ex-Senator of Ohio, as first delegate to the League Conference on Control of International Trade in Arms, Munitions, and Implements of War, to be held at Geneva

on May 5th. Besides the American Minister in Switzerland, several military and naval technical advisers are being sent by the American Government. The following States, members and non-members of the League of Nations, will be represented:—

Austria, Great Britain, Persia, Belgium, Greece, Poland, Brazil, Hungary, Portugal, Bulgaria, India, Roumania, China, Italy, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Japan, Sweden, Denmark, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Switzerland, Estonia, Turkey, Finland, Latvia, the United States of America, Germany, Panama, Uruguay.

The conference, which is expected to last three weeks, will endeavour to carry out the Arms Traffic Convention, which was signed at Saint Germain in September, 1919, and is intended to fulfil two purposes. The first is to prevent the importation of arms except under the strictest possible control to certain defined areas inhabited by backward peoples. The purpose of this part of the Treaty is evident. The task of preventing bloodshed in great parts of Africa and in the countries which border on the Red Sea is rendered far more difficult if the inhabitants have access to unlimited quantities of arms and munitions. It was felt to be especially desirable to bring this part of the Treaty quickly into effect, in order to prevent the despatch to these parts of the world of the surplus stocks left over from the war.

The second is to secure by a system of licensing full publicity for all international traffic in arms. The parties to the Convention undertook not to allow the export of arms from their territories except with a license from the Government authorities, which should indicate the quantities the export of which was allowed and the destination to which they were sent. The Treaty further provided that copies of these licenses should immediately be forwarded to the Central Office to be established under the League, and that they should be published. It was believed that by securing in this way the fullest publicity for the traffic in arms, something at least would be done to get rid of the evils attendant upon it. The Convention of Saint Germain was drafted on the assumption that it would be universally accepted by the Governments of all countries. While, of course, it is essential to secure the co-operation of countries which produce arms and munitions, it is nevertheless desirable that every country, whether it produces arms or not, should be a party to such a convention.

The Presidential Election in Germany.

According to newspaper reports, Dr. Marx believes that the salvation of Europe will be found finally in the various States forming the "Amalgamated States of Europe." He has my earnest wishes for success over his opponent, Field-marshal Hindenburg, who, albeit a venerable and honest man, is probably too much of a child in politics — à la MacMahon in 1873!—and who would be a danger if he became President of Germany, a danger not only to Germany, but to Switzerland and the rest of Europe as well.

Swiss Village Life.

Bromley District Times (10th April):—

Despite the intense quiet which pervades villages in mountainous Switzerland, especially during the off-seasons, it is remarkable how happy and contented are the people who live there. Unlike visitors, whose enjoyment of the beautiful natural conditions prevailing knows no bounds, the inhabitants are so used to all the loveliness around them that they appear to take but little interest in it. After all, have they not, most of them, lived in its midst all their lives? Their mode of life, too, is of the simplest kind, and with it they seem quite satisfied. They are accommodated, for the most part, in wooden dwellings, the appearance of which usually leaves much to be desired, though curiously enough these habitations, frequently shared with cows, which occupy the ground floor, are particularly up-to-date as regards heating and lighting, for electric power is everywhere. Another essential of life, which the Swiss in the Grisons enjoy in abundance, is water, which is continuously running almost at every turn into stone troughs or wooden ones, constructed by splitting the trunk of a tree in half, scooping out the middle, and stopping up the ends. These receptacles are used for the cleansing of almost everything, as well as for the watering of cattle. Incidentally they make excellent wash tubs, and around Flims women may often be seen at them washing and rinsing their clothes. Although pure air is always available, it is remarkable