

The second annual meeting of the English branch of the "Schweizer Vereinigung für Heimatschutz"

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Diesen Auslassungen füge ich ergänzend bei:

Man hat sich gewundert und diesem Erstaunen ist in der Presse Ausdruck verliehen worden, dass ich mich in meinem Referate gegen die Bahnbauwut im allgemeinen gewendet und nicht zu einem bestimmten Projekte, so z. B. der Schöllenenbahn Stellung genommen habe. Gegen die Schöllenenbahn hätte ich allerdings unendlich Vieles zu sagen, aber ich habe bereits anderswo erklären müssen, was mir verbietet, energischer als bisher meine Gegnerschaft zu bekunden: Ich bin Inhaber der Bahnhofrestauration in Göschenen und habe den Schein gegen mich, ich könnte aus geschäftlichen Interessen die Schöllenenbahn ablehnen. Ich will den Konzessionären dieser Bahn nicht den Gefallen tun, auch nur den Schein eines kleinlichen Motivs unter die grossen Beweggründe zu tragen, die die Gegner leiten und leiten müssen. O Jammer und Schmach, wenn nicht das Schweizer Volk auch ohne Weckruf fühlt, um welchen Reichtum die Spekulation im Urnerlande es bringen will! Wir haben in der Schule alle Schillers „Berglied“ gelernt und geliebt. Man hat uns erzählt, dass die Brücke „hoch über den Rand der furchtbaren Tiefe gebogen“ die Teufelsbrücke in den Schöllenen sei, wir kannten das Urnerloch als das „schaurige Tor“ und Ursern als das „lachende Gelände“, von dem es heisst:

„Aus des Lebens Mühen und ewiger Qual
Möcht ich fliehen in dieses glückselige Tal.“

Wird das Schweizervolk zugeben, dass „über den Rand der furchtbaren Tiefe“, die düstere Stille der Teufelsschlucht entweichend, die einsame Teufelsbrücke verunglimpfend, ein Eisenviadukt gebogen werde? Dass man durch ein in freilich ganz anderem Sinne schauriges Tor, einen rauchschwarzen Tunnel nach Ursern gelange? Dass in dem Tal, in das der Dichter aus des Lebens Qual zu fliehen wünschte, die Lokomotive puste und pfeife? Wahrlich was gegen die Schöllenenbahn spricht, ist zu gross und zu ernst, als dass es kleinlichen Eigennutzes bedürfte, um zum Gegner zu machen, aber dennoch, damit der Schein vermieden bleibe, darf ich mich nicht zum Führer dieser Gegner aufwerfen. Es muss ja endlich einmal ein Veto aus dem ganzen Volke kommen, gegen die Schöllenenbahn, gegen die Leidenschaft überhaupt, in jedes stille Bergtal, auf jeden aussichtsreichen Gipfel Schienen zu führen. Man glaube doch nicht, wir Mahner sähen nicht ein, dass grosse Alpentunnels und manche Bergbahnen kommen *mussten*, einzelne noch kommen müssen, dass ideale Interessen vor den realen oft zu schweigen haben; aber man erkenne doch endlich das *Uebermass*. Das Volk darf nicht schlafen und schlafen, bis ihm die Spekulanten im Schlafe die Heimat gestohlen haben!

Ernst Zahn.

The second Annual Meeting of the English branch of the „Schweizerische Vereinigung für Heimatschutz“

An audience numbering about 300 was present at the second Annual Meeting of the English Branch of the League for the Preservation of Swiss Scenery held in London at the Society of Arts, on October 30th, and letters of regret at their inability to attend were received from the Dean of Norwich, Lord Desborough, Mr. Alfred East A.R.A., Mr. Douglas Freshfield, the Rev. H. B. George and Professor Holland, D. C. L. of Oxford, Lord Monkswell, Canon Rawnsley, Sir H. R. Reichel, Sir Alfred Wills, and many others. The Chair was taken by the President, Sir Martin Conway, who in moving the adoption of the Report and Accounts referred to the last obnoxious proposal to construct a sledge-train railway over the Aletsch glacier. He said that the fact that such schemes were put forward to attract foreigners and in the supposed interest of tourists was what gave English visitors amongst others the right to say whether they desired such action to be taken. To that question he replied with an emphatic No. Englishmen rejoiced to go to the Alps which they had made a second home, for the sake of mountain beauty, but for that alone. Proposals were made by which that beauty would be destroyed in order that more people might be brought to see, — What? To see nothing, for the beauty once destroyed there remained nothing to go and see. The tourist industry which had brought much wealth to Switzerland rested on the foundation of Alpine beauty. English people therefore begged and implored the Swiss to develop that industry if they would, but not to attack the basal and fundamental attraction which their country had to offer.

Mr. F. W. Bourdillon seconded the Report, and laid stress on the power of public feeling which had been so greatly aroused in Switzerland, and which should find an echo in England by a large increase in the number of those who desired to support the Vereinigung für Heimatschutz. The well-known affection of Englishmen for Switzerland and the Swiss brought them this responsibility. The Tosa Falls were threatened by Italian engineers, and it was to an Englishman that the people of the district appealed to reinforce their opposition to the scheme. Such help was felt to be essential in order to save the Falls. The wonders of Nature only required to be left alone, and if any effort of ours could save for futurity aught of the beauty of the world which has created a faith and inspired a feeling of divinity, it was our duty to make it.

Professor Ganz, Conservateur du Musée de Peintures at Bâle and Secretary of the Swiss Ligue, thanked the branch heartily in the name of the Schweizerische Vereinigung für Heimatschutz for their most valuable assistance. The formation of an English branch of the Ligue had brought them an ally who would be very welcome to their opponents, for it was principally on behalf of the foreign visitors to Switzerland that it was proposed to build the many mountain railways and luxurious residences in the Alps. Undoubtedly the tourist traffic was a very important factor in the prosperity of Switzerland, and should be encouraged by suitable measures, but when a competition between hotel keepers led to the

construction of a railway line to every view or point of advantage, and to the erection of a gigantic hotel barrack on every outlined summit, it was not only their right, but their duty, to guard themselves against such desecration. (Cheers.) They all knew that the tariffs of mountain railways and hotels were not so moderate as to enable every one to pay them, and this difficulty became increasingly evident as a greater elevation was reached. Hence there could be no question of making the chief beauty spots accessible to all, as the supporters of the Matterhorn railway seemed to suggest. Indeed, this disposed once for all of the argument in favour of railways to the highest Alpine summits. What remained was merely the sensation.

They were making an earnest appeal to the highest authorities of Switzerland not to grant any concessions above the eternal snow line, and the English, who were the first to climb their mountains, had a primary right to lend a helping hand. (Cheers.)

Mr. H. Hart Davis, M. P. called attention to the advertisement nuisance and to the pressing need in Switzerland, as in other countries, for legislation to check it.

The Report and Accounts were then unanimously adopted. The Bishop of Bristol, President of the Alpine Club, proposed the following resolution: „That this meeting fervently echoes the numerous protests of the Swiss people against the construction of a railway or lift up the Matterhorn, believing that, in the eyes of the great majority of English visitors, and of all to whom the sublimity of nature appeals, it would be an act of profanation and spoliation, and that the sacrifice of such a mountain to sectional interests and the materialism of the age would involve an irreparable loss to humanity and a wrong to succeeding generations.“

The speaker said that although the Alpine Club took no action lest it should seem to be influenced by selfish motives, all its 560 Members were solid with the English branch of the Ligue in this matter. He hoped no words spoken at the Meeting or elsewhere in England would annoy the just susceptibilities of the Swiss people and the Swiss Parliament. The Gensgenfreiheit has had a remarkable effect in preserving the chamois, and he should like if it were possible to put a similar view before the Swiss Parliament as regards the greatest of their mountains, viz, that they should establish a Freiheit, a freedom from invasion by railways, in which case the Matterhorn would be saved, or if possible that this Freiheit should be established for all mountains above the line of perpetual snow. If the Swiss Parliament decided on one of these principles, the pressure which might be used to obtain concessions in particular cases would be obviated. He would put the attraction of the Alps even higher than the Chairmann had done. It was not merely the beauty, but the mystery of the beauty that appealed to men. Beauty might be brought so close that it lost all mystery, and then it was mere physical beauty. But when the mystery, or the veil which hides the details, could be lifted only by a very few persons then the beauty was at its very highest. The chief influence of these railways would be to entirely destroy the mystery of the mountains, and when that was gone all was gone. He held that the Matterhorn inaccessible would draw to it very many more people than the Matterhorn made accessible by the payment of 50 francs without putting one foot before the other, — because to everyone who could not reach its top it would possess this hidden power of mystery. The question rested on the highest and best ground, on something which the thoughtful world was rising to feel a real necessity, for when everything was reduced to a materialistic test, when everything was made as unspiritual as possible, degradation must come. The whole thought of the world ought in such a materialistic age to support the passing of such a resolution, for the Meeting was thus doing what it could to preserve at once the mightiest and the tenderest influences of nature.

Sir Frederick Pollock seconded the resolution and said that the watchword of the Bishop of Bristol „no railway above the snowline“ seemed to him the most sound and practica.

Letters from Mr. Bryce, Mr. Whympster (see Zeitschriftenschau p. 165), and Sir A. Wills in opposition to the scheme having been read, Mr. C. T. Dent, formerly President of the Alpine Club, said that Mr. Whympster had touched the keynote of the whole project; it was merely a commercial speculation. But when the time arrived that a flying machine carried people to the summits of mountains where would be the value of a railway? The capital would be entirely lost. But it was for flying machines that the capital would be wanted.

The resolution was then put to the Meeting (which included about 40 Swiss) and was carried unanimously.

A Vote of Thanks to the Chairman was proposed by Mr. Richardson Evans, and seconded by the Swiss Pasteur, M. A. G. Braeudli. Sir Martin Conway in replying mentioned that the cost of the Zeitschrift for carriage and postage being so great, the Committee thought it should not be included in the minimum subscription, but that such members should be asked to pay a postal fee of 2/6 in addition, if they desired to receive the Zeitschrift each month.

Before the audience dispersed Mr. J. W. Western exhibited a number of beautiful lantern views of the Pennine Alps.

Vots: The amount (exceeding £ 25 per annum, or 2 sh per member) which the English branch has hitherto expended in distributing the Zeitschrift, seriously reduces the Contribution which it is anxious to make to the funds of the Ligue.

Der Wiederaufbau des Schlosses Kasteln im Aargau.

In der Nacht vom 24. auf 25. August d. J. ist das Schloss Kasteln im Schenkenbergtal samt einer angebauten Scheune bis auf den Grund niedergebrannt; einzig seine Umfassungsmauern stehen noch. Dadurch hat die Erziehungsanstalt Kasteln das Heim verloren, in welchem sie sich seit 52 Jahren dem Erziehungswerk an versorgungsbedürftigen armen Kindern gewidmet hat. Eine reifliche Prüfung aller in Betracht kommenden Punkte hat die Direktion der Erziehungsanstalt zu dem einstimmigen Beschluss geführt, das Schloss Kasteln sei, in seinem Aeussern möglichst unverändert, aber mit rationellerer Einteilung der Innenräume und unter Verwendung der Errungenschaften der modernen Technik, wieder aufzubauen.

Dagegen kann vorläufigerhand nichts eingewendet werden; denn es wäre zu weit gegangen, wollte man verlangen, dass das schon wegen seiner Lage für seinen modernen Zweck trefflich geeignete Schloss aus rein ästhetischen Gründen unbenutzt verfallen müsste. Was man aber verlangen kann und muss, ist, dass sich alle Beteiligten und Behörden der Verantwortlichkeit bewusst seien, die sie mit dem Neubau übernehmen. Das Schloss war als ehrwürdiges Denkmal der Baukunst früherer Zeiten ein Schmuck der Landschaft weithin (vergl. Abbildung S. 95). Mögen sich Verständnis und Kräfte finden, die vereint dahin wirken, dass das Neue dem Alten auch in ästhetischer und künstlerischer Hinsicht gleichwertig ausfalle.