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# The Swiss Observer

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"THE SWISS OBSERVER."

It has probably not escaped the notice of our readers that the conduct of our columns in the last two issues has undergone a change.

This change is due to the fact that Dr. A. Latt has requested us, in consequence of his return to Switzerland in the near future, to release him from the Editorship which he had kindly accepted temporarily.

We greatly regret thus being deprived of Dr. Latt's very able co-operation, and we feel sure our readers will join us in coupling our most sincere thanks for the support he accorded to "The Swiss Observer," with our very best wishes for Dr. Latt's future.

We have succeeded in making arrangements for regular and original contributions on Home Affairs from the economic and financial point of view, as well as for Gleanings from the English Press, etc.

We further wish to remind our readers that we shall always be pleased to receive and publish individual contributions and correspondence of general interest to the Swiss colony.

THE PUBLISHER.

## RANDOM JOTTINGS IN SWITZERLAND.

The rough result of the 1920 *census*, recently taken in Switzerland, shows, according to the "Nationalzeitung," 3,856,825 inhabitants of Switzerland. The increase since 1910 is but 103,532, whereas our population increased from 1900 to 1910 by 437,850. This seems to indicate that Switzerland approaches the limit where she can no longer increase to any considerable extent the number of her inhabitants without seriously lowering the standard of life—in other words, the struggle for life is already pretty hard in our country. Certainly that limit is not yet reached, but it cannot now be very far off, especially if we consider the present circumstances of anarchistic economic conditions which may possibly still last for years. The Census has at any rate proved that we are not yet the 4 million people already now and then quoted. If we continue to increase as slowly as we have done during the past decade we may well wait till 1935 before reaching the round figure mentioned.

As things are such, it is surely necessary that Swiss people exercise greater care than they have done hitherto regarding the type of individuals whom they accept as their fellow-citizens from abroad. Fortunately, there are signs that our people begin to realise that the *foreigner*

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO—

THE EDITOR, *THE SWISS OBSERVER*.

21, GARLICK HILL, E.C. 4.

*question* is a very serious problem: that the 17 per cent. of foreigners who actually live in Switzerland are the utmost limit we can afford. One day we shall be able to make good confederates of the children born of foreign parents in our country, but meanwhile it is our duty to consider very keenly whether those foreigners who become naturalised can afford any guarantee of their being acquainted with the Swiss character and our national ideals. The St. Gall Kantonsrat has recently proved that it is alive to the changed situation. It refused, in an outburst of national pride, to ratify the naturalisation of a schoolmaster of German origin, living at Rheineck, because he had called his pupils "Schweizerkühe." In the Canton Schaffhausen there is also actually a scandal about a naturalisation being talked of. But this case is rather a deplorable one. A German factory manager tried to acquire the citizenship. A strong patriot protested, however, immediately. He thought the candidate particularly unfit to become a Swiss whilst he not long ago—in fact during the war—used to boast widely of his German origin and the glory of the Fatherland. But no sooner had the Swiss patriot said a word against the manager than this latter was instantly backed up by a highly respected lawyer, whose position in the army is as well known as his functions in our councils. The patriot was not only intimidated by so prominent a personality, who was soon joined by other pillars of society, but in a very short time the newspaper press also adopted the point of view of the German would-be Swiss and refused the patriot even the space to reply to the attacks upon his honour. The battle is still going on and is upsetting the whole canton.

If business plays often too great a part in Swiss politics—if you don't believe it, you have but to read Gottfried Keller's "Martin Salander," which the "Verein für Verbreitung guter Schriften" has just issued in a popular edition—it is no less true that sometimes our authorities as well as our people have their good moments and pass wise and generous resolutions. One of the finest things achieved in Switzerland in recent years and one of the most famous monuments of Helvetical solidarity, too, is the construction of the *road to Indemini*. Indemini is a forlorn little village high up in the Tessin mountains at the foot of the Gradiolioli and the Tamaro. There existed, until our councils decided to undertake the construction of a road, only a small bad footpath to connect Indemini with the nearest Swiss village, Gerra. It took one seven hours to ascend from Gerra to Indemini! All goods had to be carried by those poor women of Indemini on their backs! It was terribly hard work, and nearly all of them

suffered during their youthful years from those terrible burdens and became affected with different diseases. After many years of work Indemini has now finally got this road connecting it with the mother country and enabling its inhabitants to use mules for the transport of food. There are only some 300 people in that village. Some business men may therefore think those 1,170,000 francs spent on that road thrown away and wasted. Happily our councillors had for once consulted their hearts instead of their pockets. If you listen to the heart, then the inhabitants of Indemini are as good Swiss as the inhabitants of a big city of the North or the West of Switzerland. There was no reason why they should live till Doomsday separated from their fellow-countrymen.

Deeds of that kind are the real cement uniting together French and German and Italian-speaking cantons. The value of such deeds is not to be estimated in mere terms of cash, while the different races are alike worthy of every consideration irrespective of their numerical strength. No doubt the *Tessin people* are now prouder than ever to belong to Switzerland. They have shown this clearly, even to those few sceptics who were not yet quite sure of it, by the unanimous outburst of indignation with which they answered the insolent action of Signor Carmine and the poet of Fiume. There is certainly no canton of Switzerland more beloved nowadays by all the others than the Tessin. We welcome also the opportunity Tessin students will soon enjoy of being able to study Swiss jurisprudence in their own language. This is due to the recent creation of a *chair for Swiss Civil Law* at the university of Pavia. At last the sons of the Tessin will have a chance to become conscious of their own particular civilisation by prosecuting their studies at a university of their own tongue—a possibility Tessin law students were denied hitherto. There is no canton in Switzerland where we have less reason to fear the intimate contact of its people with their friends of the same tongue than the Tessin. The attitude of the Tessin people during the war and since has proved this beyond any doubt. Speaking of a Tessin Irredenta is mere stupidity or bad faith. We can but welcome the fact that the third element of our national entity, the Italian, gets at length a full opportunity of developing its abilities in contact with a kindred civilisation. If it will see clearer the similarities it will not fail to remark also the differences.

The longer we think about it the greater is the wonder that the Swiss people have been able to build up a state wherein three nationalities live in peace together. We are bound to be astonished at the fact the more we realise how the exaggerated principle of nationality provokes disastrous results for the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. It may well be that the principle of the *co-operation of nationalities*—expressed by the Constitution of our country—is, in spite of the present boom of the other, the one principle of the future. At all events, it is comforting to believe it. No people is truly alive if it does not believe that it has something to give the world. Let us think that we *have*!

P. L.

### A DISTINGUISHED COMPATRIOT.

Prof. Eugène Borel, advocate and professor at the Geneva University, arrived in London to take up his duties as President of the Mixed Arbitral Tribunals, created under the Treaty of Versailles as between England and Germany and between Japan and Germany.

Of the many appointments which some of our eminent

lawyers have been called upon to fill in order, finally, to dispose of the numerous thorny questions originated by the clauses of the Peace Treaty, the task allotted to Prof. Borel is of far-reaching importance and one for the accomplishment of which he is singularly qualified.

Prof. Borel, having held with distinction several offices of State, such as President of the Grand Conseil, in the canton of Neuchâtel, opened in 1906 a practice in Geneva, where he also lectured at the University on International Law. He was our delegate at the Second Peace Conference at the Hague and reporter on the convention establishing the rights and duties of neutrals in case of war on land. At the International Conferences in Budapest (1905) and Washington (1910) he again represented Switzerland, and at a conference held in London (1914) by the International Prison Commission he participated in the preliminary works for the International Prison Congress, which was planned to take place in this city in the following year.

During the war Colonel Borel was a member of the General Staff of the Swiss Army.

Prof. Borel has expressed the intention to miss no opportunity of getting into personal contact with our colony and its members; one of his first acts has been to become a subscriber to *The Swiss Observer*. On Tuesday next he will visit the City Swiss Club.

### NOTES & GLEANINGS.

All the *Reviews* of this month have at least one important article on the *results of the Geneva Meeting and the future prospects of the League of Nations*. Add up all the good they have to say and deduct the sum of criticism, pessimism and imperialism which are thrown into the opposite scale—and you are left exactly where you stood before. You may go on guessing whether British public opinion is really favourable to the League of Nations or not.

In the *Contemporary Review* (January) we find the first critical article on *Spitteler* in English. Its author is Professor John G. Robertson, of London University, author of "History of the Literature of Germany" and various papers on Schiller, Goethe, Lessing, etc. The learned critic shows himself thoroughly acquainted, not only with *Spitteler's* work, but with Swiss intellectual life as well:

"If *Spitteler* is not a recognised notability, it is due to reasons that are far from discreditable to him. In all his long life he has never sought popular favour; with genuine Swiss doggedness he has gone his own way in singleness of purpose, has refused to abate one jot or tittle of his spiritual independence to appease the many-headed monster. He is a lonely poet, perhaps the loneliest poet in Europe; lonely not merely by temperament, but also by virtue of a depth and obscurity which make him inaccessible to those that would read as they run. His books were regarded as enigmas as they appeared; they are enigmas still, but enigmas which, we believe, are well worth the trouble of trying to read."

For the first time also the problem of the "*Free Zones of Savoy*" is explained to English readers by Mr. Robert Dell (*Nation*, 22nd January), the Paris correspondent of "The Manchester Guardian." We are glad to see this eminent journalist and the "*Nation*" fully adopting the Swiss point of view. There is now a movement on foot to bring the question before the Court of Arbitration of