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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

We wish to express here, on behalf of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain, our sincere sympathy in the great loss and sorrow which our English friends are suffering by the passing of her Gracious Majesty Queen Alexandra.

M. Evéquoz (Valais), who at the recent National Council elections failed to retain his mandate, has accepted the seat offered to him by M. Trottier, who voluntarily retired in the former's favour.

\*\*\*

By mutual agreement the Dutch Foreign Minister has been designated president of the commission created under the permanent conciliation treaty concluded in June, 1924, between Switzerland and Denmark. The commission consists of three neutral adjudicators and two other members representing the contracting parties, the interests of Switzerland being entrusted to Dr. William Rappard, professor at the University of Geneva.

\*\*\*

The number of the registered unemployed is again on the increase, the figure for October being 12,291, against 10,356 in September.

\*\*\*

The special commission appointed by the States Council to report on the proposed revision of the regulations imposing the military exemption tax has arrived at the unanimous conclusion that no change should be made in the present system.

\*\*\*

A social reform of great importance, embracing old-age and invalidity insurance, will be submitted to the electorate on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 5th and 6th. Similar social legislation is only in force in the cantons of Glaris, Appenzell, Neuchâtel and Vaud.

\*\*\*

Considerable excitement was manifested during the election, over last week-end, of members for the municipal and communal councils in the canton of Vaud. Though a second ballot has been rendered necessary in many districts, it is stated that the Socialists have suffered a set-back. At Chevroux, near Payerne, the local guardians of the law were attacked and badly mauled by excited voters; a small police force from the outside had to be called in to restore order.

\*\*\*

During the construction of the hydraulic installation the hospice on the Grimsel pass will be closed, as it is being used to house the engineers and workmen.

\*\*\*

The Post Office Museum in Berne, which was closed in June, 1924, has now been re-opened to the public. Amongst other exhibits of interest in this particular line, philatelists will find a comprehensive collection of proofs and prints of Swiss postage stamps and entires.

\*\*\*

A new broadcasting station was officially opened in Berne last Thursday week.

\*\*\*

The index figure to November 1st compiled by the Swiss Co-operative Societies (Schweiz. Konsument-Vereine), indicating the cost of living, shows a slight reduction compared with the previous month, though generally at this time of the year prices exhibit a tendency to rise.

\*\*\*

Over 4½ million francs deficit is anticipated in the budget for 1926, just approved by the Grand Council of the canton of Grisons.

\*\*\*

Ten unregistered wireless transmitting stations have been discovered in the western and central part of Switzerland; the owners, who are stated to belong to a secret society, are to be prosecuted.

\*\*\*

Col. Arnold Biberstein, born in 1865 at Olten, has been appointed to the command of the Third Army Corps in succession to Col. Steinbuch, who died at the beginning of last month.

\*\*\*

The Selzach passion plays are to be taken up again in 1927.

A Socialist (Paul Strub) and a Communist (Edwin Ruegg) were elected last Sunday members of the municipal council of Schaffhausen; of the five members of the "kleine Stadtrat," which is the executive of that town, two are Liberals and the others belong to the parties of the extreme Left.

\*\*\*

An elderly cashier of the Crédit Suisse in Zurich has been arrested on a charge of having appropriated during the many years of his employment different amounts, totalling Frs. 200,000, which it is stated he has lost in speculation.

\*\*\*

The post-office clerk, M. Pescia, at the Iselle station (Ticino) has been run over by a train and killed on the spot.

\*\*\*

Colliding with a telegraph standard, M. Edouard Weit, of the Café des Alpes in Prangins (Vaud), who was riding with his wife in a motorcycle combination, suffered serious injuries, necessitating his removal to the infirmary at Nyon.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KVBURG."

### Foreign Affairs.

In *Contemporary Review* (November) I find the following very interesting thoughts on Locarno, Peace by Diplomacy and Arbitration, and although "The Swiss Observer" is, perhaps, known for providing rather lighter fare for its readers, the issues at stake and discussed in these thoughts are so vital to everybody that I make no excuse for putting them before our readers. These Thoughts form interesting topics for Sunday afternoon conversations!

### Locarno: A Postscript.

Postscripts, like prefaces, are written last to come first. The following pages were written on October 14th, while the Locarno Conference was in progress and no results were known. On the following day I left for Locarno and arrived just in time for the shouting on October 16th, the dual occasion of the initialling of the Locarno treaties and of Mr. Chamberlain's birthday. As this number of the "Contemporary Review" is already printed, it is impossible this month to add anything beyond a short note to chronicle the successful issue of the Conference. The Rhine-land Pact, or as it is officially called the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee, together with the four arbitration treaties, between Germany on the one side and Belgium, France, Czechoslovakia and Poland on the other, were initialled, and the signing ceremony was deferred till Dec. 1st, to take place in London. The psychological effect of the Locarno treaties is of far greater moment than the mechanism of their detailed content. To be in Locarno and to talk with the Foreign Ministers of the countries concerned was to be convinced beyond doubt of the sincerity of the pacifism to which Locarno is now a monument. The word "allies" was never used by any member of any delegation from the beginning to the end of the Conference, and the word has now been deleted from the vocabulary of European post-war diplomacy. It will never again appear in Diplomatic Notes. Since the Conference ended Mr. Chamberlain and other leading protagonists have dotted the is by pointingly speaking of "former allies" and "former enemies."

The striking feature of diplomatic thought at Locarno was that goodwill was regarded as a realistic instrument, whereas treaties, conventions, pacts, covenants were in themselves regarded as worth little more than the paper they are printed on, except in so far as they are made potent by goodwill. It would be easy to find loophole after loophole in the Locarno texts for any purpose whatever. So far as the diplomatic opinion of the seven countries is concerned, the only important thing done at Locarno—but it is all-important—is that those countries have openly committed themselves to a pacifist policy in the future. For the first time in diplomatic history Great Powers have surrendered their historic "right to make war"—the famous paradox of international law, "les droits de guerre"—and it will be next to impossible for them to recap-

ture, even if they wanted to recapture, so dangerous a "right." The value of Locarno may be put in this way. Hitherto the mass of sensible people have longed for peace, but fear and stupid tradition have made them disbelieve in it, and the whole conception of international relations has been based on the hypothesis that there would be war, somewhere, at some time. The difference now is that, whereas national honour in the past was bound up with war, it is now bound up with peace. After Locarno war is synonymous with national dishonour. The plunge has been taken in favour of pacifism for the first time in European history.

It is common ground among all the diplomats with whom one has discussed the matter that with the entry of Germany into the League of Nations, the door will be shut on the past ten years, and no matter how successfully the timid ones may look for the possibilities of war in the texts of the Locarno treaties, their discoveries will be of no avail, for those texts themselves will be of as great, and of as little, importance to the new order in Europe as the chrysalis is to the butterfly. After October 16th, 1925, it became an anachronism to talk of the Polish difficulty, or of any of the stock difficulties of European diplomacy, as we have known them for the past seven years. They have vanished like mist.

### Peace by Diplomacy.

The "Fall," as the Americans aptly call this time of the year, has been the occasion of much interesting diplomacy, some of it good, some unnecessarily perverse. A year's work on the proposed Security Pact culminated in the conference at Locarno, where at the moment of writing hopes ran high that the representatives of Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Czechoslovakia and Poland would succeed in agreeing never again to provoke a war. The thing is on about the same philosophical level as would be a solemn attempt to agree not to lie across the railway lines when an express is dashing along. Practically, however, it is a difficult thing for the nations to agree not to exterminate each other, for diplomacy is still in a primitive stage, and the diplomats quarrel outrageously about matters of the most palpable simplicity and common sense. It is not primarily their fault, of course, but of the 'public opinion' which largely guides them, or cripples them. Seven years after the Great Slaughter, for instance, fifty thousand people go to Wembley every night for the pleasure of gazing at a military spectacle, the essential purpose of which is not to revolt people against war, but to arouse enthusiasm over military precision and drill. As if to pervert perversity still further, that unbelievable enterprise begins with the parade of a child and ends with the singing of a hymn, and people's minds are encouraged to cherish and to perpetuate the delusion that war is an incident of patriotic sacrifice, whereas every serious man, woman and child knows that his country could suffer nothing worse than war, whether victorious or not, in any cause whatever. One knows the traditional argument that to be prepared for the worse is not the same thing as to want the worse—"We don't want to fight, but by jingo . . ." The unfortunate thing, however, is that to be prepared for war is to make war certain. Mr. Chamberlain, then, went to Locarno, while the British public went to the Stadium at Wembley, and that epigram—for it is an epigram—being reproduced in different forms in France, Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Belgium and Poland, partly explains why it is that the diplomats have been beating about the bush for a whole year, and why, having met at last in Locarno, they at first found difficulty in doing an obvious thing.

The determination and even enthusiasm shown by Mr. Chamberlain since Germany proposed the Pact of Security at the beginning of the year is a matter on which the present British Government is to be congratulated by a grateful people. Whether in fact the people are grateful or not is a matter of doubt, which is as illustrative of the muddle in human affairs as is the British Government's own inconsistency in other fields. Can it be believed that the same Government should be willing, even anxious, to sign a Security Pact, but should refuse to sign a treaty of "all-in" arbitration with, for instance, Switzerland? Yet this matter has been put to the test, and the Government has refused. The British type of arbitration treaty operates for all questions except those which affect the honour

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