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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

According to official documents published by the League of Nations, Switzerland has reduced her military budget by 39 per cent.

\* \* \*

Federal Councillor Motta made an important speech at a deliberation of the sixth commission of the League of Nations on the Minority question.

The following extract from Federal Councillor Motta's speech, taken from the *Journal de Genève*, resumes his views on the Minority question in Switzerland:—

“ La Suisse a résolu la question des minorités dans ce sens que, théoriquement, il n’y a plus de minorités chez nous. Les différences dans la race, dans l’esprit et dans la religion de chacune des parties qui forment la Confédération sont considérées comme un enrichissement de l’idéal commun. L’idéal de l’Etat est de faire le bonheur de tous ses citoyens. Cet idéal peut se réaliser sous deux formes différentes: certains Etats cherchent à le réaliser dans l’idée de l’unité de la langue et de la race. Il y en a d’autres chez qui cet idéal absolu de race et de langue n’est pas possible et ainsi il ne reste que l’idéal de la justice et de la fraternité entre toutes les races et tous les hommes.”

\* \* \*

On Sunday next, September 24th, a very important referendum will be submitted to the Swiss people, the "Lex Häberlin." The projected law would enable the Swiss Government to deal effectively with revolutionary propaganda and agitation. This proposed Bill has been the subject of many agitated meetings all over the country, from which may be inferred that the majority will be opposed to this addition to our constitutional laws.

\* \* \*

The Federal commission of experts for the reduction of imports decided by eight voices to seven to propose to the Federal Council a limitation on potato imports, with, at the same time, a fixed scale of maximum prices. The commission also agreed, by eight voices to three, to propose a limitation on fresh fruit import.

The harvest of fruit is so abundant in Switzerland that the problem of gathering and transporting it is acute, while export markets are very restricted, owing to unfavourable exchange rates. The railways have agreed to a temporary reduction of 30 per cent. on freight charges for potatoes and of 25 per cent. on plums, to assist home-growers. The price of fruit continues to fall, and even in London good Swiss apples are now being retailed at 2d. per pound.

The Regierungsrat of St. Gall has decided to revise the salaries of State officials by an average reduction of 10 per cent. The civil servants declare they agree to the principle of a cut of from 5—10 per cent., having regard to the precarious position of the canton's finances, but insist on the foundation of a pensions fund for State employees, for which there is at present already available a fund of about one million francs.

\* \* \*

Dr. Julius Frey being unable to accept his nomination as Swiss delegate to the special commission for financial aid to Austria, the Federal Council has now offered the delegation to Mr. Alfred Sarasin, President of the Swiss Bank Union. Mr. Sarasin has accepted the appointment.

\* \* \*

The Federal Council has decided, in order to relieve the lot of the unemployed, to pay half of any extra assistance which local bodies may grant to deserving cases, this assistance, however, not to exceed 50 frs. per person.

\* \* \*

*Comptoir Suisse.*—The Exhibition of Agricultural Products at Lausanne was opened on September 14th, in the presence of Federal President Haab, Federal Councillor Schulthess, and cantonal representatives.

\* \* \*

Philippe Godet, the Neuchâtel writer, has been made a Commander of the Légion d'Honneur; born in 1850, he is the author of many poetical and literary works and several essays on matters of contemporary interest.

\* \* \*

A donation of 10,000 frs. has been handed over to the guides of Grindelwald by the Japanese Maki towards the cost of erecting a hut on the eastern slope of the Eiger; it will be remembered that Mr. Maki was the first to make this ascent this year.

\* \* \*

Twenty Swiss railway trucks have been found amongst the booty captured by the Turks from the retreating Greeks. These are said to be curiously similar to the same number that, some time ago, were sent from Switzerland to Roumania and which disappeared mysteriously during the journey.

\* \* \*

An experience which might well have been followed by serious consequences befell a Dutch lady doctor who lost her way in the National Park near Val Cluoza. As she did not return to her hotel, a search party was sent out in the dark, who, however, could not discover the lady's whereabouts, although they heard her cries for help. It was only after two days' search that she was found in a drift of newly fallen snow on the edge of an abyss. She had to be pulled up by rope and had to go through the ordeal of being suspended in mid-air for about three hours before at last being brought to safety.

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A grave accident occurred on the road between Schaff-