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# The Swiss Observer

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(58, Renfield Street).

The whole of Scotland.

#### SWISS LEGATION.

32, Queen Anne Street, W. 1.

London, January, 1923.

## HOME NEWS

On Sunday, February 18th, the Swiss people will have to vote on the Savoy zones convention, concluded with France on August 7th, 1921, and subsequently ratified by both the State and National Councils. The demand for a referendum was signed by about 59,000 citizens, and although the matter is of essentially local (Geneva) importance, a lively propaganda in other parts of Switzerland is directed against the convention. The latter, briefly, abolishes the privileges of Savoy, which dated from agreements entered into in 1815 and 1860,

and the customs barrier will become identical with the political frontier. The French Chamber ratified the convention on the 2nd inst. by 424 to 7 votes.

\* \* \*

Another measure, to be determined on the same day, is an initiative, demanded over three and a half years ago, and which seeks to invest the Federal authorities with the right of preventive arrest (Schutzaft). Similar dispositions were already contained in the "Lex Haeberlin," rejected last September by a large majority.

\* \* \*

By a small majority (87 to 82) the National Council has abolished free postage, and the proposal is referred back to the States Council, who at the time was in favour of making no change.

\* \* \*

During the year 1922 the clerical staff in the employ of the Confederation has been reduced by 23% as compared with 1921 (from 32,940 to 32,093), and the employees of the Swiss Federal Railways by about 5% (from 37,808 to 35,964).

\* \* \*

A short but lively discussion took place last Monday in the National Council, when the proposed surrender of a Geneva property for the purpose of housing the International Labour Bureau was voted upon; the Socialist members seized the opportunity for severely criticising the League of Nations.

\* \* \*

New five-franc pieces will be struck, showing on the obverse a typical herd-boy in his alpine garb (junger Senn im Hirtenhemd).

\* \* \*

Playing with a loaded rifle brought about the death of two boys in Wyden (Buchs). Hans Schütz, age 15, after accidentally shooting his playmate, Joseph Buch, age 10, went and hanged himself in the neighbouring wood.

\* \* \*

A futile attempt was made on Saturday, Feb. 3rd, to derail the 8.30 express train from Biel to Solothurn. A large iron beam and heavy stones were laid across the line. A few arrests have been effected.

\* \* \*

General Wille, in a long article in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (No. 163, Feb. 5th), entitled "Our Duty," pleads for Swiss intervention at the League of Nations in regard to the French policy in exacting reparations from Germany.

\* \* \*

At the concours de chronomètres at Neuchâtel no less than 574 watches have been submitted. The list of awards has now been published, at the head of which appear the following well-known manufacturers, who have all secured a number of first prizes: Paul Dietheim, La Chaux-de-Fonds; Ulysse Nardin, Le Locle; and the Zenith Watch Co., Le Locle.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### The Winter Season.

The "high season" is now in full swing, and the most important sporting events will be decided before the end of this month. A stay at one of the fashionable resorts, with all their outdoor and indoor attractions, is indeed a strenuous affair and would seem to suggest the necessity of a rest-cure to follow. The hotel managers are ever anxious to devise and introduce new features for enhancing the lure of their particular district, and when the latter is fortunate in harbouring such a convincing journalist as Sir John Foster Fraser, their enterprise will not fail to secure recognition and widespread publicity. Sir John is at present "stuck away in an elevated Alpine fastness where it does not seem to matter what is happening down-stairs on the earth"; horse-racing on the ice is the all-absorbing topic, and the following is the description which has been sent to the *Evening Standard* (Feb. 2nd):—

"St. Moritz lake is frozen over and provides an excellent plain, but with beaten snow instead of turf. A staked 2000-metre course has been made; grand stands have been erected. There is the enclosure and the paddock. The totalisator offices for backing your fancy are the most important buildings.

A number of well-known jockeys, like Archibald McGee and O'Neill, are in St. Moritz, keeping themselves fit with winter sports, and mount well-known Continental horses.

The altitude of over 6000 affects the wind of beast as well as man, and there has to be a little acclimatisation in the case of both.

The St. Moritz meet has much of the good humour of Irish races. The mountain hotels are rather like

ships, where everybody gets to know everybody else within a week, and there is a constant interchange of hospitality, so that after a morning of skating or skiing we all have early and generous lunch and then jump into jangle-belled sleighs and off down to the lake, the merriest of family parties.

Everybody is there, from English peeresses to French prize-fighters and M.P.s. You can get a three-days' ticket to the grand stand for 50 francs, and you pay 2 francs for standing room on any one day.

Of course, there are the rugged, snow-covered mountains to look at; there is sunshine; there is a band; there is a stand where multi-coloured beverages may be purchased. There are no "bookies," but the Rennverein has set up two totalisators, and the amount put on the horses is divided amongst those with correct foresight, less a small percentage which goes to the village.

The English are the principal backers, but can only put their money on within ten minutes or so before the race is run, and the window is closed as soon as the horses have left the paddock. So there is always a theatre-like queue waiting to get to the windows. The highest price ticket is 50 francs and the lowest 5 francs. After the race there is a long queue to get small returns if the favourite wins, and a short queue to get a big return if an outsider romps home.

We are a quaintly garbed lot, a mixture of puttied golf enthusiasts in plus fours and sweatered Alpine climbers, and the ladies on the grand stand are in their furs and woollies and snow boots to keep their feet warm.

There is a tremendous boom; but it is nothing except the ice cracking under the assembled weight of 3000 spectators.

The jockeys are in their caps and colours, but they wear thick-soled boots and double socks when 'up.' There is a flat race, 'open to four-year-old and upwards horses of all countries,' over 1500 metres for 2000 francs. There are nine starters, and they take an interminable time far down the course in getting away.

But it is a thrilling and pretty sight as they come past the grand stand to make the circle of the course—the leaders easily to be seen, but the followers in a perfect mist of kicked-up snow.

"When one gets into that, which nearly blinds you, it is like a thick snow-storm, and almost impossible to break through," a jockey afterwards said to me. The favourite did not win.

Personally, I found the skijoring races the more exciting. The finest ski-runners in Switzerland are here. They are on ski, and whilst with one hand they hold on to a slight hauling-bar, with the other they grip the reins.

The horses go at the pace of runaways. It is thrilling. Ski-ers are thrown and dragged, and released horses scamper where they like. In the last furlong, with three runners together, the pace terrific, it always looks as though there must be a mix-up of the ski and a smash. When the leader goes down and the others are over him and past him in a smother of snow, there is a gasp.

Yes, skijoring is a great sport; one of the finest contests is when the best horses in the meet are mounted by jockeys, with lady competitors skiing behind.

It looks tremendously dangerous, especially when they all come along in a bunch, and the crowd gives a sudden shout when the ski-er is down and you see her crawling in the snow, whilst horse and rider plunges on ahead.

They all come in terribly blown, horses, jockeys, and ski-runners, coated with snow, and the women winners exhausted, but smiling."

Another writer in the *Daily Mail* (Jan. 25th), gives a vivid pen-picture of a ski-jumping championship, whilst a fair contributor in the *Westminster Gazette* (Feb. 1st) reveals the secret by which a six weeks' stay in the Swiss Alps can be converted into a regular "beauty cure."

### The Night Life of Lausanne.

This is the title of an article by G. Ward Price, the correspondent of the *Daily Mail* (Jan. 29th); it does not do justice to the headline, but as a sort of a burlesque on the Conference it will make amusing reading. We, of course, accept no responsibility for the startling revelations. This is what he writes:—

"Ten weeks of talking—they must have wasted a lot of time!" is what some people are saying about the Lausanne Conference, now that its end draws near. But they are wrong, for the good reason that there has been nothing to waste it on.

M. Poincaré is said to have urged the choice of Lausanne for the Conference as being a quiet little town. The idea apparently was that it would be over the sooner for that.

But dullness clogs the brain even more quickly than amusement. And after ten weeks of the off-season in what is at all times a very quiet Swiss town of the boarding-school-sanatorium-half-pay-cordon type, the members of the Conference are bored to death.

Accustomed to the competing distractions of their various capitals, these diplomats have been reduced by the 'ennui' of the Conference to indulgence in strange pastimes. It came as a great shock to me one night when, in personal despair, I sought out the chief local cinema to find the gallery occupied by the best brains in the British Foreign Office, eagerly watching Charlie Chaplin interpret 'A Dog's Life.'

But it was left to the Italian admiral to provide a standing remedy for the monotony of leisure moments at Lausanne.

One evening, after a more than usually indigestible gala-dinner, which he had attended in full uniform, he offered to initiate his fellow-guests into an Italian game whose name has been anglicised as the Conference into 'botchy-botchy.'

It is nothing more than marbles, played with pool-balls on an ordinary billiards-table, but I have seen some of the most responsible brows in Europe bent over it in careful calculation.

Ismet Pasha enjoys it immensely, playing a dashing, if somewhat reckless, game; Marquis Garoni, the chief Italian delegate, is one of his most redoubtable opponents, using all the caution which a long diplomatic career has taught him pays in the end.

And some of the younger members of the staff of the British delegation show the national adaptability for all ball-games. In fact, the Lausanne Conference could probably put up a team that would extend the most skilful English errand-boys that ever shot a blood-alley.

The table on which "betchy-betchy" is played has a patched cloth and moribund cushions, and balls rolling on its surface are liable to as sudden and inexplicable aberrations as if they were projects at the Conference; but it is the only English billiards-table there is, and when you tire of looking on, it is almost equally diverting to study the expressions of indignation on the faces of real billiards players who see it degraded until far into the small hours to such base uses.

### EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Die Axenstrasse in Gefahr.** — Wer schon einmal von Brunnen nach Flüelen gewandert ist und sich an den Schönheiten dieses Stückchens Erde erfreuen konnte, wird mit Bedauern vernehmen, dass auch dieses Strassenstück für den Touristen verloren ist. Bisher war nämlich die Strasse wenigstens auf dem schweizerischen Gebiet von dem Auto, seinem Staubbewölken und Gefahren frei. Schwyz besitzt nämlich ein Sonntagsfahrverbot für Automobile. Nun hat die Regierung des Kantons Schwyz sich bereit erklärt, die Strasse bis Brunnen zu öffnen, und im letzten Sommer rasselten die Autos auf der ganzen Linie und vertrieben die Fussgänger. Die Urner Regierung hat auch die Bereitwilligkeit ausgesprochen, die Axenstrasse als Durchgangsstrasse dem Verkehr ganz zu öffnen. Von andrer Seite wird aber diesem Vorhaben sehr stark opponiert, hoffentlich mit Erfolg. (*Volkswacht am Bodensee.*)

\* \* \*

**Wie man in Bias (Wallis) früher anbandelte.** — Sah ein Mädchen einen Burschen gern, so ging sie am "feissen Frontag" (Tag vor den Fasten) nach Fiesch und kaufte "Mutzbrot." Dasselbe hatte die Form eines Kranzes und war auch feiner und weisser, als das mit Gerste vermischt Roggenbrot. Zu Hause wurde das Brot in ein Versteck versorgt, damit nicht Mäuse und gefrässige Brüder es beschädigen könnten. An der alten Fastnacht war die Entscheidung.

Sah nun ein Bursche ein Mädchen gern, so "bzahle" er zu trinken. Er brachte Wein in das Haus der Auserkorenen und lud sie ein. War den Eltern und dem Mädchen der Bub willkommen, so wurde das ringförmige Brot und Fleisch aufgetischt und allem tapfer zugesprochen. Der Bursche sah daraus, dass er als Freier willkommen sei.

Lag die Sache nicht günstig, und waren nur die Eltern einverstanden, so wurde schon etwas "Spys" (Brot) auf den Tisch gelegt, und das Mädchen liess sich auch Wein einschenken, nippete vielleicht auch davon; aber bald entfernte es sich aus der Stube und kam nicht mehr zum Vorschein, so lange der da war.

War dieser jedoch allen Teilen unerwünscht, so wurden nicht einmal Becher aufgestellt, und es ging nicht lang, so verschwand der Jüngling mit seinem Wein und seiner Liebe, um sein Glück anderswo zu suchen. (*Schweizer Bauer.*)

\* \* \*

**Le retour des canons de 1814.** — Les deux canons dont le gouvernement de la République autrichienne vient de décider la restitution au canton de Genève sont des souvenirs historiques, d'un haut intérêt en même temps que des œuvres d'art de valeur. Signalés dès 1884 dans les catalogues du Musée de l'Armée de Vienne, on les croyait disparus ou fondus depuis qu'en 1914 la légation impériale d'Autriche avait déclaré au Conseil administratif de la ville de Genève qu'il était impossible de les retrouver.

C'est à M. le ministre de la Confédération suisse à Vienne, M. le Dr. Bourcart, que revient le mérite de les avoir retrouvés en février 1922, toujours au Musée de l'Armée; les démarches de M. Bourcart, qui agissait à la demande du Conseil d'Etat de Genève, ont été d'ailleurs grandement facilitées par l'amabilité des autorités et des fonctionnaires de la République autrichienne.

La plus remarquable de ces deux pièces est un canon de bronze de 3 m. 50 de long, orné d'un cartouche aux armes de Genève et fondu en 1680 par Martin Emery. Une fois cette identification acquise, il restait à exposer au gouvernement autrichien les raisons que le Conseil d'Etat avait de penser que ces canons auraient dû normalement faire partie de la restitution ordonnée le 23 juillet 1814 par l'Empereur François Ier, grâce aux démarches du lieutenant-colonel Pinon, et que c'était à la suite d'une erreur ou d'une méconnaissance des décisions prises qu'ils étaient restés à Vienne.

Tel a été le but des démarches et des négociations poursuivies par M. le conseiller d'Etat Rütty, par l'entremise du Département politique fédéral et de la légation de Suisse à Vienne. Grâce aux documents de nos archives, il a pu établir que des 70 ou 73 pièces d'artillerie genevoises enlevées à la place par l'état-major du général de Bubna

en février 1814, 48 seulement ont été retrouvées et reclamées par le lieutenant-colonel Pinon et restituées à la République en décembre 1814; février et mars 1815. L'empereur et le prince de Metternich avaient également déclaré au lieutenant-colonel Pinon que les pièces genevoises perdues seraient remplacées; comme cette compensation n'a pas eu lieu, il était hors de doute que les effets des décisions de 1814 devaient s'étendre aux pièces restées à Vienne jusqu'en 1922 et que leur légitime propriété demeurait la République de Genève.

Après avoir ainsi établi en droit le bien-fondé d'une demande de restitution, il restait à provoquer de la part de l'Autriche un geste particulièrement amical; en 1814, le retour des canons causa une joyeuse émotion dans la population genevoise; en rendant à la République restaurée ses anciens moyens de défense, le gouvernement autrichien donnait plus de solennité à la reconnaissance de l'indépendance genevoise. C'est un rappel à ce souvenir en même temps qu'une preuve d'amitié et d'équité que le gouvernement de la République autrichienne manifeste en annonçant le prochain retour à Genève de ces deux pièces.

Le canon d'Emery (de Colovrex, alors dans le pays de Gex) est long de 3,50 m., orné, comme il est dit plus haut, d'un superbe cartouche aux armes de Genève avec le millésime de 1680; les anses sont des dauphins, et près du bouton de culasse on lit en caractères cursifs gravés: "No. 2 fecit Martin Emery." Le même fondeur avait donc fabriqué d'autres pièces; il était le fournisseur de l'arsenal genevois dans la seconde moitié du XVIIe siècle. (*Journal de Genève.*)

\* \* \*

**La doyenne du Tessin.** — A Arosio (Malcantone, district de Lugano), est décédé, à l'âge de 98 ans, Mme. Thérèse Devitori. C'était la doyenne des femmes tessinoises et une vaillante chrétienne. Elle se plaisait à dire: "Je joins avec reconnaissance des biens modestes que la Providence m'a attribués et je supporte les maux avec patience: je suis contente de mon sort et d'avoir vécu une longue vie dont le bon Dieu fixera le terme." (*La Liberté.*)

### THE SWISS FLAG ON THE HIGH SEAS.

It will be news to many of our readers that Switzerland is entitled to have her own Mercantile Marine, the right to fly their own flag on the high seas having been extended to inland states and expressly recognized by Art. 273 of the Versailles Treaty and the Barcelona Conference of 1921. Commercial interests in our Colony have already given this matter their serious consideration, and at a special meeting of the "Commission Suisse à Londres pour l'Etude de Questions Économiques et Commerciales," presided over by Monsieur Gustave Aguet, and held on February 2nd, the following resolution was unanimously accepted and forwarded to the Department of Public Economy in Berne:—"Switzerland having the right of flying the Swiss flag on the seas, this Commission suggests to the Federal Government the desirability of taking the needful steps for giving effect to the above right."

As far back as 1864 this important question has formed the subject of petitions to the Federal Council, when a considerable number of Swiss citizens in Trieste, Smyrna and Petrograd made similar applications; since then several more found their way to Berne from Swiss merchants engaged abroad, but our authorities found themselves obliged to reject every one of them. The present changed conditions enable the matter to be approached from a different angle, and it is hoped that this will result in Switzerland taking a share in the world's shipowning trade. Should the Federal Council choose to exercise this right, operations would be a matter for private enterprise. Besides eliminating certain difficulties and disadvantages in case of war, it is confidently anticipated that an independent Swiss shipowning company would greatly benefit our export trade and open valuable new avenues for employment.

### Mme. ALICE LANDOLT'S CONCERT.

Mme. Alice Landolt made her debut in this country with a piano-forte recital at Wigmore Hall on Thursday afternoon, the 1st inst.

Her programme, which included selections from the works of Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin and Liszt, was very well received by an appreciative and fairly large audience, in particular her spirited interpretation of Brahms' Paganini (Variations) and her very soulful rendering of Chopin's Fantasie in F minor, calling forth warm tributes. Perhaps, however, her artistry and skill were most clearly revealed in her rendering of the last selection on the programme, Liszt's Rigoletto. This item was most enthusiastically received.

Mme. Landolt studied under Hans Huber, Carréno and Busoni. Her first public appearance was with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

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### FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

Political conditions continue to exercise a restraining influence on the monetary situation, and any tendency towards business improvement seems destined to be nipped in the bud. As a result, money continues to be abundant in the short-term market, and the rate for private discounts, which is the barometer of this market, continues to decline. First-class bank acceptances and trade bills are quoted between 1 7-8% and 2 1-8%, while business is even reported to have been done in Zurich at 1 3/4%. Finance bills are mostly being done at 2 1/4% to 2 3/4%. Call money is readily obtainable at 1%. The rate for advances against security is maintained unaltered at between 4% and 5%.

The Banque Populaire Suisse shows net profits from the year 1922, inclusive of the carry forward and after deduction of general expenditure, losses, allocations to reserves and depreciations, amounting to 5,792,681 frs. This compares with a corresponding net profit of 6,463,515 frs. for 1921. It is proposed to place 579,268 frs. to reserves, this being the proportion due to be allotted according to the Articles of Association and to add a further 59,669 francs to the ordinary and special reserve funds, in order to round off the figures. 268,144 frs. go to a special reserve for Federal War and Stamp Taxes, and a dividend of 5% is to be paid, as compared with 6% last year. The paid-up capital amounts to 95,851,083 frs., and the total reserves to 23,918,865 frs.

The results of the Cantonal Bank of St. Gall, which are now available, show a profit of 1,960,000 francs for the year 1922, as compared with 2,060,000 francs for 1921. This figure is arrived at after deducting 1,350,000 frs. required for paying the statutory dividend. An amount of 250,000 frs. is set aside for covering the expenses of converting the 10,000,000 frs. of the subscribed capital which falls due in 1923; an amount of 350,000 frs. goes to reserves, and the Cantonal Treasury benefits to the extent of 900,000 frs., while a further sum of 140,000 frs. is this year again to be handed over to the pension fund for cantonal employees.

The directors of the Guyerzeller banking company in Zurich have issued a preliminary statement showing a net profit of 723,404 frs., as compared with 773,176 frs. last year, and will propose at the general meeting of shareholders to pay a dividend of 8%, thus repeating last year's distribution, and to place 150,000 frs. to reserves, thereby bringing up this fund to 10% of the share capital.

### STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

	BONDS.	Jan. 30	Feb. 6
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	... 79.50%	79.35%	
Swiss Confed. 9th Moh. Loan 5%	102.25%	102.05%	
Federal Railways A—K 3 1/2%	84.30%	84.56%	
Canton Basle-Stadt 5 1/2% 1921	106.00%	106.00%	
Canton Fribourg 3 1/2% 1892...	76.50%	76.85%	
Zurich (Stadt) 4% 1909	100.25%	100.50%	
SHARES.	Nom. Fr.	Jan. 30 Fr.	Feb. 6 Fr.
Swiss Bank Corporation	500 656	650	
Crédit Suisse	500 679	682	
Union de Banques Suisses	500 550	545	
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000 1635	1575	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000 1235	1220	
C. F. Bally S.A.	1000 950	950	
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon	500 592	595	
Entreprises Sulzer	1000 640	630	
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	500 323	319	
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mfg. Co.	200 189	155	
Nestlé & Suisse Peter-Cailler-Kohler	100 90	95	
Comp. de Navig's sur le Lac Leman	500 462	462	