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HOME NEWS

The President of the French Republic has caused to be presented to the City of Basle the "Médaille vermeille de la reconnaissance française," together with a diploma in recognition of the charitable services rendered to French refugees and wounded soldiers during the late war.

* * *

The British Chamber of Commerce for Switzerland has held in Berne its General Meeting under the presidency of the British Ambassador, the Hon. Theo. Russell.

Leading representatives of Swiss commerce and industry participated at the meeting.

A resolution was passed expressing the opinion of the meeting that the French project, which involves the construction of a lateral canal to the Rhine on French territory, would seriously impede the free traffic of boats on the Rhine, in addition to retarding passage on account of locks and attendant customs formalities, and therefore urging the British Government that its delegates on the International Rhine Commission should support the technical objections of the Swiss Government to any scheme which would impair free and quick navigation on the Rhine between Strasbourg and Basle.

The meeting further resolved to draw the attention of the British Government to the necessity of abolishing passport visas between Great Britain and Switzerland, the restriction being an unfavourable handicap to Anglo-Swiss relations.

The Administrative Council of the Chamber also expressed its disapproval of the boycott which has been declared by the Schweizerische Tabakverband against the Swiss Branch of the British-American Tobacco Co., Ltd., considering the action a repressive measure by which the Swiss Union not only injures Anglo-Swiss trade relations, but also shuts out free competition, thereby fostering maintenance of high prices to the detriment of Swiss consumers.

* * *

On January 31st the roll of unemployed in Switzerland registered 96,580, an increase during that month of 7,613. Emergency employment was provided for 19,662.

The building trade was represented by 18,924 unemployed, the textile industry by 21,514, the metal, machinery and electrical trades by 29,996, and the watch and jewellery trades by 26,188.

Unemployed foreigners in Switzerland totalled 7,804, of whom 4,388 were recipients of unemployment grants.

The Italians considerably outnumbered other nationalities with 4,316 unemployed (2,331 receiving relief), then follow Germans with 2,002 (1,473), French 885 (421), Austrians 193 (56).

* * *

The new taxation proposals put forward by the Social-Democratic Party of the Canton of Aargau have been rejected by the cantonal voters by 29,865 against 19,001.

* * *

The index figures of the cost of living, which are periodically compiled by the Association of Swiss Co-operative Societies, show an average drop of 22 per cent. compared with the January figures of 1921.

The following table illustrates the fall in prices of certain commodities:—

| | January, 1921. | January, 1922. |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Fr. | Fr. |
| Milk (per litre) ... | —49 | —49 |
| Cheese (per kilo) ... | 5.00 | 5.00 |
| Butter ... | 8.18 | 6.74 |
| Bread ... | —75 | —60 |
| Flour ... | —85 | —68 |
| Veal ... | 5.44 | 3.37 |
| Beef ... | 4.74 | 3.43 |
| Mutton ... | 5.76 | 3.61 |
| Pork ... | 6.20 | 4.86 |
| Potatoes ... | —19 | —19 |
| Eggs (each) ... | —41 | —26 |
| Haricot Beans ... | 1.14 | —62 |
| Peas ... | 1.32 | 1.15 |
| Macaroni ... | 1.45 | 1.18 |
| Sugar ... | 1.70 | 1.10 |
| Rice ... | 1.15 | —69 |
| Coffee ... | 3.08 | 2.39 |
| Anthracite (100 kilos) | 25.20 | 14.54 |
| Briquettes ... | 17.00 | 9.95 |
| Paraffin ... | —70 | —46 |
| Soap ... | 2.74 | 1.72 |

At the 1922 prices the increase of the present-day cost of living over that in 1912 still indicates a rise of from 70 to 80 per cent.

* * *

The electors of the Canton of Zurich have decided by 68,600 votes against 24,490 that the existing laws of taxation shall be revised and a Bill adopted which will bring relief to the smaller tax payer by increasing the burden of the propertied classes.

The credit of 10 million francs asked for to combat unemployment by means of providing emergency work has also been adopted by the voters with 71,194 against 25,506 votes. Both these results show with emphasis that the majority of the electorate of the Canton of Zurich are fully conscious of the necessity for social solidarity under the present difficult conditions.

* * *

At Berne an exhibition of drawings by Swiss scholars

has been opened by Federal Councillor M. Chuard, Minister of the Interior. The exhibition has been organised by States Councillor Merz (Berne), the editor of the Pestalozzi Almanac, and will remain open until March 19th.

* * *

The administrators of the Aluminium Industrie A.G. Endowment Fund for the encouragement of studies in national economics and applied electricity, and particularly for study and research in electro-chemical and electro-metallurgical science, express their surprise in the Swiss press that in view of the prevailing industrial crisis more applications for financial aid have not been received.

During 1921 only 14,500 frs. were distributed in subsidising various scientific works, although the available funds permit expenditure of far greater amounts.

* * *

The Belgian Football Association having declined to fall in with the views of the Swiss Union (as mentioned in our last issue), the match between Belgium and Switzerland, which should have taken place in Lausanne next May, has been called off by the latter.

NOTES & GLEANINGS.

The correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette* (Feb. 14th) describes in detail the mountaineering ventures of the new Pope, and says that it is difficult to imagine "how with his love for the mountains he can ever be content with the orthodox walk about the Vatican Gardens, beautiful as these are."

Much activity is being displayed again in British industrial circles with reference to the Rhine Navigation scheme, probably due to some allusions made in a paper read by Sir Joseph Broodbank on February 10th at the "London Society." An influential deputation was received on February 15th by Sir William Mitchell Thomson of the Board of Trade, when the importance of the maintenance and improvement of the Upper Rhine to British export trade was insisted upon.

* * *

In an article on "Anglo-Swiss Trade" in the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* (Feb. 9th) stress is laid on the antiquated methods which British manufacturers are still pursuing in endeavouring to introduce their goods to the Swiss market. Catalogues printed in English, with British measures and weights and f.o.b. quotations in sterling are practically useless, but occasionally shortsightedness attains a limit, as the following example will illustrate:—"A large British firm had secured by tender an order from the Swiss Post Office, admittedly the best organised in Europe, and the department of which Switzerland has special reason to be proud. Yet the firm in question insisted on payment before delivery."

* * *

The *British Medical Journal* (Feb. 11th) contains the following appeal from Sir Martin Conway, who says that the interferences with free travel during the last seven years, owing to passport restrictions, have had a disastrous effect upon the alpine treatment of TUBERCULOSIS:—

"The British Davos Sanatorium, built under the patronage and name of Queen Alexandra, after vain appeals in your columns by the late Lord Balfour of Burleigh and others, has recently been sold by its committee to the Cantons of Schaffhausen and Thurgau. In spite of the efforts of Lord Balfour, Dr. Mitchell Bruce, Sir William Willcox, and several others who tried in vain to save it for the nation, this institution,

which the Queen Mother had fostered and which had been a great blessing to so many English patients of moderate means, has been disposed of at a very low figure to the Swiss authorities.

During the war consumptive sanatoriums sprang up in England in all directions to meet urgent military necessities, and the treatment of tuberculosis in this damp and sunless climate grew rapidly.

I believe that I was the first English writer to call attention to the remarkable plateau of Montana. This place, with Villars sur Ollon and Leysin on the north side of the Rhone Valley, furnish unique conditions for the treatment of this terrible disease. Some very influential representatives of the medical profession, including Dr. Mitchell Bruce, Sir Humphrey Rolleston, Sir William Willcox, Sir John Broadbent, Sir Charlton Briscoe, and others whose names are known throughout the medical world, visited Switzerland last summer as guests of the Swiss Government, to inspect the Swiss health resorts. As a result of these visits several articles appeared in the "Lancet," "British Medical Journal," and the "Journal of Tuberculosis," in which the writers testified that the climate and other conditions of the north side of the Rhone Valley are of great value in dealing with the disease.

From time immemorial the dryness of the climate in the Valais on the north side of the Rhone has been so great that former generations have constructed what would be called in India huge "tanks" or small lakes for the irrigation of the vineyards which stretch along the whole of that side of the Valais. The long duration of sun produces wines almost as strong as the Italian wines. On the shortest day in winter these alpine slopes enjoy two hours more sunshine than the alpine lung resorts in German Switzerland.

I venture to suggest in your columns that the funds from the sale of the Queen Alexandra Sanatorium now in the hands of the committee might well be supplemented by some generous donor or donors for the purpose of re-establishing in French Switzerland the work carried on in Queen Alexandra's name with such benefit to our countrymen.

I am supported by the best medical opinion in saying that recoveries are more probable and more rapid in an institution situated in such a district as I have described than can be hoped for, under any circumstances, within the range of the British Isles."

The Queen Alexandra Sanatorium for British consumptives was opened at Davos in 1909 and received patients for about 6s. per day. A proposal to acquire the sanatorium for frs. 800,000 has been rejected on the 19th inst. by the voters of the canton of Thurgau.

* * *

The fact of Chaliapin, the great Russian singer, having recently partaken of "Vacherin" prompts the *Daily News* (Feb. 14th) to publish a eulogy on this Swiss cheese which no doubt will rouse the farmers of the Jura mountains to ecstasies. After pointing out that the atmosphere of the place in which a cheese is made has a great deal to do with its peculiar virtues, the glorification culminates in the following recapitulation:—"Vacherin is creamier than Brie; more thrilling than Gorgonzola; provocative of deeper emotions than Stilton; and effecting a reconciliation to life more complete than Gruyère. Above all, it is guaranteed not to produce nightmares."

LES RELATIONS ECONOMIQUES ENTRE LA GRANDE-BRETAGNE ET LA SUISSE *

par William Waldvogel (Neuveville, W. Henry, 1922.)

The author of this excellent work has rendered a great service to men of business in Great Britain and Switzerland. He has produced in a concise and very readable form a complete history of the economic relations of the two countries. From the bibliography included in this volume we can judge of the number of authorities which the author has had to consult, and from the fact that we can find no

*288 p.p., crown 4to (price 7/-, by post 7/4), from "Swiss Observer," 21, Garlick Hill, London, E.C. 4.