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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The final figures of the Federal Budget for 1922 have now been published, and they register a deficit of 79.4 million francs, against an anticipated amount of 99.4 millions. Taking into account 34 million supplementary credits voted during the last year, 54 million seem to have been economised as compared with the amount originally estimated.

\* \* \*

At the request of National Councillor Reinhart, the Federal Council has examined the question of keeping the children of unemployed immune from the consequences of possible under-nourishment. A consultation with the cantonal governments and the result of exhaustive enquiries have shown that, with the special assistance given by communes in necessitous cases, any further dispositions in this direction would not be justified.

\* \* \*

In the elections for the Regierungsrat of the canton of Grisons, Dr. Walser (Liberal), Dr. Bezola (Liberal) and Dr. Willi (Conservative) obtained the requisite number of votes, the absolute majority being 8,000. Stadtrat Ottlinger (Socialist) was at the bottom of the list with 1,600 votes.

\* \* \*

For the 125 seats of the Basle Grosser Rat, the elections for which are fixed for April 23rd and 24th, no less than 566 candidates are proposed by eight political parties.

\* \* \*

According to an official statement, the German deliveries of coal from the occupied districts have come up to the quantities contracted for.

\* \* \*

Half a million francs have been allocated by the Federal Council for the purpose of assisting the emigration of agricultural workers into Canada; the scheme has been studied and prepared by the Association for Inland Colonisation in Zurich, which has also been responsible for placing a considerable number of Swiss farmers and farm hands in France. In order further to relieve unemployment, the possibility of a systematic emigration to North and South America is having the attention of our home authorities.

\* \* \*

Owing to unfavourable atmospheric conditions during last summer, civic aviation in Switzerland records a considerable decrease in the number of passengers carried, i.e., 4,663 against 7,224 in 1921.

\* \* \*

39,217 permits were issued to commercial travellers in Switzerland during 1922, of which 1,421 represented foreign firms.

\* \* \*

Half a million francs has been spent by the Confederation during last year in order to assist necessitous Swiss abroad, Germany heading the list with 3,099 cases, and France being second with 1,438. In addition, collective assistance has been organised for compatriots residing in countries still suffering from the after-effects of the war, one such scheme benefitting at present about 12,000 Swiss living in Germany.

\* \* \*

According to official figures, unemployment in Switzerland has, in a marked degree, decreased during the month of March.

\* \* \*

After a concert, which the Gesangverein "Harmonie" from Zurich gave at the Vatican, the Pope received the president and conductor and subsequently conferred his benediction upon the members of the choir.

\* \* \*

A large farmstead in Grellingen (Laufental), called the "Hollehof," was destroyed by fire on Sunday (March 25th); no human life was lost, but a considerable amount of live stock perished in the flames.

\* \* \*

Considerable damage, estimated at Frs. 100,000, was done on Friday (April 6th) by a fire which broke out in a factory manufacturing wooden articles, situated at Wald (Appenzell) and belonging to Mr. Ernst Müller.

\* \* \*

The Ticinese hunt clubs are protesting vigorously against a proposal—recommended by a com-

mission of the National Council—to prohibit hunting on Sundays all over Switzerland.

\* \* \*

National Councillor Paul Mosimann from La Chaux-de-Fonds died at the Lindenhof clinic in Berne, at the age of 65. He took great interest in the municipal work of his native town, and, a watchmaker by trade, was at the time of his death president of the Chambre Suisse d'Horlogerie.

\* \* \*

By the death of Lieut.-Colonel Aloys Huber, who died at Altdorf at the age of 70, Uri loses a well-known citizen, who occupied a large number of public offices.

\* \* \*

Giovanni Dazzoni, a former National Councillor, died in Faido at the age of 72; he was the uncle of Federal Councillor Motta.

\* \* \*

Victor Favrat, a well-known journalist and author of dialect compositions, died in Lausanne at the age of 63.

\* \* \*

Dr. Albert Lüthi, teacher of French and German at the Sleaford (Lincs) Grammar School, has been appointed professor of languages at the Kantonsschule in Schaffhausen.

## AUSLANDSCHWEIZERTAG AT THE BASLE FAIR.

More than twenty Swiss are travelling with our special Basle Fair party, and most of them will assist at the official functions of the Auslandsschweizertag on Monday, April 16th. Our compatriots, residing in countries adjoining Switzerland, have long recognized the importance of this gathering for Swiss abroad, but the English Colony, on account of the distance, has up till now been poorly represented as far as numbers are concerned. One reason is, of course, that we have little cause to lodge complaints to remedy which our Federal authorities are in most cases powerless. The following London societies will be officially represented:

Swiss Mercantile Society,

by its president, Mr. G. E. De Brunner;

City Swiss Club,

by Mr. P. F. Boehringer, a former president; Nouvelle Société Helvétique,

by Mr. Th. Schaefer, a member of the council, and we hear that the Attaché Commercial of our Legation, M. Henri Martin, who has been unsparring in his efforts to arouse interest in the Basle Fair in this country, intends to make a flying visit to our proud city on the Rhine.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

### Franco-Swiss Free Zone Dispute.

I have met several compatriots who, in discussing the above, have had to admit that they really knew very little about the historical details and merits of the case, and I, therefore, give my readers the following from the *Manchester Guardian* (31st March):—

"We have been told this week of the 'painful surprise' with which Switzerland has received the French Note of March 21st on the subject of the free zones. A glance at the latest Swiss papers shows that the expression is not exaggerated. Is Switzerland a province of France? it is indignantly asked. Is the Federal Council to set at naught the plainly expressed wishes of the Swiss people and to accept with humility the dictatorial demands of M. Poincaré? The question around which the dispute has arisen is historically interesting. When, at the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars, the Council of Vienna remade the map of Europe, it took note of the position of Geneva, which, lying sandwiched between the French frontier and the lake, would be deprived of the hinterland economically necessary to any great town, unless some special privilege of free access to the French border lands were secured to it. Partly as compensation for Switzerland's sufferings in the wars, a line was, therefore, traced round Geneva, embracing territories within the French political boundaries; this zone was declared free of all Customs duties, and became a source of great wealth to the Canton of Geneva. Forty-five years later France annexed Upper Savoy, previously part of the kingdom of Sardinia, as a reward for her services to Victor Emmanuel II. against Austria in the war of 1859. The inhabitants of Upper Savoy themselves voted for the union with France, but on the express condition that a second free zone should be created, to enjoy the same privileges as the first.

An arrangement to this effect lasted without any serious hitch up to 1919, when France took advantage of her prestige as a victor to insert in the Peace Treaty a statement that the agreements of 1815 and 1860 were obsolete, and that France and Switzerland should contract a new agreement respecting the zones. Two years' conversations ensued, and in 1921 France persuaded President Ador to sign a treaty, renouncing these economically valuable rights. The Swiss Parliament ratified the treaty by a small majority, and early in February last the French Parliament did the same, though the Savoyard deputies strongly protested. Application of the treaty being then



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imminent, Swiss public opinion was suddenly aroused, and Geneva demanded a referendum, which was held on February 20th and reversed the Swiss ratification by no less than 400,000 to 90,000 votes. This immense majority is doubtless attributable to Swiss indignation at the French Ruhr policy, which is hitting Switzerland very hard, and at the refusal of the Reparations Commission to recognise a recent German-Swiss Insurance Treaty. M. Poincaré, however, sent a peremptory Note, refusing to recognise the referendum decision on the grounds that, when the agreement was signed, the referendum had not been part of the Swiss Constitution. It is this Note which has caused such indignation. If each country maintains its present position obstinately, the result will presumably be tariff warfare. This, however, would be far more harmful to French than to Swiss trade, for Switzerland sells little to France, while importing large quantities of French goods. M. Poincaré may, therefore, find that he has overreached himself in speaking so dictatorially to a proud, if small, neighbour, even if it be found that Switzerland has technically put herself in a false position."

With regard to the concluding remark in the above article, there can, of course, be no question of "Switzerland being technically in a false position." Either Mr. Poincaré allows us to have a Constitution of our own, in which case the right of exercising the Referendum is obvious, or he does not, in which case he will have to put in 'sanctions' against the neighbour who does not fall in with his own brand of political thought. I am quite happy about it all, however, because if History teaches one thing it is that Right is Might, and not *vice versa*. The French nation, as distinct from the French Government, feels the same way and has proved it. To the French nation we must look in the end, not to their present Government, which succeeded in making Mr. Ador, who already once before (if I remember aright) preferred French political thinking to our robust and more simple-minded Swiss way of looking at things, agree to a convention which, as events proved, was against the wishes of our people.

### Swiss Immigrants to Canada.

According to the *Daily Telegraph* (March 6th) the first party of Swiss immigrants to Canada do not seem to have met with an enthusiastic welcome, the system of reception and distribution adopted by the Canadian immigration authorities having given cause for much dissatisfaction. Our compatriots—remember, they are *farmers* who wish to settle in Canada, where the need of more farmers is a crying one—were subjected to close examination, being compelled, among other things, to answer such questions as "whether they had ever taken part in pacific demonstrations—whether they had done military service during the war—whether they had ever been employed by a Pan-German Banking Institution," etc. I can't quite see the connecting link between farming and banking; at least, I think that German banks have evolved a system of helping farmers which was quite good and might be copied with marked success by other countries. I also know of at least one young Swiss, and a French Swiss at that, whose patriotic zeal I had occasion to admire quite recently and who, I am told, is employed in a banking institution which bears a world-renowned *German* name and yet is located within five miles of Charing Cross, London! Canadian authorities are evidently a bit young yet, and if they persist in their vexatious