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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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or the vital interests of the country. In other words, Great Britain has concluded some two hundred arbitration treaties for the purpose of settling disputes by arbitration instead of by war, but excludes from their field of operation precisely those disputes which most certainly lead to war. Suppose Mr. Chamberlain or Mr. Baldwin were to commit a murder in private life, as against in public life (that is, in war), and they appeared before the magistrate and pleaded in this way: "My Lord, I accept the validity of our common law as the arbiter in all disputes in which I may become involved. But I make exceptions, and so far as those exceptions are concerned, I have no use for the law. The exceptions are these: where my personal honour is concerned, or my vital interests, I reserve the right to commit murder without being interfered with by the police. In the present case the man I murdered was one whose existence threatened my vital interests. He was, in fact, an income-tax collector. I therefore murdered him, and I refuse to be answerable to any authority except my own Honour and my own Vital Interest." What would happen? The jury would no doubt be dismissed pending a medical examination of the defendants by nerve specialists. Yet their foreign policy, so far as arbitration is concerned, is an exact analogy.

Lest it be thought that the allegation here made that the British Government's attitude to international law is in gross conflict with the individual attitude of its members to English law, be a misrepresentation, it is well to explain exactly what the position is.

The question of arbitration is not a new one as it affects the British Government. There happens to be a definite British policy on the subject a policy that has been recently reaffirmed as the result of a certain test case. When Mr. MacDonald supported and partly evolved the Geneva Protocol last year his main object was to institute a system of universal arbitration. Mr. Chamberlain, in rejecting the Protocol last March, and in other public declarations, has stated the present Government's case against "all-in" arbitration. The two points of view were well summed up in letters from Mr. Chamberlain on the one side and from Mr. MacDonald on the other, published in the press in the last week of September. The issue is best illustrated by the actual case in point, which was referred to above, namely, that of Anglo-Swiss relations. Switzerland was one of the many countries with which Great Britain had an arbitration treaty of a uniform pattern. All the arbitration treaties to which Great Britain is a party, including that with Switzerland, and numbering some two hundred, have been published, and their common feature is that the reservation is made that they shall not apply to issues which affect either the vital interests or the national honour of Great Britain. The Anglo-Swiss Arbitration Treaty was renewable every five years, and when it fell due for renewal some five years ago the Swiss Government proposed that its character should be altered by the elimination of the reservation clause—in other words, that it should be made an "all-in" arbitration treaty. As the British Government did not accept that proposal, the proposed new treaty and the old existing treaty fell through. Since then the Swiss Government has renewed the proposal for an "all-in" arbitration treaty, with the same result. . . .

#### UN MOT DE CHEZ NOUS.

Où est le temps où la Suisse, pays proverbial semblable en cela à celui de Canaan, découlait "de lait et de miel"? Où est le temps où les tribunaux chômaient, où la police indiquait—tout juste encore!—le chemin aux automobilistes, où nos douaniers conversaient avec leurs frères, assis sur une borne, où personne ne craignait ni pickpocket, ni malfaiteur? Un signe des temps actuels s'est levé l'autre matin sur l'aube grise du Lac de Genève. Une véritable bataille s'est engagée entre représentants de la loi et malandrins. Au large de Rivaz des gardes-pêche suisses, montés sur leur bateau moteur surprinrent deux Savoyards qui, ayant tendu des filets prohibés dans les eaux suisses, s'apprêtaient à les lever. Les gardes-pêche voulaient intervenir; ils furent reçus à coups d'aviron. Une véritable bataille s'engagea alors, où avec un sang-froid remarquable, les Suisses évitèrent de faire usage de leurs armes. Les Savoyards sentant que leur vie n'était pas en danger, cherchèrent alors à atteindre le canot suisse et à le couler. En défendant leur embarcation les nôtres furent blessés à la tête, sur les bras et à la poitrine. Enfin après 2 heures d'une lutte farouche, l'avantage resta aux braves Vaudois qui ramenèrent leurs captures triomphalement à Vevey, où elles furent incarcérées. Tandis que cette bataille navale faisait rage, quelques heures avant, la même nuit, à Bâle, deux jeunes gens rentrant chez eux à la Greifensee,

furent assaillis par une bande d'individus qui les accablèrent de coups de pied et de coups de matraque: Un vrai massacre! Ce n'est que le matin que les passants trouvèrent ces corps inanimés gisant sur la chaussée!

Enfin à Bellinzona va s'ouvrir devant la justice pénale tessinoise les débats qui font suite à la catastrophe de chemin de fer dont on se souvient, et qui couta la vie à une personnalité allemande, dont la mort influenza certainement le cours de l'histoire! Le conducteur de la locomotive, un nommé Caviechioli semble être en mauvaise posture. Il y a pourtant une certaine ironie à comparer les rapports d'experts que soit l'accusation, soit la défense, ont accumulés. M. Binet, Inspecteur Technique des chemins de fer belges est catégorique. Pour lui c'est uniquement les installations défectueuses et insuffisantes de la gare de Bellinzona qui sont cause de la catastrophe. Monsieur Henzen, chef de division des chemins de fer de l'Etat Prussien, parle de défectuosités d'installation, mais estime que Caviechioli est fautif pour ne s'être pas arrêté au sémaphore fermé. Mais voici Mr. Leibbrand, directeur des chemins de fer du Reich à Berlin, qui estime que les installations ferrées ne pouvaient être meilleures, qu'aucune critique ne peuvent leur être adressées, et que seul et péremptoire le conducteur est fautif!

Maintenant, mettez-vous à la place des jurés, et vous vous rendez soudain compte que le métier de juge n'est pas un métier facile. La confrontation de ces "Gros messieurs des chemins de fer" sera sans doute un des moments les plus savoureux de cette affaire. Malgré tout, cela ne rendra pas la vie aux trépassés!

Si vous allez sur l'eau vous êtes attaqués. Si vous usez de vos jambes vous risquez d'être diminués, si vous prenez le chemin de fer, vous risquez d'être réduits en bouillie. Si vous songez à sortir en voiture, apprenez que Monsieur Jakob Möckli de Schlatt près Schaffhouse est tombé de son attelage et qui est décédé quelques heures plus tard à l'hôpital. Quant à l'automobile n'en parlons pas, c'est une pure folie que d'en essayer. Que vous soyez sur la route ou dans la voiture, vous risquez votre peau et votre fortune. Reste la douce joie de passer son temps à la maison. Là encore n'itez vous étrangement. Surtout vous, belle-maman, ou vous encore belle-soeur trop jolie! Ainsi l'agriculteur Louis Arnold de Braunwald, canton de Glaris a avoué avoir mis de la strichine dans un plat destiné à un membre de sa famille. Pendant ce temps d'aimables cambrioleurs peu respectueux de leurs devoirs civiques, essayaient de dévaliser la gare de Lamon Cadempino, près de Lugano. Ne peuvant y parvenir, ils se rabatirent sur le café "d'en face" où ils volèrent de la marchandise en quantité, et 600 francs en bonne espèce sonnante!... Et cette énumération pourrait continuer encore longtemps!

Dès lors où aller? Rien n'est sûr, tout vous est hostile! Ce sont désormais les "Philistins" qui habitent cette "Terre Promise". Et voici le long exode vers l'étranger, la fuite vers les Amériques et les forêts vierges. Voilà aussi pourquoi—ignorants que nous étions—nombre de nos confédérés ont cherché asile loin du pays natal. Voilà pourquoi il existe une "quatrième Suisse"! voilà pourquoi le lecteur! assis confortablement dans un monumental fauteuil "Club" tu feras avec le sourire mon article à Londres, au lieu d'en vérifier l'exactitude à l'ombre des grands monts neigeux!

"UN SUISSE QUELCONQUE."

#### QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES

	BONDS.	Nov. 17	Nov. 24
Confederation 3% 1903	80.25	80.25	
5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln.	100.85	100.32	
Federal Railways 3 1/2% A-K	81.85	80.50	
1924 IV Elect. Ln.	100.85	100.85	
Canton of Basle (City) 4% 1910	100.08	100.00	

	SHARES.	Nov. 17	Nov. 24
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	704	702
Crédit Suisse	500	762	755
Union de Banques Suisses	500	602	601
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	1848	1829
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3212	3257
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	3392	3370
S.A. Brown Bovery	350	382	378
C. F. Bally	1000	1139	1137
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. M. Co.	200	267	267
Entreprises Sulzer S. A.	1000	935	936
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