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HOME NEWS

Considerable surprise has been caused in Berne and Geneva by the French decree which abolishes the free Savoy zones on November 10th, on which date the customs barrier will become identical with the political frontier. Later official utterances of the French Government seem to indicate, however, that the decree is not to be taken so very seriously and is meant to be a reminder, addressed to our Federal authorities, to give this unsolved question its immediate attention by submitting fresh proposals. The Federal Council despatched last Tuesday a note to our Minister in Paris for presentation to the Quai d'Orsay, of which the following is an extract officially issued to the press:—

"Le Conseil fédéral commence par revenir sur l'art. 435, base de tout le différend. Il conteste que la Suisse cherche à se soustraire aux engagements contractés; mais aussi il établit que l'art. 435 n'a force de loi que dans la mesure où elle l'a accepté. Il montre que tant que l'accord ne sera pas fait sur sa portée, les conversations ne sauraient aboutir à un résultat satisfaisant. Cet article est le noeud gardien de toute l'affaire; c'est pourquoi le Conseil fédéral ne peut pas accepter de négocier dans les circonstances créées par le gouvernement français.

"La note réfute ensuite l'accusation portée contre le Conseil fédéral d'avoir, par son attitude dilatoire, rendues vaines les négociations. Elle rappelle que les conversations n'ont pas cessé depuis le mois d'avril, et qu'à plusieurs reprises le Département politique a tenu à constater qu'elles étaient bien en cours. Celui-ci a prévenu la France que la Chambre de commerce de Genève procédait à de nouvelles études, et qu'un projet serait envoyé à Paris au début d'octobre. La note fait en outre mention du projet français du 27 juillet, et montre qu'il était inacceptable, parce qu'il considérait comme réglée la question de droit, et basait ses quatre conventions techniques sur le transfert du cordon douanier à la frontière politique, solution rejetée par le peuple suisse le 18 février.

"En terminant, le Conseil fédéral propose de soumettre le litige à la Cour internationale de la Haye, ou à tout autre instance arbitrale qui conviendrait au gouvernement français. Il adresse à celui-ci un pressant appel pour qu'il accepte ce moyen de conciliation si conforme à l'amitié traditionnelle qui a toujours uni les deux pays."

The strike of carpenters and woodworkers, which for nearly five months seriously hampered the Basle building trade, has now been settled; no victory is claimed by either side.

At a general meeting of the Welch sections of the Swiss Communist party, held in Montreux last Saturday and Sunday, it was decided to publish a fortnightly review, which will appear for the first time at the beginning of next month under the title of *Le Drapeau Rouge*.

Accused of fraud and defalcations in connection with the sale of the Austrian crown jewels, Baron Bruno Steiner, who was acting for the ex-Emperor Charles, and his wife have been extradited from France and are awaiting trial by the Bernese courts.

The late Professor A. Tobler bequeathed Frs. 150,000 to the Widows and Orphans Fund of the teachers at the Federal Polytechnicum in Zurich.

The painter and writer, Paul Robert, died in Orvin at the age of 73; he is chiefly known as the painter of the mural decorations along the grand staircases of the Federal Court in Lausanne, the Museum in Neuchâtel, and other public buildings.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

The Summer Season in Switzerland.—The summer season of 1923 has been good, very good even in a large number of Swiss stations and towns. Foreigners have flocked in from all parts of the world. The traffic at certain frontier railway stations, that of Basle, for instance, has surpassed the best years before the war. Usually at this time of the year

the number of travellers leaving Switzerland is greater than that of incoming tourists. This year, for the first time at the same period, the reverse has been the case.

The number of foreign tourists shows a great increase on that of last year. The majority are English, Americans, and Dutch; next, though in far smaller numbers, come the French, the Belgians, the Italians, and the Spaniards, etc.; the latter suffer at the present moment, unfortunately, from the rate of exchange.

The Transport Companies, especially the Mountain Railways and certain Navigation Companies (on the lakes of Geneva, Lucerne, Thun, and in other districts which were generally little frequented) say the rolling stock and boats were at times insufficient to cope with the rush of tourists. In one single day more than 62,000 travellers took the train at the railway station at Lucerne.

The Engadine, and the other stations in the Canton of Grisons, Central Switzerland, Lucerne, especially the Bernese Oberland, the Vaudois Alps, the Canton of Valais and the Jura, have had on many occasions their hotels quite full, and in certain places the hotels have been obliged to refuse tourists.

There is a new and very important element in the large circulation of tourists in Switzerland: it is that of the motor-car—postal motor-cars of the Confederation and private motor-cars. The Postal Administration uses the Saurer motor-cars, and they have given every satisfaction. Up till now no accident, not even a break-down has caused an interruption in the irreproachable regularity of the services; great success has resulted from this means of agreeable and commodious travelling. It carries tourists into regions and districts which were generally little frequented up till now, on account of the great distance from the railways. To-day, one can easily arrive at, and cross, in a very short time, the mountain passes, such as the Great St. Bernard (8,000 ft.) or the Furka Pass (7,980 ft.) comfortably seated in powerful motor-cars.

In September the shooting season opened, and chamois stalking begins at Arosa, Celerina, Interlaken, Pontresina, Wengen, and Zinal, etc.

(Bulletin officiel du Bis.)

Le drapeau du "Genève."—Le Conseil d'Etat a pris possession, du drapeau du "Genève" qui lui a été confié, ainsi que nous l'avons déjà dit, par le Club suisse d'aviation, section de Genève de l'Aéro-Club suisse.

Le glorieux emblème, portant les marques de la foudre, a été doublé de soie blanche par des mains pieuses.

Le Conseil d'Etat a décidé d'adresser une lettre à M. le conseiller administratif Stoessel, délégué aux musées et collections, pour lui demander s'il serait d'accord de placer cette relique précieuse au Musée d'art et d'histoire. En attendant qu'une décision soit prise, le drapeau du "Genève" a été remis à M. le chancelier d'Etat Bret.

(La Suisse.)

Ein Kampf zwischen Adlern und Gensern.—Im Alpsteingebiet horsten bekanntlich an vier oder fünf Orten Steinadler. Dieser Tage beobachteten einige Männer ein Rudel Gensern von ungefähr 20 Stück, darunter einige diesjährige Zicklein. Ueber der Gruppe kreiste in geringer Höhe ein stolzes Adlerpaar, das unermüdlich mit Flügelschlagen die alten Tiere auseinander zu treiben suchte, um sich sodann auf die junge Beute zu stürzen. Doch jene umstellten instinktiv und kampfbereit ihre Jungen, sodass diese immer geschützt hart an der Felswand standen, von wo ihnen keine Gefahr drohen konnte. Obwohl die Adler über 20 Angriffsversuche machten, gelang es ihnen nicht, die Phalanx zu durchbrechen und an die Jungen heranzukommen, und sie mussten den Kampf unverrichteter Dinge aufgeben.

(Grenzpost.)

Nach Russland.—In Winterthur fand letzter Tage eine Versammlung von Leuten statt, die beabsichtigen, nach Soviet-Russland auszuwandern und dort als kommunistische Bauern ein "sorgenfreies" Bolschewikdasein zu führen. Bekanntlich hatte seinerzeit der inzwischen wieder ins Ausland verschwundene Fritz Platten die Mission übernommen, Lenin solche Schweizerarbeiter zuzuführen und sie in Russland anzusiedeln. Wie man nun hört, haben sich 38 Familien aus den Kantonen Schaffhausen, Thurgau und Zürich für die Sache interessiert.

(Allgemeiner Anzeiger.)

Le Palais du B.I.T.—La cérémonie de la pose de la première pierre du nouveau palais du B.I.T. dans la campagne Bloch, à Sécheron, a été fixée à 4 heures de l'après-midi, le dimanche 21 octobre. Seront présents MM. Scheurer, président, Chuard, vice-président de la Confédération, le Conseil d'Etat



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et le Conseil administratif de la Ville, au complet, ainsi que tous les délégués à la conférence internationale du travail qui sera ouverte le lendemain au Casino municipal. Plusieurs discours seront prononcés, puis l'on entendra l'Harmonie nautique, sous la direction de M. Gabelles, et le Cercle choral, dirigé par M. Otto Wend, qui seront installés sur le kiosque ambulant, prêté par la Ville. La Chorale municipale chantera notamment un "Hymne au travail."

Un dîner sera offert le soir par le président de la Confédération, dans l'hôtel des Bergues. (La Suisse.)

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

The Swiss Observer is so neat and compact that very few of its readers can have an idea of the worry and trouble expended upon its production. If they had, I feel sure they would tumble over each other to thank the Editor and his faithful assistants—including, of course, "Kyburg"—for the wonderful fare they provide for them week by week. Just think what it must mean to write all the various articles in one's leisure time, when the Editor has got a fearful cold and when some of his assistants, as has happened just now to "Kyburg," went week-ending for three days, instead of sitting down to do their weekly column. Then the telephone starts in earnest, and somebody wants to know when that — copy will be coming along! In such times it is of real comfort to find that the British Press has nobly done its share of the work by publishing quite a number of interesting paragraphs referring to Switzerland, and I, at least, find my work considerably lightened thereby.

Typewriter Magic: Machine operated by Voice.

Daily News (5th Oct.):—

Are the days of the shorthand-typist numbered? It would seem so if one may believe the claims made for a machine concerning which a patent has recently been applied for at Berne. This is nothing less than a phonetic typewriter, which writes direct from dictation.

The inventor is Mr. Martin Bandli, of Davos, who describes the machine as "a typewriter enabling a person to write by the use of the voice only." Until applications for patents have been entered in all countries, Mr. Bandli is maintaining a certain reserve, which one can well understand, but he informs me that a person may talk at a speed of 90 to 100 words a minute, and that as many copies can be obtained as with an ordinary typewriter.

The question which at once occurs to the mind is: How does he get over the difficulty of spelling? I can only quote his own statement. He says:—

"The two principal difficulties to be overcome were those of correct orthography and the writing of figures. The first, for a long time, proved an almost insurmountable obstacle, because, especially in the English language, there are in some cases half a dozen different letter combinations for one single sound."

"Finally, I found out a device by means of which the short intervals of silence (one-tenth to one-fifth second), which in every case take place between two words or distinct syllables, are used automatically in finding the correct letter combinations."

"The second 'hard nut'—how to write numbers otherwise than in the form of words, while allowing the machine to write them as words if desired—was eventually solved by considerably lowering the voice