

Notes and gleanings

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have her children recognised as Italians. This was vehemently opposed by M. Wild, who brought an action against his wife at Milan, which was decided in his favour, the Court declaring that during the father's life-time it was impossible for his sons, being minors, to lose their Swiss nationality. The Countess, nothing daunted, appealed, and this time she has won her case.

Seeing that the mother, an Italian lady, is bringing up the children, I should have thought it monstrously unfair and stupid if the Tribunal had upheld the first decision and given the children Swiss Nationality. And mind you, I am not influenced in this by any political considerations. As a matter of fact, this question of the Nationality of Children born in a foreign country has occupied me, in the abstract, for a very long time, i.e., ever since the early days of the N.S.H. in London.

I am satisfied that children born in a foreign country, i.e., a country in which their parents are foreigners, should not be influenced too much in favour of their parents' country, at least not when the country in which they are being brought up is of similar culture and civilisation. Take Switzerland and England for instance. Had I any children, I would wish them to be absolutely free to decide for themselves, when they reach maturity as regards their nationality. They would be British by birth, anyhow and would probably do and prosper best if brought up here, not according to Swiss ideas, but in accordance with English ideas. True, we know our Swiss Schools are in many respects better, but then, is it wise to create a sort of dual personality? What about the assimilation of Immigrants in Switzerland? What about its counterpart in England? What would happen if all Nationalities kept rigidly to their own ideas all the time? I think assimilation should proceed as quickly as it is possible and no egotistical patriotism should stand in its way. As for keeping a foreign nationality for three generations, I think it is snobbery, pure and simple.

Please, Mr. Editor, may I say a word or two about the correspondence on speeches at banquets? I have always found that a jolly, rattling good humorous speech, such as very few can really make, enlivens proceedings no end and puts the whole assembly at ease with one another. Contrarywise, a dry, solemn oration, spiced with statistics, exhortations, praise for those up high, flattery, etc., in short the sort of oration everybody, who has ever been to one such banquet, knows by heart and could make himself with his eyes shut, i.e., not looking at the cuffs for the notes thereon, generally makes people frightfully and rightly impatient and should be stopped. Nobody, I think, except the one who makes such a speech, wishes to hear it. Nobody comes to such a Banquet "in the hope" of hearing such a speech, but everybody comes with an idea that he or she are going to have an amusing time. Well then, why not get up the funny man of the assembly and let him say a few funny things and make people laugh? Make them laugh and they will feel happy and the whole show will be voted a success, irrespective of whether the band was good or not. But, stuff them with statistics, with important facts, try to make them feel solemn on such occasions, and they will stay away in future.

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A RHONE-TO-RHINE WATERWAY

Switzerland, with no seaport of her own, is naturally alive to the possibilities of reaching the sea by artificial waterways linking up with the great rivers. A successful experiment has already been made with the Rhine waterway, and now a scheme is proposed for linking Switzerland with the Mediterranean through the Rhône.

Allied with this are two supplementary schemes, the first for the improvement of Rhine navigation, and the second for connexion of Basel with the Lake of Constance. The port of Basel, built 24 years ago, has been steadily growing since 1919, but navigation on the Rhine is handicapped by the Istein Rapids. An international commission has just met to consider means of getting rid of them, and it is probable that explosives will be used. Recently the Basel Grand Council voted a sum of £320,000 for this purpose. Further, engineers are at present examining the possibility of connecting Basel and the Lake of Constance by the Rhine to allow the passage of 1,500 ton barges, a scheme which would cost about £2,500,000. If, as is probable, a canal is made also from the Danube by German initiative, Switzerland will then have access to Bavaria, Austria, the Balkan States, and the Black Sea.

But the meeting at Geneva last July of the Congress of the "Union Rhodanienne"—an organisation including representatives of all districts in the Rhône Valley from the Mediterranean to the Furka—has revived interest in the main scheme of a Rhône-to-Rhine waterway. Investigation has shown that the Rhône can be made navigable from Lyons to Geneva, despite all natural obstacles, and that the connecting of the Lake of Geneva with the Rhine is a comparatively easy matter. The part of the scheme which offers the greatest technical difficulties is the Lyons-Genève section, where the Rhône passes through a very mountainous region. It would be necessary to build a dozen locks and dams and many side canals between Lyons and the Swiss frontier, a distance of about 150 miles. A sum of nearly £28,000,000 would represent the cost of the section, an important part of which could be repaid by the sale of electric power from six or eight of the biggest dams. From Bellegarde, near the border, four dams and locks, one of which is already made, and two side canals would enable 700-ton barges to reach the Lake of Geneva. In order to pass through Geneva itself and to avoid the pulling down of a quarter of the town it has been suggested that a canal tunnel could be bored under the town. The Geneva authorities are taking steps to acquire the land for a port on the lake. The construction of the Bellegarde-Genève section would cost about £10,000,000.

From the Lake of Geneva, vessels would reach the Lake of Neuchâtel through the Canal d'Entremont, 23 miles long, the necessary construction of which would cost about £6,720,000. The waterway would then pass through the Lakes of Neuchâtel and Bienne, run along the River Aar, and enter the Rhine at a short distance from Felsenau, about half-way between Basel and Constance. Part of this last section is ready for navigation; its completion would involve an expenditure of £900,000.

The whole scheme would connect Marseilles and Lyons with Geneva, Basel and Rotterdam, and eventually with the Balkans, and would have a great influence on the economic development of Switzerland. While all natural obstacles can be conquered, it is still doubtful, however, whether the financial resources can be found. The share of Switzerland would be about £17,620,000, and it is not certain that the French Government would find it possible to provide its share of £28,000,000. Supporters of the scheme are of opinion that private enterprise may be successful where Governments may hesitate, and hopes are entertained that the Rhône-to-Rhine waterway may be built with the assistance of the chambers of commerce, the business organizations, and the municipalities concerned.—*The Times*.

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