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HOME NEWS

The Federal Council has declared its willingness to grant the Canton of Uri a loan of Frs. 820,000 at 3 per cent. on the condition that the cantonal finances are subjected to a reorganisation.

The Swiss Federal Railways have now come to an understanding with the widow of the German Minister Dr. Helderich, who lost his life in the railway accident near Bellinzona; she will receive a total indemnity of Frs. 300,000.

The index figure to January 1st, as compiled by the Swiss Co-operative Societies (Schweiz. Konsumvereine) shows a reduction of nearly one per cent. as compared with the figure to the end of December last year; this is chiefly due to the lower prices ruling in the meat market.

At the end of last year, 66,797 persons (against 67,106 to 31st Dec., 1923) were employed in the different departments and services of the Swiss Confederation; of this number, 35,345 were in the service of the Swiss Federal Railways.

Two Zurich medical practitioners, who were establishing themselves in the canton Ticino, were taxed by the local authorities Frs. 200 each for the "patent" or permission; they appealed to the Federal Tribunal, which ruled that such an imposition is contrary to Federal law, and that the cantons may charge a small registration fee only for purposes of control.

Liberal concessions are contemplated by the Federal Council as a result of the memorandum which the Ticinese authorities presented a few months ago. In the first instance, the necessary funds will be granted for a cantonal survey and the establishment of a land registry. The present subsidy of Frs. 200,000 for the upkeep of the alpine roads will be doubled. The surtaxes in connection with the goods traffic in the mountain districts will be abolished as from the 1st of January next year. Financial assistance to local societies promoting and encouraging agriculture is also contemplated. On the other side, the present subsidy enjoyed by the German schools in the canton is to be withdrawn, and the latter are to be continued only for the purpose of enabling the children already attending of finishing their education.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Der Ertrag der Bundesfeierkarten.—Das Interesse, welches das Publikum an unserer letztjährigen Bundesfeierensammlung genommen hat, kommt in folgenden Zahlen zum Ausdruck. Es wurden abgesetzt an Abzeichen 298,374 Stück; an Bundesfeierkarten 389,636 Stück. Nach Abzug der Kosten für die Erstellung der Abzeichen, Karten, der Entschädigungen an die mitwirkenden Kunstler, der Spesen für Propaganda usw. sowie einer notwendigen Einlage in den Reservefonds verbleibt ein Reinerlös von 184,000 Fr. Dieser wird unter die Pro Juventute, die Schweizerhilfe, das Ausland-schweizer-Sekretariat der N.H.G., die Caritas-Zentrale, die Vereinigung der Russlandschweizer, die Pro Senectute verteilt werden, mit der Bestimmung, dass er von diesen Organisationen für unsere notleidenden Landsleute im Ausland, insbesondere die Kranken unter ihnen, verwendet werde. Mit einem bescheidenen Betrag soll auch das Heim "Nos Pénates" in der Waadt beacht werden, das betagten, arbeitsfähigen Erzieherinnen im Ausland eine Unterkunft bietet. Mit diesen Mitteilungen verbindet das Komitee den besten Dank an alle, die in irgendeiner Weise zum Gelingen dieses patriotischen Liebeswerkes beigetragen haben. (Nat.-Ztg.)

Gegen das Fluchen und Zoten.—Der Zentralvorstand der italienischen Liga zur Bekämpfung der Gotteslästerung holt zur Zeit die Zustimmung der fremden Regierungshäupter ein für einen internationalen Feldzug gegen das Fluchen und Zoten. Kürzlich veröffentlichte er das aus Bern erhaltene Zustimmungstelegramm des schweizerischen Bundespräsidenten. (Bündner Tagebl.)

Seconde mise à prix de la Furka.—La Chambre des poursuites et faillites du Tribunal fédéral a décidé de ne pas accepter l'offre de 1,750,000 frs. faite à la première mise à prix de la ligne de la Furka par le directeur Marguerat et d'organiser une seconde mise à prix, qui aura lieu à Brigue le 30 mars 1925 à 2 heures de l'après-midi. A cette occasion, le tronçon Gletsch-Disentis, non exploité jusqu'à ce jour, sera offert avec la concession ou sans celle-ci, c'est-à-dire pour la démolition. Le tronçon Brigue-Gletsch sera pour la seconde fois aussi mis à prix avec l'obligation de continuer l'exploitation. Les conditions détaillées de la mise à prix seront communiquées ultérieurement. (Gazette de Lausanne.)

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

We Swiss Abroad.

Most times we think of our family, our business and our friends, and little of the world at large. We all love our far-away country and its democratic institutions, its simplicity, its beauties, its majestic grandeur, and in moments of patriotic fervour perhaps even firmly believe that pretty story of its origin:—When Adam and Eve were driven forth from Eden, the Archangel Gabriel came down from Heaven to gather up Paradise and take it back to Heaven. On the way up a corner of Paradise, overlapping Gabriel's apron in which he had placed Eden, broke off, fell back to Earth, and that corner constitutes Switzerland! But what about us Swiss abroad? Firstly, of course, we endeavour to be a credit to our mother country, while at the same time honouring the institutions, laws and customs of the mighty country which gives us such charming and unfettered hospitality. But, after all, we might sometimes think also of the good we are doing, or that we ought to be doing, to our own country. An instance will explain what I mean. The other day, last Saturday to be precise, I had occasion to ring up a business friend at Sheffield. The call came through in less than half a minute, and in that time I was speaking with my friend—be it Sheffield, I in London—as plainly as if we were sitting opposite each other. Three minutes' talk. The result of that talk was a message to Switzerland. That message brought work for a number of our people for several weeks. That work brought those people wages and good ones at that, enabling them to provide their families with the necessities of life and a few luxuries, making life not only bearable, but enjoyable. Their labours produced articles which will be shipped to this country, where they will form parts of instruments. The assembling of these instruments will give employment to many hands here, and many English families will be provided with bread and butter. The finished instruments will be shipped to India. Apart from the middlemen who get a living out of the merchanting of these instruments, retailers in India will reap a profit which will do good to their families, and finally somebody will have to pay the final selling price for the instrument he buys. Paying that price will oblige him to do something whereby to make good the outgoing and to replenish his cash box. Maybe he will gather the fruits in his garden and sell them. Maybe he will give education to children and use the instruments to demonstrate. And so on.

Now, I think that by following occasionally one's actions along the same lines, we would all benefit, because such thoughts bring a great lesson home to our minds. They show us how closely interwoven present-day business life is, and how vast are the oscillations in the social life of the world produced by an action, insignificant and banal in itself, customary in every-day business procedure. And we Swiss abroad will think further: We see by the above cited example how we act as pioneers for our countrymen at home, providing, at least helping to provide, them with work. And, therefore, although we are the exiled Swiss, and for that reason perhaps even keener on our kinship with the Swiss at home, we have reason to be proud of the work we are doing, not only for our own benefit, not only for the sake of earning a living—no, but because we are helping our mother country to obtain some of the work which is so vitally necessary to feed our population at home.

Some of you, dear readers, may have had the same thoughts many times, as I have; some of you may not, and to those of you who have not, the above may, I hope, be not only an eye-opener,

but a great and uplifting stimulus and an exhortation to do your best always, and if it is only for the sake of being not only a Swiss abroad, but a Swiss Pioneer. (Here endeth the sermon!—Ed.)

The Geneva Protocol.

A lucid and masterly article by Lord Parmoor appeared in the *Contemporary Review* (January) and ought to be read by all Swiss, because all Swiss are vitally interested in the doings at Geneva.

The World Court in Session at The Hague.

A speech by its President, M. Huber (*Manchester Guardian*, 17th Jan.):—

The first public hearing of the sixth (extraordinary) session of the Permanent Court of national Justice was held in the Peace Palace at The Hague, under the presidency of M. Huber (Switzerland), who sat in the chair for the first time. The Court was composed of eleven judges, Lord Finlay being the British judge.

The convocation of the Court for this extraordinary session was rendered necessary by the recent decision of the Council of the League of Nations at its Rome meeting last month to ask the Court for an advisory opinion on the interpretation of the word "established" used in Article 2 of the sixth Lausanne Convention (on the exchange of Greek and Turkish populations) and also on the conditions to which the persons designated must answer in the said article as "Greek inhabitants of Constantinople" in order that they may be considered as "established" in the meaning of the Convention, and therefore exempted from the obligatory exchange provided for in it. As, pending the solution of this question, the exchange work must be suspended and thousands of people remain in uncertainty as to their fate, it could suffer no unnecessary delay.

In the course of his address M. Huber said:— In accordance with its statute our Court must represent all the main forms of civilisation and the principal legal systems. We are thus involved in difficulties which do not exist for a national court composed of judges who in general speak the same language and have been trained in accordance with the same legal principles. However, that which may be for us a source of weakness, delay, and even friction, may and should be the source of a special strength and a guarantee against the danger of working in a groove and becoming stagnant amid legal theories.

Nothing is further from me than to underestimate the difficulties of my task and the special responsibility resting upon me; but far greater is the responsibility resting equally on all of us who are called to maintain and, if possible, to increase the authority of the Court. There is no doubt that since the Great War the opinion has become prevalent that international life requires to be deeply reformed; none the less, the great effort made in this direction which the League of Nations constitutes is still the object of much scepticism. Public opinion is more ready to note the shortcomings and apparent failures of this institution than the remarkable results which it has accomplished. Many persons think it merely constitutes a manifestation of old political ideas, although disguised under new methods.

It is none the less true that one conception has acquired and possesses an enhanced credit—namely, arbitration in general, and more particularly international justice. Public opinion is unable to appreciate the essential limitations of justice, in the strict sense of the term, in the realm of international law—a branch of law so imperfect, so incomplete, and so difficult to transform. But that matters little; the essential is a belief in the possibility and the existence of an organism above the more or less brutal or more or less subtle competition of national selfishness, of an organism which represents impartiality and justice, principles of a higher order of things. This idea of international justice is—whatever one may say—at the present time essentially represented by our Court. On the success of our institution depends to a great extent the victory of the forces of goodwill and of the world's hopes, forces which in case of defeat must give place to a new pessimism more deadly than the old. Such is our responsibility, and it is truly formidable.

The number of cases brought before the Court will always be relatively limited. This is due to the composition of the community of nations. For that reason the value of each judgment which we deliver has upon the authority of our Court

an influence far greater than that of a single judgment of a national tribunal on that tribunal.

A further difficulty arises from the political elements involved in almost all international disputes. It would be superfluous and even offensive to insist on the fact that the world expects the Court and each of us to consider all questions in a spirit from which all preference or prejudice of a political nature is banished, and relies on our being always on our guard not to fall unconsciously victims to considerations foreign to justice. But this primordial principle does not prevent our envisaging all the aspects of the questions submitted to us.

But the political element enters into account in another manner also: there is no doubt that every legislator and every judge must, to fulfil his duties satisfactorily, fully understand the circumstances of that social state of things in which he intervenes, whether by means of legislation or by legal decision. And so it is necessary for the Court to take account of the particular nature of the relations between States. The Court does not only require the confidence of public opinion, but also of Governments; and it is natural that the latter require to be sure that the Court fully understands the problems lying at the root of the disputes which it is called up to settle.

For instance, you remember that some months ago Italy and Switzerland signed an arbitration treaty which entrusts the Court with jurisdiction, after methods of conciliation have failed, to hear and determine, at the request of one of the parties, any dispute of whatever nature, and to decide *ex aequo et bono* even disputes of a political nature.

This is an exceptional tribute to the Court, but it is easy to see that if States are really to abandon—as Italy and Switzerland have done in this treaty—the limitations of a political nature which have hitherto restricted international justice, it is necessary for them to have sufficient confidence in the independence of the Court and in its capacity to appreciate in its true value every element of an international dispute. It is equally possible for us to do much harm or much good, and this it is which renders our responsibility particularly heavy. But so long as we remain mercilessly conscious of what we are, and so long as our efforts are devoted solely to our mission and not to our own interests, we shall have the support of a force which is not our own.

What did Turkey think?

I read the following in *The Star* (16th Jan.):—
Recently a Swiss airman named Mittelholzer undertook to fly from Zurich to Teheran. He accomplished the flight successfully as far as Smyrna, but there he was stopped by the Turkish authorities and his machine confiscated because he had not the necessary authorisation to fly over Turkish territory.

For weeks he has been waiting at Smyrna for the necessary permit, but the matter still remains in abeyance.

On approaching Smyrna, M. Mittelholzer noticed on the coast a small group of Turkish soldiers and Europeans. He was so far from suspecting what was in store for him that he mistook for a guard of honour two Turkish aeroplanes, armed with machine-guns, which took up a position on his flanks immediately his seaplane touched ground.

The airman was, however, at once conducted to a small shanty, where he was detained more than an hour for the "medical visit," which merely consisted in plying him with questions. An officer later informed M. Mittelholzer that his machine was confiscated. The two Turkish aeroplanes had been sent out to prevent him entering the Gulf of Smyrna at all costs.

The Turks have, as a rule, a wonderful secret service and must have known—seeing that *The Swiss Observer* in its "Notes and Gleanings" referred to the forthcoming flight some weeks ago, and seeing that I have it on the most unreliable authority that the "Notes and Gleanings" form the favourite week-end literature of the Ladies of the Harem—that Mr. Mittelholzer is not a spy, bent upon spying out the lay of the Turkish fortifications, etc. Well, then, did they think that the dashing airman was after one of the fair beauties of the Harem? A most mysterious affair, surely, and I hope that the respective Governments will lose no time in clearing it up. Perhaps, as a reward, the Turks might forbid Mr. Mittelholzer to go near a Harem!

Winter Joy Days in the Alps.

Every now and then I come across an article which makes me give a *coup de canif* in my resolution not to write anything about winter sports. Such articles have appeared on the 17th and 21st inst. in the *Daily Chronicle*. They are written by Mr. Laneige, which I take to be a singularly appropriate *nom de plume*. If there is room I hope the Editor will print them:—

If you would be born again, in January leave the fog and drizzle of London and join me at Muerren.

Winter sports, though primarily for the 'Var-

sity athlete or public school boy, have a peculiar effect on our elders.

Here you will find bishops, temporarily unfrocked, frisking about like choirboys, famous lawyers "in fair round belly with good capon lined," falling on skis down rocky slopes for the sheer joy of falling.

I have even seen maiden aunts leaping like mountain goats across crevasses.

Muerren is the highest winter sport centre in Western Switzerland, and you are always sure of good ice and snow.

It is perhaps the most popular all-round sporting centre for English visitors. It lies 5,400-ft. high on a terrace shut in by mountains rising "terribly above" on all sides.

Every day at 10 a.m. the punctual sun rises over the Jungfrau, and in a few moments the world is warmth of colour and light.

Before me on the ice rink, as I bask in the heat and sip my Hopfenperle (as near Bass as I can get), gyrate the most superb creatures imaginable in unimaginable attire: girls in gay gabardines, girls in Fair Isle sweaters, girls in breeches, girls in trousers, girls in costumes of scarlet, green, russet, all-white and all-black.

And this to a background of dazzling, shimmering snow slopes to that throbbing waltz tune of "Wonder One."

Is it any wonder that couples get engaged for the season? In fact, the life here is responsible for two kinds of engagements—those in Switzerland and those in earnest.

More marriages are broken at St. Moritz than are ever made in heaven!

An ice gymkhana is in full swing. The most popular event is the shovel race. The lady sits on a wooden shovel, and a man pushes her across the rink. They then change positions and race back.

A famous headmaster (who should know better) has just collided a shovel-bound dowager (hitherto treated like Caesar's wife) with the fifteen stones of a Rugby international. Oh, this monkey gland of mountain air!

There follow balloon races, egg-and-spoon races and musical lounge (the ice version of musical chairs).

Or do you curl, the ice equivalent of bowls? In the far corner of the rink a group of elderly Scotsmen dance excitedly round a granite stone which slithers along with a mellow note known as "the birling o' the stanes."

The air is full of the peculiar jargon of Aberdonians: "Gie her a wit bit ice," or "Come snoooving up the port and cuddle under Granny's wing!"

Or perhaps you ski? Beyond the rink that tangled mass of humanity is the nursery slope where the beginner gets his "black-and-blue" and practices his stemming and his telemark turns on what an old writer calls the "slabberic snow-broth."

This year is almost a record for the absence of snow. We have only had four falls since the beginning of December.

Difficult as ski-ing is with snow, it is still more difficult without it.

Beyond the nursery climbs the baby funicular to the Allmendhubel (vulgarily called the bubble) 1,000 feet higher up. Thence the ski parties descend over the High Alps to the funicular stations below Muerren. From the Bubble starts also one of the largest bob-sleigh and longe runs in Switzerland.

A Limerick competition is responsible for the following:—

There was a young lady of Muerren,
Who went with a party ski-tourin';
But this little lass
Fell down a crevasse,

And she died, for the cold did do-her-in.

But now the sun has sunk behind the Tschingel Horn, one of the first mountains to exchange the bob for the shingle. It is 3.30 p.m. It is time for cherry jam.

Then some indulge in that roughest of rough games, ice hockey, and others longe down the steep tracks to shop in the little chalets below.

Night hurries down from the mountains. We bath, we dress for dinner, we dine. And only then does the day start, for do we not dance away our bruises till snowy-fingered dawn has lit the high peaks with the radiance of another day?

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