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HOME NEWS

By overwhelming majorities the electors of the canton of Lucerne rejected on Sunday, Dec. 30th, an initiative demand, made by a group of Liberals, which aimed at a reduction of the members of the Grand Council and of the cantonal judges, and the election of the former by the system of proportional representation.

Mr. Schnyder von Wartensee has taken up his duties again as vice-president and general manager of the Swiss National Bank; at a farewell luncheon in Vienna, offered by Austrian ministers and other high officials, homage was rendered to his engaging courtesy and his outstanding services in the reconstruction of Austrian finances. He was, during the last twelve months, counsellor to the Austrian National Bank.

Surprise and even disgust is manifested in Zurich and other centres at the number of well-to-do Germans that are at present staying in first-class hotels, with well-stuffed purses, whilst passionate appeals are being made in Switzerland on behalf of their less fortunate nationals.

The physical institute, attached to the University of Zurich, caught fire on Sunday, Dec. 30th, the roof and the rooms occupied by the family of the caretaker being completely destroyed; little damage was done to the contents, as the collection of exhibits and valuable instruments were removed in time.

St. Moritz seems to be enjoying a record season, the number of visitors, registered as staying at the various hotels, being about 4,300 — 2,000 more than twelve months ago and 800 more than the pre-war record.

The heavy snowfall has been the cause of numerous avalanches, which in many places resulted in serious consequences, apart from the excitement and admiration of the crowds of revellers staying at the winter resorts. On the Gotthard line, near Airolo, one of them demolished no fewer than 15 houses. A party of ski-runners was overtaken near Zuog (Engadine), two tourists perishing in the icy embrace before they could be extricated.

It is reported that the Swiss colony in New York has collected 100,000 dollars for the purpose of producing in Switzerland a historic film, commemorating the foundation of the Confederation.

The Allgemeine Elektricitäts-Ges. (Berlin) has been awarded, in a judgement just delivered by the Federal Tribunal, Frs. 100,000 for infringement of the "Wolfram" patents against a Basle company, which has also been ordered to suspend the further manufacture of these lamp filaments.

A dastardly crime was committed at St. Gall in the early hours of New Year's eve. Two young men broke into the bedroom of an 80-year-old lady, Frau M. E. Oberle-Keller, with the intent of providing themselves with the necessary funds for celebrating "Sylvester." The old lady was murdered without much ado, but her cries for help had awakened some neighbours, with the result that the two miscreants were arrested before they could decamp with their booty.

The 52-hour week has been reintroduced in the factory of the Eisen- und Stahlwerke, A.G. in Schaffhausen, although the workmen had threatened to reply to this measure by the declaration of a general strike.

PEASANT ART IN SWITZERLAND.

This is the title of a volume which, it is expected, will be ready for sale in the early spring. It will be published in English and French (separately), and its compilation is the work of no less an authority than Monsieur Baud-Body, the President of the Federal Commission of Fine Arts and of the Commission of Applied Arts. The book will contain about 240 pages, 152 pages of which are covered by black-and-white illustrations, apart

from 17 plates in colours or sepia. It deals with all the aspects of Swiss peasant art and architecture, and its wide scope will include wool-work, furniture, costume, textiles, metal-work, glassware and pottery. It will draw the attention of the reader to the many treasures distributed over Switzerland, and direct the student to the various centres where these art objects are exhibited.

The volume is published by "The Studio, Ltd.", of 44, Leicester Square, W.C.2, which for a considerable number of years has specialised in fine-art productions, and has been responsible for a series of similar books, dealing with other countries. Apart from the libraries, this volume will find a place in the reading-rooms of large hotels, clubs, ocean-going passenger steamers in all parts of the world, etc.

As the book constitutes a first-class advertising medium, it is intended to include a limited number of selected advertisements.

Further particulars may be obtained from the leaflet which is posted with this week's issue of *The Swiss Observer*, as well as from M. Henri Martin, Counsellor of Legation, 32, Queen Anne Street, W.2, who is the connecting link between the Genevese author and the English publishers.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Notre représentation extérieure. — Le *Bulletin de la Nouvelle Société Helvétique*, de novembre-décembre, contient le rapport présenté à l'assemblée générale de la société sur "la représentation extérieure de la Suisse" par M. Georges Wagnière.

Notre distingué ministre à Rome expose, dans cette étude, les origines de nos légations et de nos consulats et signale les critiques que notre représentation extérieure rencontre dans l'accomplissement de sa tâche. M. Wagnière établit avec autorité le caractère des relations de la Suisse avec les pays étrangers et marque aussi les conceptions, différentes de celles de la Suisse, qu'ont les autres nations en ce qui concerne leur représentation diplomatique.

Les intérêts politiques et économiques sont souvent méconnus par ceux qui voudraient voir la Suisse sans agents à l'étranger; ils oublient que, toute proportion gardée, la Suisse est le pays de plus forte production de l'Europe et qu'elle doit écouter ses marchandises; d'autre part, elle est la cliente importante de nombre d'Etats puisqu'elle doit importer une quantité considérable de matières premières. "Elle est, à cette heure, le marché le plus important de l'Italie." A la veille de la guerre, elle acheta à la France cinq fois plus de marchandises que la Russie. Elle vend à l'Angleterre pour 350 millions de marchandises par an, ce qui n'est pas le cas de bien des pays d'entre les plus vastes.

Mazzini prétendait que les Suisses avaient une tendance à ne rien prévoir. A lire le compte-rendu de certaines délibérations de notre Parlement, il semble que l'illustre Italien ait, aujourd'hui encore, raison. Notre diplomatie, nos diplomates ne sont point assez soutenus par les Chambres qui n'apprécient pas assez leur rôle.

Celui-ci est immense; il est délicat. Pour le remplir il faut un désintéressement d'autant plus grand qu'aucun des postes diplomatiques suisses n'enrichit et que plusieurs d'entre eux coûtent à ceux qui les remplissent; il faut aussi un patriotisme ardent parce que les fonctions des carrières diplomatiques et consulaires doivent manifester sur la terre étrangère la grandeur morale et la puissance de travail de tout un peuple dont la reconnaissance pour ses serviteurs les plus dévoués ne sera jamais égale aux services qu'ils lui rendent.

(*Journal de Genève*.)

Nos champions de tir. — L'Association suisse des tireurs de match qui s'est réunie dernièrement à Zurich, propose à l'Union internationale de tir de ne pas reconnaître la validité des résultats du championnat de Comp-Ferry, auquel participeront seuls les Américains, sans contrôle officiel.

L'assemblée a décidé en principe de former, avec le concours de la Société suisse des carabiniers, une équipe pour les tirs des Jeux olympiques.

Le groupe de match sera probablement constitué par l'équipe de Milan, avec Zimmermann et Lienhard (Lucerne), Hartmann (Lausanne), Pfeiderer (Ottenbach) et Rössli (Winterthour). En outre, Widmer (Bienne), prendra part aux tirs d'essai.

(*La Suisse*.)

Die letzten Bündner Bären. — Man schreibt uns aus Feldis: "Zu den Bäreneschichten in Nr. 237 Ihres Blattes sei noch hinzugefügt, dass der Bär, auf den die Churer Schützen im Jahre 1833 Jagd machten, wahrscheinlich über das Emser nach dem Feldiser Gebiet gewandert ist. Denn im Herbst dieses Jahres hielt sich hier, wie man sich erzählt, längere Zeit ein Bär auf. Zuerst sah ihn ein Mann,

der eines Morgens über einen Fussweg zu Tal wanderte. Der Bär lag unter einer Tanne hingestreckt und rührte sich gar nicht, als der Mann mit grossem Schrecken an ihm vorüber sprang. Der Steg heiss noch jetzt der Bärensteg (il trutz dil tuor). Nachher sah man noch hic und da Bärenspuren. Er stieg gern auf Mehlbäume und naschte die roten Früchte. Man war im Dorf sehr besorgt um das weidende Vieh und machte Treibjagden nach ihm, ohne ihn jedoch zu sehen. Ende Oktober wurden geübte Jäger herbeigerufen, und diese entdeckten ihn in einer Hölde gegen Rotenbrunnen. Ein Felsberger Jäger schoss ihn an und verwundete ihn. Nun lief der Bär die Hölle hinunter zum Rhein, schwamm durch das Wasser und lief den Rätzinsberg hinauf. Es zogen gerade Italiener Händler mit aufgekaufter Habe Vieh über die Strasse gegen Thusis und bemerkten auch mit Schrecken das Ungeheuer. Dieses tat ihnen aber nichts zu leide und trotzte endends weiter. Die Italiener, darüber froh, riefen so laut, dass man es dieseits des Rheins hören konnte: 'La bestia passata, la bestia passata!' Kurze Zeit darauf soll man im Oberland den Bären erlegt haben." (Neue Bündner Zeitung.)

La population de Genève. — Le recensement de 1922 a accusé, pour la Ville, une diminution de 2,585 habitants sur le chiffre de 1921 (1921: 58,723; 1922: 56,138). Cette population se répartit entre 16,018 Genevois (16,821 en 1921), 37,317 Confédérés (38,538) et 16,821 étrangers (18,185). Classés par nationalités, les étrangers les plus nombreux sont les Français: 7,963 (8,657 en 1921), les Italiens: 5,448 (5,821) et les Allemands: 1,213 (1,385). L'exode de la population étrangère a été dû en partie au chômage, en partie à la faiblesse des changes. Nombre d'étrangers aisés qui vivaient largement ici de leurs revenus n'ont pu maintenir leur train de maison, et sont retournés dans leur pays d'origine.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

"Dézaley Clos des Moines de Kyburg":—

Sounds attractive, but, believe me, dear reader, makes Kyburg's mouth water, because, like so many lovable and desirable things, ever since old Tantalus inaugurated the cult, it belongs to the visions which conjure up before the thirsty scribe refreshing expanses of drinking fluid. No, it would not have been right to put "drinking water" in this case. As the small boy said, "water is the stuff which turns black when one puts one's hands into it." You must often have come to the conclusion that "Kyburg" must be a confirmed pussyfoot, seeing the dry stuff he pours forth week by week. Let me tell you, in case it is necessary, or rather in case it prompts you to do the proper *beau geste*, that this is not the case. And the Editor-in-Chief—sounds a nice title, this, which one could roll around one's mouth beautifully, if the said mouth was properly moistened!—knows "Kyburg" fairly well and must have felt that a drop, now and then and far between, of course, of "Dézaley" would have made all the difference to the "Notes and Gleanings." Need I elaborate the point?

Chalchère:—

To give it its homely name, as pronounced by my good compatriots, of Mostindien (Thurgau), which was mentioned in our last issue in connection with an automobile accident, used to be used by my grandparents as a bogey in my youth. It was, if memory serves me rightly, the last institution in Switzerland where recalcitrants who did not want to work and were, therefore, a trouble and a burden to their village, were forced to tread water in order to escape drowning. And some of my Thurgauer friends will probably remember how Chalchère sprang into notoriety, when Thali, who used to steal, so it was said, from the rich and to give to the poor, was quite a character in Eastern Switzerland. Well do I remember helping to search for him in the neighbourhood of Iselsberg, and I remember how every one of the peasants who were looking for him was secretly bent on giving him the tip which way to escape from the Landjäger. This note may bring forth some long-forgotten memories of early youth in some of my friends.—Now to business—in spite of a growing thirst!

The White Diamonds of Switzerland—

are not the ice and the snow of which we have heard so much lately, but our Electric Power, or rather the natural water-forces which can be made to generate it. My readers know, of course, that this power, to call it by this short name, is a tremendous potential asset in our national resources, and our Government has very wisely taken steps to prevent greedy concession hunters from playing "ducks and drakes" with this asset.



Export has been strictly controlled, not with any Tariff Reform idea, but, as stated, in the interests of the country, as a whole, it being felt rightly that the mere accident, by which some of our cantons enjoy more of this power than others, should not enable any of them to get rich by selling concessions to foreign or even Swiss syndicates for export purposes. Now I find that some arrangement has been come to by which some of the surplus power, generated in our Southern Canton Tessin, will be used for Lombardy. The *Financial Times* (2nd Jan.) states:—

The Swiss Government has authorised the export of 5,000 kilowatts of water power, contracted by the Societa Elettrica Ticinese Belinzona with the Societa Elettrica Lombarda Piemontese, Milan.

Great importance is attached to this step, which is the first of its kind, by electrical trade circles, it being known that diffidence has existed, so far, in both countries regarding the importation and exportation of water power.

International Congress on Industrial Health.

The health of the industrial worker is engaging expert attention everywhere, and an International Congress on Industrial Health is to be held at Geneva this summer. The *Lancet* (29th Dec.) says:—

A group of Swiss medical men, interested in industrial health questions, met at Berne last October and constituted themselves as the Swiss Organising Committee for an International Congress on Industrial Health, to be held at Geneva from July 18th to 20th, 1924. The committee consists of Prof. von Gonzenbach (Zurich), Prof. W. Silberschmidt (Zurich), Prof. H. Zanger (Zurich), Dr. A. Rossi (Lugano), Dr. H. Carrère, Director of the Public Health Service, and Prof. H. Cristiani (Geneva), the last-named being chairman. This first congress will deal with the following questions: Industrial lighting and eyestrain; impure air in factories; the value of fatigue tests. The committee has asked prominent men of science who have given special attention to these questions to draw up reports on them, and three such reports will be presented for each question. The office of the committee is at the Institut d'Hygiène of the University of Geneva, and all persons wishing to take part in the congress should communicate with the committee at that address, from which further information may be obtained.

More elbow-room to them all!

Death of a Famous Abbot.

Catholic Herald (29th Dec.):—

Swiss Catholicity is in mourning, following upon the death of Dom Thomas Bossart, Prince-Abbot of Einsiedeln. This illustrious ecclesiastic was born on September 17th, 1858, at Altsihofen, of parents who were noted for their great devotion to the Faith. Young Gaspard Bossart felt attracted towards the religious life at an early age, and he soon assumed the Benedictine habit at Einsiedeln under the name of Fr. Thomas Aquinas. He studied theology at the Gregorian University at Rome, and had the honour to have as his tutor the priest who is now known to-day as Cardinal Billot.

Upon returning to his monastery, Fr. Thomas occupied the Chair of Theology. In 1905 he was elected Prince-Abbot in succession to Dom Colomban, and from that day he applied himself to the development of all the traditions of the Benedictine Order. He eventually became noted far and wide on account of his piety, and on certain days, when it was known that he was celebrating Mass, great crowds used to visit the abbey.

Through his mediation many Protestants were led to the true Faith. The merits of Dom Bossart attracted the attention of Pope Pius X, and also Cardinals Mathieu and Rampolla. There was no doubt that the authorities at the Vatican would have welcomed his elevation to the Cardinalate.

The funeral of Dom Bossart was attended by four bishops and three hundred priests. Delegates were also present from the cantons of Schwyz, Lucerne and Unterwalden. The Protestants of Zurich sent a special message of condolence.

A special message of sympathy was received from the Pope, who stated that he was offering special prayers for the eternal repose of "this worthy servant of the Church."

Dom Ignace Staub, of Munsingen, has been elected Prince-Abbot of Einsiedeln Monastery in succession to the late Prince-Abbot, Dom Thomas Bossart. The new Prince-Abbot was born on Dec. 19th, 1872; he took the vows on Sept. 8th, 1893, and was ordained priest on July 16th, 1899.

You will notice that "the Protestants of Zurich sent a special message of condolence," which is as it ought to be. Listening-in last Sunday to the Sermon broadcasted from St. Martin's-in-the-Field, I was much struck by two things which were said by the eminent preacher. One was to the effect that if the theologians were taken off altogether, there would remain no theological crisis; the other thing was an expression of very anxious enquiry, to which it was easy to divine the preacher's own answer, as to whether the Church would not attack Christ if He were to come among us once more, just as did the Church in His time?

Faith is what is required, and Faith alone can lead to progress in humanitarian and religious thought. All the rest is byplay, clever, but, oh! so very irrelevant! And strife between Christian Churches is an irreligious thing altogether.

A Step in the Right Direction—

is being made, it seems, by our Government in order to come into line on the vexatious question of Drugs. *The Star* (1st Jan.):—

The Swiss Federal Home Department is submitting to the Governments of Cantons a Bill regarding narcotics, enforcing the principle that morphinism and cocaine mania shall be classed among particularly dangerous diseases.

The Bill is directed against morphine, coca leaves, cocaine, all derivatives or salts, and all alkaloids of opium. It controls the manufacture and traffic in these products, which will be centralised in the Federal authority.

Authorisation to export into countries which have

adhered to The Hague Convention will be subject to special license by competent authorities of the State interested. The penalties for infraction of the law are very vigorous.

An Appreciation of a Swiss Hospital—

appears in the *Nursing Mirror* (29th Dec.):—

A "busman's holiday" attracts most of us, so that the suggestion we should visit the local hospital while on our holiday in Switzerland met with our full approval.

Lugano, hardly knowing whether it is Swiss or Italian, boasts two hospitals, and patients appear to be admitted to either, regardless of nationality. Our visit was to the Swiss municipal one, but we found neither French nor German was of much use to us as a means of communication. Fortunately, our guide was a young doctor (we knew him as such by the inevitable stethoscope, hanging out of his pocket!) who was able to act as interpreter when needed, and smiles did the rest. Certainly the "atmosphere" of the whole place was a very pleasant one, and we got a very definite sense of kindness from everybody.

The hospital is an imposing-looking white building, covering much space. The broad corridor runs the whole length, making a great deal of walking for the sisters (who are religious as well as nursing sisters) and their assistants in their care of the patients. The hospital is a two-storyed building, with two sisters on each floor, and it is fortunate that of the 25-30 beds for which each is responsible rarely more than half are occupied. Moreover, patients stay at the hospital till they are far advanced in convalescence. This, of course, lessens the work, otherwise it would not be possible for the patients to receive much nursing, when each sister has only two untrained assistants to help her. The assistants are male and female, and there seems very little attempt to make a training school of the hospital.

The whole place is built with a lavish disregard of space, and has every possible labour-saving device. Possibly the lack of discipline and very comfortable-looking beds make up for the somewhat barrack-like appearance of the whole. But we English sisters certainly missed the twinkle of brass and the relief from white walls which flowers and screens give. Perhaps, too, "pros," would prefer the extra work entailed by trolleys and other requisites necessary for doing dressings in the wards, rather than having all these done in the beautiful little theatre provided for the purpose, with the alternative, apparently, of scrubbing the bathroom floor, as we saw a nurse doing.

The wide verandas in the main building, as well as in those of the separate blocks comprising the wards for pulmonary tuberculosis and the children's wards, left nothing to be desired. There was an exquisite view of the mountains, and the smiling, sunny peace without seemed reflected within and left a lasting impression to the visitors to the Swiss Hospital at Lugano.

Winter Sports—

are still given great prominence in the British Press. I think it would tire my readers to quote from those articles. They are very much alike, and, besides, my readers are now thinking of business and other matters. It is funny, I think, how such articles lose their charm for the stay-at-home person, once one is in harness again and when it is no earthly use toying even with the idea that, perhaps, and provided that so-and-so, etc., etc., one might all the same manage a short run across Europe in order to join the happy crowd winter-sporting. So I think I will leave this subject alone this week, all the more so as Winter Sport, in my mind, is closely allied to visions of some of us sitting happily round a table in some jolly old Bündnerstübli, drinking Veltliner! And this vision is too much for me to-night, especially after the tremendous disappointment concerning the "Dézaley Clos des Moines de Kyburg," to which I have already alluded.

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

A new textile concern has just been founded in Zurich under the title of the Setina Company, which is to interest itself especially in the manufacture of artificial silk.

An interesting supplement to the current trade returns is afforded by the statistics of goods, passing into Switzerland through Genoa during the year 1923. The total quantity amounted to 231,000 tons, the largest proportion being made up of grain, and its balance mostly of coal, cotton and foodstuffs. The quantity thus transported shows an increase of 62,000 tons, as compared with the figures of the preceding year.

The Swiss National Bank's figures of bank clearings for 1923 show an improvement of approximately 1,100 million francs on those of the preceding year, the increase having been spread fairly steadily over the whole period since March.

The latest monthly bulletin, issued by the Swiss Bank Corporation from their Basle office, contains the index number of the prices of representative securities quoted on the Swiss Stock Exchanges up to the end of November, as compiled by the Corporation. The November figure is 85.31 per cent., as compared with a nominal value of 100 per cent., and the calculations comprise 45 bonds of nominal value of Frs. 1,243 million and 21 shares of a total value of Frs. 592,900,000. The way in which prices have moved since the end of 1913 is illustrated by the fact that at that date the index number stood at 117.56 per cent., while in December, 1921, it fell to the low level of 70.79 per cent. In the case of the bonds taken separately the index number for the end of 1913 was 90.57 per cent., and the November, 1923 figure 79.88 per cent., while in the case of the shares the corresponding figures were 183 per cent. and 96.69 per cent., respectively.

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.	Dec. 31	Jan. 8
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	78.25%	72.95%
Swiss Confed. 9th Mob. Loan 5%	100.40%	100.85%
Federal Railways A—K 31%	79.90%	80.65%
Canton Basle-Stadt 51% 1921	102.12%	102.62%
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892	69.50%	72.00%

SHARES.	Nom.	Dec. 31	Jan. 8
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	655	671
Crédit Suisse	500	692	711
Union de Banques Suisses	500	557	571
Fabrique Chimique ci-devant Sandoz	1000	3490	2547
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2472	2573
C. F. Bally S.A.	1000	1076	1085
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon	500	627	627
Entreprises Sulzer	1000	582	620
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	500	267	282
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. M.k. Co.	200	183	191
Choc. Chocolates Peter-Cailler-Kohler	100	105	105
Comp. de Navig. sur le Lac Leman	500	467	465

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