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HOME NEWS

The Federal Council, it is semi-officially stated, is to undergo some important changes within the next few months. The Political Department, now in charge of Federal Councillor Motta, is to be entrusted to Federal Councillor Schulthess; Federal Councillor Scheurer will leave the Military Department to look after Finance. As regards the Federal President, Monsieur Chuard, it is rumoured that with the termination of his present year of office he will retire altogether from the Federal Council.

The Federal Tribunal in Lausanne has rejected an appeal by a Zurich taxpayer, who maintained that, inasmuch as under the cantonal law an increase in capital is taxed as revenue, a loss or diminution of such capital should be deducted from income.

A loan of several million francs is to be granted by the Confederation to the canton of Geneva, the finances of which are in anything but a satisfactory state. The payment of taxes is to be enforced more rigorously, it having been discovered that several hundred residents have managed to dodge the tax collector.

A long-standing dispute in the canton Ticino, which prevented Swiss medical students who had obtained their doctor's diploma at Italian universities from regularly practising in that canton, has been settled by the Federal Council. Such students, on passing a practical examination before a Swiss medical commission, will enjoy the same privileges as those who have passed through the Swiss universities.

At the request of the Government of Columbia, three years' leave of absence has been granted to three Swiss officers who are leaving for Bogota in order to assist in the reorganisation of the Columbian army and act as military instructors. Their names are: Lieut.-Col. Juchler, of the fifth division, Major Gautier, cavalry instructor, and Major von Werdt, of the fifth division.

M. Dumant, the Swiss Minister in Paris, has recently been received by the French Premier, M. Herriot, who promised to study the Free Zones dispute and leave nothing undone to bring about a friendly solution.

A considerable decrease in the number of those emigrating to oversea countries is disclosed by the statistics: in the five months to end of May last only 1,343 left Switzerland, against 2,403 in the same period last year.

Einsiedeln is to have regular passion plays, which will take place in the open in front of the convent church. The representations this year are fixed from August 15th to September 15th, when a work of the Spanish poet Calderon, translated into German, will be produced.

With a view of turning the abundant fruit harvest to the best practical use, prizes are offered to the amount of Frs. 5,000 for suggestions for utilising it to the best advantage, which, however, must eliminate any process of distillation or fermentation. The papers are to be sent in by October 1st.

A barge, laden with 1,040 tons of coal from England, arrived last week in Basle; this is said to be the heaviest load that has ever been towed up the Rhine as far as Basle.

Dr. Charles Brown, of Brown, Boveri & Co., who recently died at Montagnola, left a hundred thousand francs to the canton Ticino for the purpose of fighting tuberculosis.

Under the will of the late M. A. Carfagni, a former director of the "Fiat" motor works, about four million francs have been left to the town of Geneva for the purpose of founding a crèche for poor children.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Ein fideles Gefängnis. — Am Donnerstag (19. Juni) begannen in Burgdorf vor dem dortigen Geschworenengericht die Verhandlungen im Falle Abbühl und Konsorten, Diebstähle im Zuchthaus Thorberg. Der Hauptangeklagte, Dr. jur. Abbühl, ist wegen Unterschlagungen bestraft worden, die er als Notar zum Nachteil seiner Klienten begangen hatte. Schon beim damaligen Urteil erklärten ihn die psychiatrischen Experten für erblich belastet und vermindert zurechnungsfähig. Kaum im Zuchthaus angekommen, begann Abbühl mit Hilfe eines Zurschmiede und anderer Sträflinge grosse Posten von Textilwaren, Schuhen und andern in der Anstalt hergestellten Gegenständen auszuführen und bei Dritten, Ausstehenden vorläufig zu lagern. Es gelang den Sträflingen, unbemerkt Waren im Werte von mehreren Tausenden zu stehlen.

Neben diesen Diebstählen kamen andere Unregelmässigkeiten vor, die ein sehr schlechtes Licht auf die Ordnung und Disziplin der Anstalt werfen. Die Sträflinge haben unbemerkt Nahrungsmittel, Zigarren und Weine eingeschmuggelt. Sie behaupten, das Essen sei so schlecht gewesen, dass sie es ohne diese Zugaben kaum ausgehalten hätten.

Abbühl und andere waren als Hilfsangestellte im Bureau der Anstalt beschäftigt. Man brachte den Sträflingen ein blindes Vertrauen entgegen, liess sie unkontrolliert Bücher führen, Sendungen abfertigen und empfangen.

Abbühl, Zurschmiede und die Mitangeklagten sagten in der Verhandlung aus, sie hätten ganz Thorberg austräumen können, wenn es ihnen daran gelegen wäre. Sie besprachen sogar den Plan, auf die Strafanstalt eine gefälschte Hypothek aufzunehmen.

Abbühl bestreitet jede rechtswidrige Handlung. Er will die Diebstähle nur begangen haben, um dann nach seiner Entlassung einer weitem Öffentlichkeit vor Augen zu führen, welche Unordnung in einer bernischen Strafanstalt möglich sei.

Am zweiten Verhandlungstag machten die angeklagten Sträflinge insbesondere geltend, sie seien zu ihren Diebstählen auch dadurch geführt worden, dass sie sahen, wie an dritte Ausstehende Produkte der Anstalt gratis gesandt wurden. Sie beschuldigten in dieser Weise vor allem den Generalprokurator des Kantons Bern. Einer Beschwerde Abbühls gegen den Generalprokurator wurde Folge gegeben. Die Untersuchung machte jedoch alle Beschuldigungen gegenstandslos. Auch im Verfahren, zu dem der Generalprokurator selber erschien, erwiesen sich die Beschuldigungen der Angeklagten als blosse Behauptungen. In gleicher Weise beschuldigten Abbühl und Konsorten den Direktor der Strafanstalt. Auch gegen diesen wurde eine amtliche Untersuchung eingeleitet, die ihn aber vollständig entlastete.

Am Samstag (21. Juni) wurde das Urteil gefällt. Die Verteidiger hoben noch einmal die misslichen Zustände in Thorberg hervor, die die Sträflinge zu ihren Diebstählen veranlassen. Die Geschworenen erklärten Abbühl nur der Diebstähle schuldig, deren Wert unter 600 Fr. steht. Auch die anderen Beteiligten, Zurschmiede und Furgler, wurden des Diebstahls schuldig erklärt, Zurschmiede dazu noch der Fälschung und der Unterschlagung kleinerer Geldbeträge. Mildernde Umstände wurden für alle zugebilligt. Die Strafen lauten — nach Abzug der Untersuchungshaft — für Abbühl auf 5 Monate Korrekthaus, für Zurschmiede 6 und für Furgler 7 Monate. (National-Zeitung.)

Wie viele Viertausender in den Alpen gibt es? — Das ist eine Frage, die auf den ersten Blick leicht zu beantworten scheint, braucht man doch nur auf der Karte nachzuzählen, wieviele Gipfel mit 4000 und darüber kotiert sind. Ganz so einfach ist diese Zählung aber nicht. Dr. Blodig ist in seinem Buche "Die Viertausender der Alpen" auf 68 Stück gekommen. Eine Nachprüfung dieser Zahl ergibt, dass er für Graubünden einen, für das Berneroberrand 9, für das Wallis 40, für das Montblancgebiet 16, für das Dauphiné und die grajischen Alpen je einen angenommen haben muss. Aus dieser Verteilung ergibt sich die interessante Tatsache, dass nicht das Gebiet mit der Maximalhöhe (Montblanc), sondern die penninischen Alpen die meisten Viertausender besitzen, während die Ostalpen gar keinen solchen aufweisen können. Etwas erklärlich macht die hohe Zahl der Walliser Viertausender, dass zum Beispiel in der Monterosa-gruppe jede einzelne Erhöhung als selbständiger Gipfel angenommen wird, wodurch dieser Gebirgsstock allein auf die hohe Zahl von 12 Viertausendern kommt. Ebenso wird der Grand Combin mit drei Gipfeln gerechnet und auch die Jorasses mit ebenfalls drei, obschon der eine derselben, die Punta Margherita, nur einen bessern Gratzacken

bildet. Mit gleichem Recht müsste man dann etwa die Pointe Mieulet am Mont Maudit und die Aiguille du Diable am Montblanc du Tacul als selbständige Gipfel aufführen, was sie doch niemals sind. Zweifel an der Selbständigkeit sind auch beim Pic Luigi Amadeo erlaubt, den Blodig so herausstreicht; denn im Grunde ist dieser Gipfel nur eine unbedeutende Erhebung im Brouillardgrat. Viel eher dürften als Gipfel gelten die Grande Rocheuse und die Aiguille du Jardin, zwei Trabanten der Aiguille Verte, die Blodig offenbar vergessen hat. Man sieht also, dass es gar nicht so leicht ist, die Anzahl der Viertausender genau zu bestimmen. Dazu kommt noch ein Anderes. Nachmessungen haben ergeben, dass der Piz Zupò ursprünglich mit 3998 Metern zu niedrig angesetzt war, und jetzt neuerdings auch der Ehre teilhaftig wird, als Viertausender zu gelten. Es ist daher dieser Gipfel Herrn Dr. Blodigs besonderer Aufmerksamkeit nachträglich zu empfehlen, ansonst sein ganzes Lebenswerk ja unvollständig wäre, wenn er nicht auch den Fuss feierlich auf diesen Gipfel gesetzt hätte.

Im übrigen kommt es wohl nicht so sehr auf die Meterzahl an bei der Gipfelaristokratie: das Bietschhorn und die Meije sind dafür Zeugen!

(National-Zeitung.)

L'homme aux quatre femmes. — Il existe à Lausanne un citoyen veuf de sa première femme, qui peu après contracta remariage. Cette seconde expérience ne réussit guère et finit par un divorce. L'homme n'est pas fait pour vivre seul. Le héros de cette histoire vraie conclut donc à Genève un troisième hymen, le 30 mars 1918. Un nouveau divorce rompit derechef ces sacrés liens — pardon, ces liens sacrés — en février 1922.

A la même époque, mais dans un autre lieu, vivait une jeune Valaisanne de Lourtier. Elle avait deux enfants, une fille et un garçon.

Ces deux existences, jusqu'alors séparées, devaient se réunir. Le professionnel du conjugo ci-dessus visé, dans son ardeur à fonder un quatrième foyer, ne fut point arrêté par les deux enfants de sa fiancée. Il leur donna son nom... ne pouvant leur donner autre chose, car la carrière qu'il a fourni n'est pas de celles qui enrichissent leur homme. Je me trompe, en même temps que son nom, ce père... — par supposition — donnait à ces enfants de l'amour la qualité de bourgeois de Lausanne. C'est là où les choses se gâtèrent.

Les magistrats vigilants, chargés de veiller sur la Bourse des pauvres, ne l'entendirent pas de cette oreille. Les tribunaux seront nantis d'une demande en annulation de légitimation, et auront à défendre, en même temps que la vérité, les intérêts des contribuables lausannois.

(La Suisse.)

Une fête de famille. — MM. René et Edouard Claparède, les chefs actuels de la famille Claparède, ont eu l'heureuse idée d'inviter, le 24 juin, leurs nombreux parents et alliés à commémorer, au Vieux-Champel, le deuxième centenaire de l'admission à la bourgeoisie de Genève de leur ancêtre Jacques Claparède, reçu bourgeois le 24 juin 1724.

Cette fête de famille a eu le plus grand succès. Des discours émus et charmants ont rappelé le souvenir du passé et fait revivre les figures disparues, notamment Edouard Claparède, le grand naturaliste, l'historien Théodore Claparède, le ministre Alfred de Claparède, le géographe Arthur de Claparède, et Théodore Flournoy, le célèbre psychologue.

Les nombreux amis de la famille Claparède souhaitent de tout coeur que ses membres continuent à servir la patrie et la science avec la même ferveur. Et le même désintéressement.

(Tribune de Genève.)

Célébrité mondiale. — La Brévine est en passe d'acquiescer une célébrité mondiale. Voici ce que nous lisons dans un des récents numéros illustrés du *Popolo d'Italia*, sous le titre "L'endroit le plus froid d'Europe":

"On croit généralement que les plus grands froids, en Europe, se font sentir dans la Russie septentrionale, ou en Laponie, ou au cap Nord, ou en Islande, et on cite les noms d'Arkhangel, Hammerfest, Kola, etc. Et cependant, d'après une communication présentée cette année à la Société astronomique, le record du froid en Europe est détenu par la vallée de la Brévine, dans le Jura suisse. Bien que, cet endroit ne soit qu'à 1100 mètres d'altitude, le froid y fait descendre le thermomètre jusqu'à 30, 35, 40 degrés sous zéro, dans les mois de janvier et de février. Le 31 décembre 1906, le froid atteignait 41 degrés sous zéro. Comme on doit si trouver à l'aïe... en été!"

(Feuille d'avis de Lausanne.)

Zeichen der Zeit. — Ein Basler Lehrer liess seine

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Schüler, denen noch der Pariser Fussball-Entscheidungskampf und der Empfang der neuesten Schweizerberühmtheiten im Kopfe steckte, die Namen der schweizerischen Fussballer von der Olympiade und die Namen des schweizerischen Bundespräsidenten und der Bundesräte aus dem Kopfe auf ein Blatt Papier aufschreiben. Das Resultat war verblüffend. Neun Knaben kennen weder einen berühmten Fussballer, noch einen Bundesrat; 21 Schüler kennen zwar keinen Bundespräsidenten und keinen andern Bundesrat, dafür sind ihnen aber die Namen der Fussballgrössen alle geläufig. Ein Schüler nannte als Bundespräsident sogar — Mussolini.

(*Neue Bündner Zeitung.*)

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KIBERG."

The other day—yes, in day time (and if you remember the temperature, you will understand) I dreamt.

Tuesday had come around again. To-morrow would be Wednesday. As sure as "eggs is eggs," the Editor would ask someone to ring up 'Kyburg' and order him to bring along those "Notes and Gleanings" for this week's S.O.

The mere thought of this dire weekly call for the children of my brain, those poor—in more than one sense—"Notes and Gleanings," made me shudder and made me rebellious.

I would not do them. I would pretend over-work, over-worry, over-anything, as long as it served its purpose, and I would, instead of spending a beautiful evening at the typewriter, go out in the car in order to get some fresh air and feast my eyes upon the glorious views from the North Downs of Surrey.

Then I thought—mind you, all in self-defence and because I rebelled at the notion of providing wonderful literary fare for people whom I dimly suspected (in my dream, of course) of not properly appreciating it—then I thought, as I have said [if you had not said it, nobody would have suspected you of thinking—*Ed.*] that I would write some really interesting Notes in which I would put all arguments upside down and thus produce a sensation, and, perhaps, if they came to the notice of some Press Magnate, they might bring me an appointment worth a Cabinet Minister's salary! Wonderful what one can think in dreams!

Tri-la-li-la-ling! Yes, hullo, who is it? Is that you, 'Kyburg'? Well, what about this week's... I ring off then, rub my eyes and look around the office, but I cannot see any "Notes and Gleanings," because they are not written, and... when the Editor rings up again, I tell him, in my confusion, that I will let him have them in the morning.

Now, 'Kyburg,' of course, always keeps his word. So, for my sins, I suppose, I am sitting here, writing these lines. But, I cannot write "Notes and Gleanings," because the articles I gleaned from the British Press are nearly all about Holidays and Sports and the beautiful Summer Resorts in Switzerland. Well, I ask you, would you like me to produce the torments of Tantalus in you by giving you such articles to read over the week-end? It is quite possible that by that time the weather will have turned again. Would you like to look out into the rain, the cold and horribly damp British Summer, as we may have it then, and read about the delights of some Swiss Alpine place? I think not. Mr. Editor, I have a duty to perform towards my readers, I cannot jeopardise their health and even their mental capacities, by tantalising them to such an extent. It would not be fair and it would probably lose us subscribers—that last argument is the one which is likely to "go down" with the Editor!

Very well, then. *The Swiss Observer*, of course, has to get copy. Readers who have paid their subscription, and more especially those who have not (yet) expect *The Swiss Observer* to be complete. I thought for a moment [you think too much and write too little—*Ed.*] that we might leave 'Kyburg's' column in the paper a blank, with an editorial comment that 'Kyburg's' article was too hot for printing, but that, provided sufficient new subscribers paid up their subscriptions during the ensuing week, the article might perhaps appear next week! I fancied this a fine advertising stunt for *The Swiss Observer*, but I am sorry to inform you its commercial value was not recognised by the powers-that-be.

So I am still trying hard to discover something to write about. I fancied some themata, such as "Why did the worm rise so early?" or, again, "Why go to the switchback at Wembley, when you can ride over the by-roads in Essex and get all the bumps free of cost?" Again, in a slightly more serious vein, I fancied "Should readers drink beer or wine, or merely indulge in an appetiser when reading *The Swiss Observer*?" I could have written a lot on this latter theme and given some really wonderful advice, but the Editor opined that it would get the paper a bad name, and some nasty folks might even hint that the "Trade" was supporting it. It isn't, worse luck! Look at the temperature just now, and you will understand.

"Grissing" was tried next. I asked the Editor whether I might write a doleful column setting

forth the difficulties of writing "Notes and Gleanings" week by week. I had already looked up a pessimistic dictionary and marked the worst adjectives, and could have guaranteed that my article would have brought tears of compassion to the eyes of the whole Swiss Colony. It might even have produced such streams of tears as to allow of a substantial saving in the weekly soap bill in many families. Such savings, I thought, might then have been wisely spent in providing the necessary liquid refreshments to make up for the tears. The editorial comments on this suggestion are distinctly pointed and personal, even pledge signing, etc., being mentioned tentatively.

Then, as a last resource, I referred to the Editor's Appeal for help in an issue some weeks ago, and I offered to write an article setting forth in glowing eulogy the happiness which comes to the writer of articles in *The Swiss Observer*. I wished to impress my readers with the glorious feeling of "duty well done," the wonderfully calm and restful sleep which such work produces in the writer [and, as far as yours is concerned, in the reader—*Ed.*] and I wished to extol the feeling of literary ability and superiority which is naturally produced in the writer's mind when he sees his articles in print. I imagined that the Editor's Appeal had erred in that respect, that he ought not have appealed so much to the sense of patriotism, but rather to the inborn vanity of his readers when asking them to come forward with contributions. Anyhow, I told him you might let me try; the result cannot be worse than the one which attended your effort. Believe me, I said, the Swiss want something with a bit of "pep" in it to make them sit up and take notice. Once you get their sense of vanity and their ambition tickled, they will come along in serried ranks, and you will have to employ the Swiss Boy Scouts to keep volunteers away from Garlick Hill!

The life of the article writer is a hard one. The Editor's heart has long ago become petrified to all feelings when dealing with his collaborators. Would you believe, dear readers, who have now read the above suggestions, who are surely of my way of thinking, and who know that they were brilliant and helpful suggestions, would you even dare to believe, I ask you, that the Editor was blind to their advantages, to their appealing beauty, their sense of humour, their fitness and their superiority over anything ever attempted in this line?

Truth compels me, with a breaking heart, to inform you that this is the case. Again and again he shook his head, pointed to a previous article in a copy of our paper and directed my gaze to the fatal and to me sinister words "Notes and Gleanings."

And still I am trying now, as a result of the shortsightedness of the Editor, to write these Notes and Gleanings. Were I a popular writer of fiction, I would entertain you now with a full description of 'Kyburg,' sitting on a wooden chair, his hands forming a cup for his tired head to rest in. His brow is swathed in iceworld bandages. A glass of strong—no, of weak—ahah! I am not going to tell you of what, because I might be accused by the "Trade" of working for the T.T.s.—and a look of utter hopelessness in his eyes.

And the more I stare at the bare wall opposite, the more of the stro—oh, bother, I mean weak, beverage I absorb, and the oftener I change my icy bandages to refresh my feverish brow, the less do ideas, really helpful ideas, come to my mind, and the larger and more terrifying become, in my mind's eye, the three fatal words: "Notes and Gleanings."

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The Cantonal authorities of Neuchâtel are issuing a new 5% loan of Frs. 13,000,000 to provide for the consolidation of the floating debt. The price of issue is 95½%, and the loan is to be redeemed in 1934, with an option on the part of the Canton to repay in whole or in part any time after 1931. Interest is payable on the 30th of June and the 31st of December. The subscription lists opened on the 30th of June and will close on the 8th of July.

An interesting issue recently made in Switzerland was that of bonds of the State Mortgage Bank of Jugo-Slavia. The mortgage bonds offered were of the 7 per cent. type and were issued at 94 per cent. As guarantee the Bank undertook to set aside an amount of mortgages which, at the current rate of the dinar, at any time will always be in excess of the total of the loan then outstanding. Since the entire liabilities of the bank are guaranteed by the Jugo-Slav Government, the issue may virtually be regarded as a State loan. The bonds were underwritten firm by the Swiss Bank Corporation in Basle.

The Compagnie Générale de Navigation sur le Lac Léman, the shares of which are quoted regularly in the list given in the columns of *The Swiss Observer*, has at last returned to the ranks of dividend-paying concerns, distributing for the year 1923 a dividend of three per cent. out of a net profit of Frs. 200,000, and carrying forward Frs.

34,000. The capital of the company is Frs. 4,500,000, and the fleet is valued at Frs. 3,525,000. The increased profits obtained in 1923 point to a satisfactory revival of the tourist traffic to Switzerland during that year.

The return of the holiday season makes it again desirable to remind our readers of the advantages of the Swiss Postal Travellers' cheques, which can be obtained from the offices of the Swiss Bank Corporation. They present the special attraction that they may be cashed at sight at any post-office in Switzerland—and the traveller is thus assured of a supply of ready cash in even the most outlying districts, without the necessity of carrying a bulky pocket-book.

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.	June 24		July 1
	Frs.	Frs.	Frs.
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	71.50%	72.00%	
Swiss Confed. 9th Mob. Loan 5%	100.35%	100.35%	
Federal Railways A—K 3½%	76.37%	76.55%	
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921	100.67%	100.50%	
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892	67.25%	67.12%	

SHARES.	June 24		July 1
	Frs.	Frs.	Frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	624	624
Crédit Suisse	500	667	670
Union de Banques Suisses	500	530	530
Fabrique Chimique et-lev. Sandoz	1000	3365	3235
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2090	2099
C. F. Bally S.A.	1000	1145	1172
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon	500	620	600
Entreprises Sulzer	1000	607	620
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	500	284	249
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	188	186
Choc. Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler	100	125	132
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	565	580

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