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HOME NEWS

The Federal Council has approved the request of the Military Department for a credit of 16½ million francs for the purpose of manufacturing and introducing into the Swiss Army new light machine-gun. Preliminary tests are stated to have given entire satisfaction. (See "Extracts.")

The terms of an arbitration treaty between Belgium and Switzerland have now been agreed to by the Swiss Minister in Belgium and the Foreign Minister of the latter country. Speaking generally, disputes are to be submitted to a special commission of five members, and in case the latter cannot arrive at a satisfactory settlement, will be referred to the International Tribunal at The Hague for final adjudication.

The net surplus of the Swiss Post Office, after providing for interest on capital invested, depreciation, etc., amounts to just under four million francs for the year 1924; the budget estimates anticipated a surplus of Frs. 442,000 only, that is to say, about Frs. 100,000 more than the surplus of 1923.

A new fiscal law which, by imposing a higher ratio on large fortunes, not only increases the revenue to the State, but also slightly decreases the taxes on income and capital levied upon the middle classes, was voted last Sunday by a large majority of citizens of the canton of Geneva.

Three new Bills were submitted last Sunday to the electors of the canton of Thurgau. Two of them, which mainly legalised modern administrative methods based on an antiquated law, were accepted, whilst the third, the most important one, regulating business in real estate, was thrown out by a small majority. Under the latter Bill it was hoped to put a stop to land speculations which injuriously influence the agricultural interests of the canton; one of the clauses decreed that no land or real estate could be re-sold, except under certain exceptional conditions, within five years of its purchase.

A Communist publication, issued in Berne during carnival week and called "Die Giftmadel," has been confiscated by the authorities on the ground that it contained serious personal reflections on the Italian Prime Minister.

For making fraudulent entries in the official record books and other irregularities, three committee members—including the president—of a Vevey Rifle Society were sentenced to three days imprisonment and to pay the costs of the proceedings.

The "Föhn" has visited the central and eastern part of Switzerland during last week with exceptional violence, bringing about torrential rain and causing damage to several farmsteads. On some causes railway traffic has been interfered with.

Two hunting enthusiasts, Councillor Daniel Kohler and Mr. Ernst Ruggli, from Vättis (near Ragaz), were overwhelmed by an avalanche near the "Graue Hörner." Both were enveloped and carried down the mountain for about 1,000 metres; when the avalanche broke up, Councillor Kohler had the good fortune to come up on the outside, though somewhat seriously injured; the body of his companion was dug out the next day.

Karl Russ-Suchard, the well-known chocolate magnate, died in Neuchâtel at the age of 87; he was keenly interested in the municipal affairs of his canton and a liberal supporter of social and charitable institutions.

BASLE FAIR, 1925.

In connection with this year's Basle Fair, which takes place from April 18th to 28th, we are arranging a conducted party for English visitors. The party will leave on Saturday, April 18th, and is open to any of our readers who wish to make use of these special travelling facilities. Further particulars will be published in due course, but intending participants should communicate with us without delay.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Das leichte Maschinengewehr. — In unserer Armeewird das leichte Maschinengewehr eingeführt. Die kriegstechnische Abteilung des eidgen. Militärdepartements liess es sich angelegen sein, die neue Waffe der Presse vorzuführen. Nachdem die Durchkonstruktion des Pistolen Gewehrs, das bei einem Gewicht von etwa 5½ bis 6 Kilogramm die normale Pistolenmunition verschiesst, erkennen liess, dass es bei entsprechender Erhöhung des Waffengewichtes möglich sein werde, auch für die Ordonnaanzmunition eine ähnliche Maschinewaffe herzustellen, ist im Frühjahr 1922 die Ausführung dieser Waffe in die Hand genommen worden. Die hergestellten Versuchswaffen liessen die Richtigkeit des von Oberst Furrer, Direktor der Waffenfabrik, konstruierten Versuchsprinzipes erkennen. Die Versuche wurden daher fortgesetzt und hatten Erfolg. Die neue Waffe besitzt ein Gewicht von 8,5 Kilo, eine Anfangsgeschwindigkeit von 740 Meter pro Sekunde, eine mechanische Schussgeschwindigkeit im Serienfeuer von 450 Schuss in der Minute, und eine Schussgeschwindigkeit im Einzelleuer von 50 bis 60 Schuss im gleichen Zeitraum. Das leichte Maschinengewehr ist luftgekühlt. Zum Auswechseln ist ein sogenannter Wechsellauf mitgegeben. Das Auswechseln kann in einer halben Minute vorgenommen werden, und zwar in der Regel nach 18 Schüssen. Zu jedem Gewehr gehören zirka 30 Magazine. Das Wechseln der Magazine im Feuer braucht nur wenige Sekunden Zeit. Der Waffe ist für den präzisen Einzelschuss eine abnehm- und verstellbare, nahe der Mündung anzubringende, zweistufige Stütze unter dem Kolben beigegeben. Präzision und Schussweite der Waffe sind mindestens gleich gross wie diejenige unseres Ordonnaanzkarabiners, mit dem die Kavallerie und verschiedene Spezialtruppen ausgerüstet sind. Die praktische Vorführung der Waffe ergab, dass jeder mittelmässige Schütze genaue Schussfelder erzielt. Man kann mit der Waffe auch stehend und ohne Stütze genau schiessen. Ohne dass eine Reinigung nötig ist, können bis zu 15,000 Schuss abgegeben werden. Unter dem Kommando von Oberst Otter wurden feldmässige Schiessübungen vorgeführt, die die gewaltige Wirksamkeit der neuen Waffe darstellen.

(National-Zeitung.)

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

To-day's Great Thought.

For the last three-quarters of an hour I have been wandering up and down the room. A fierce battle of ideas has been raging in my mind. Great Thoughts by the dozen have been struggling for supremacy, for the honour of adorning to-day's "Notes and Gleanings." Decision as to which would carry off the palm of victory seemed most difficult, if not altogether impossible. Fiercer and fiercer grew the struggle, quicker and quicker my paces, until, at last, she could endure it no longer, and with a peremptory "do sit down, please," assailing my ears, I came back to Earth, as it were, sighed and bade my Great Thoughts to be quiet. And that is why, dear reader, you will have to think of a Great Thought for to-day yourself!

Dean Inge and Mr. Garvin.

Dean Inge considers the British Empire and the United States the two countries to which the future belongs, but states that the race is far more important than the nation, and that a high-minded and idealistic patriotism is far better than cosmopolitanism.

He further states, without calling it by name, that "we still have to reckon with the ceaseless intrigue of a powerful Church as a disruptive agency."

Mr. Garvin, who, thinks the "Daily News," ought to have been a purely literary writer and ought not to have gone into Politics, makes our flesh creep by depicting in wonderfully effective passages the alarming state of Europe, the growing armaments, the growing feeling of unrest—in short, the approach of another Armageddon.

I had not recovered from the effect of the writings of the two aforesaid eminent publicists when, on reaching my office on Monday morning, I found a friendly, albeit vehement, letter from my old friend, whom I called the Nestor of the Colony in our last issue. He utterly disclaims my calling him an inveterate Conservative, and states that he had been, all through his long life, a Liberal, nay, an advanced Radical. Well, well, "there is more joy in heaven over a converted brother, etc." And, my very dear correspondent,

you know that we all wish that you may live many, many years, enjoying splendid health and gracing our London Swiss Colony by your vivacious presence. And, if you really have become an advanced Radical, there will be none better pleased than "Kyburg," as you know!

And now, I suppose, I ought to attend to the 'Gleanings' proper. Well, I wrote a note to the Editor last week to inform him that the British Press seems to be uniformly of the idea that Switzerland consists of frozen lakes, snowy slopes, sunlit mountain tops, all liberally sprinkled with ski-enthusiasts in as many various attitudes as there are stars in the night sky, and that besides articles dealing with these subjects, there appears practically nothing concerning Switzerland. This week's crop is no better. It is true there are quite a number of paragraphs in British newspapers giving me the prices of the Geneva Bourse. I am not a bit interested—for obvious reasons. Besides, the Editor stifles any attempt on my part to get our readers to present me with the wherewithal to become interested in monetary values! Then there are several articles dealing with Swiss commercial news. These are dealt with by another and better qualified collaborator. There is a short paragraph in the *Daily Express* (7th Feb.) on a—

New German-Swiss Air Line.

The Swiss expulsion order against the German aviator Zimmermann, who flew with the late ex-Emperor Karl from Zurich to Hungary in an unsuccessful attempt to regain the throne, has been withdrawn in order to allow him to participate in the establishment of a new aerial service between Switzerland and Germany.

Zimmermann will pilot the largest aeroplane in the service. It has three powerful motors, and is able to carry ten passengers, with mails and luggage.

And then there are pictures of the Jungfrau Hotel, of Pic Bernina, of ski-jumpers and ski-ers holding on to a cord and whirled along by an aeroplane. Happily, there is one really good article in the *Daily Telegraph* (7th Feb.):—

Sunny Sea to Sunny Snow.

This is a typically perfect mid-winter day in the Engadine. Finer could not be. The sky is clear, the sun shines hotly—so hotly that I can sit at my open window writing in complete comfort. All the mountains are sharply outlined against the light-blue heaven, but a transparent gossamer mist drifts lightly about the lower slopes. At my feet the skaters are gracefully performing their complicated evolutions on a large ice rink, that reflects the sunshine as from burnished silver. Ski-runners are disporting themselves on the snow-slopes. A band plays tinkling tunes far enough away to be agreeable and yet unobtrusive. The snow carpet spreads abroad over the fields and among the dark trees. Thickening as it rises, it reaches up the deep valley that leads away to the high mountains, most of which I climbed within a few months of half a century ago. There are the rocks up which I clambered; there is the narrow arête along which I delicately advanced behind the step-cutting guide, who to my inexperience seemed a miracle of skill. Surely, it is not longer ago than yesterday, but where are the companions of those wonderful times? They have vanished, but the mountains are unchanged.

Two or three days ago I was sitting in summer warmth beside the Italian shore of the Mediterranean. Here the sun is no less warm, but the air is by no means the same. This mountain air seems to fill the lungs with life and the body with energy. I know that I cannot now climb to the glittering heights that look so tempting. I know it, but I don't feel it. In this radiant world the spirit of everlasting youth revives. The years fall away; the old days return; for a moment one rejoices in a phantom adolescence.

The Engadine is a long, straight trough of a valley, with a succession of lakes in its floor between an avenue of peaks. It is the nursery of the River Inn. The names of the places along it are pure music—Silvaplana, Maloja, Suvretta, Celerina, and so forth, shaped in that Romansh tongue which the Roman legionaries left behind in these mountain-fortressed valleys. The sleigh-bells jingled when we started on again; ice-crystals sparkled on every twig. Nature had arisen from her night's sleep new-clothed in a robe of brilliant samite. The lakes were spotless sheets of white. Dark forests embraced them and pushed headlands out into them, shaping their shores into capes and bays,

and climbing up the hillsides to lose themselves aloft in straggling lines and last sentinels. The crowning rocks broke into pinnacles and ragged crests against the sky. Through this fairyland we were smoothly drawn by a gliding sleigh, passing happy folk in sufficient numbers to amuse without crowding the scene. Some lay idly in the sunshine, basking under the shelter of south-facing walls. Others were riding, for the Engadine is one of the few places where one can ride for pleasure upon snow. Groups of trailers on little toboggans tied behind horse-drawn sleighs often came by, and here and there a couple on skis, driving and drawn by a freely trotting horse. The road mounted a side of the valley, and we could look down upon its beautiful floor, far-spreading in front and behind. In every direction and above and below all was glorious. Half-way along we stopped to lunch elaborately and most festively with my old friend Hans Bon, the master-financier of the Swiss tourist industry, in his magnificent wood-panelled and pillared gallery, 150-ft. long, which is certainly one of the most distinguished modern rooms in Europe. Physically refreshed and mentally stimulated by excellent talk, on we went again—through St. Moritz, with its attractive shops and crowded little “place,” and then down in a wood beside the famous Cresta Run and out into the open at Celerina, after which there was only the flat valley to cross, and we were entering the branch that leads up to the Bernina Pass.

Pontresina stands at the mouth of this latter valley, and enjoys the advantage of also looking up the Rosegthal, so that the sunshine finds gaps of entry very useful indeed in winter-time. The day after our arrival some hundreds of people, on foot, on ski, or in sledges, gathered from all the hotels and villages in the Upper Engadine, were wending their way up this last-mentioned Roseg valley, attracted by an international ski-jumping competition, in which the representatives of eight nations were to participate. It is not easy to find a place entirely suitable for a ski-jump, but an observant person, after long search in these parts, discovered the very thing, a mile or so away from Pontresina. There is a slope of 25-deg. at the top, above a little artificial cliff 2,80 metres high, and there is a longer slope of 38-deg. below it, which runs out in a flat area in the valley bottom. On the farther side of that is a short, steep slope upward, and then forest. I should mention that immediately above the actual jump the slope is reduced for a short distance to one of 4-deg., from which the expert actually springs.

At the fall of a flag the performer shoots down the upper slope, then leaps into the air at the take-off; he lands on the steeper slope below, and must keep upright till he runs out upon the flat. It requires much skill and all the help of the rise at the far end to stop his wild career, and most competitors had finally to throw themselves on to the ground to escape contact with trees. Wonderful it is to see such skillful performers as were competing for their honour and our pleasure, flying through the air at I know not what astonishing velocity, and maintaining a perfect balance and sangfroid. The longest leap of the afternoon was 55 metres; there were others of 53 and 51. The record is 57½ metres. The setting for the sport was as beautiful as could be. The sun shone, the air was deliciously fresh; everyone was gay, and everyone could see the performance. In the evening we had the prize-giving, with speeches in several tongues. The local authorities may—and, in fact, do very heartily—congratulate themselves upon having organised a meeting attractive to competitors from so far away.

Which, I feel sure, will be a pleasure to read to most of you. And this morning I received a beautiful postcard from Pontresina, on which the writer assures me that he is greatly benefiting from his stay. But they do not have all the fun in Switzerland. I, too, had a good day last Sunday, although the sun did not quite come out, but merely hinted at his presence by a bit of the clouds being of somewhat lighter colour and finer texture. We motored up to Danbury, the Surrey-like part of Essex, and found the gorse afire already in many places (i.e., flowering) and a fine springlike air that did rejoice our flu-attacked constitutions and gave us a splendid appetite to do justice to the ample fare provided by the Cricketers' Inn. And I wonder, when I think of the stewed prunes and rice, so often dished up in Swiss mountain hotels, what tourists out there would have thought of the wonderful, creamy apricot tart we were regaled with at Danbury. Home-made, too, we were told—and it tasted like. So there!

BRITISH WOMEN MARRIED TO 'ALIENS.'

An illuminating and entertaining debate took place last Wednesday in the House of Commons on a motion that “a British woman should not ‘lose, or be deemed to lose, her nationality by ‘the mere act of marriage with an alien, but that ‘it should be open to her to make a declaration

“of alienage.” The motion was subsequently agreed to, but it is to be hoped that it will not generally be acted upon, as such a course is certainly not likely to strengthen the family ties or contribute to matrimonial happiness. We presume that the motion was based on the experiences recorded during the last war, when thousands of homes were mercilessly broken up, although international conventions had established the inviolability of private property, but we doubt whether in future conflicts such guarantees will afford any better protection. The Government was against this new departure, mainly on the grounds that it involved a principle on which it was desirable to obtain the opinion of the British Dominions. The House did not lose much time over the subject, but we reproduce some of the amusing passages in the discussion.

Viscountess Astor (Unionist member for Plymouth), who, of course, is an alien by birth, in supporting the motion, said:—

That no man wanted to give up his nationality because he was married to an alien woman, but she suspected a man married to an alien woman more than a woman married to an alien man, because a woman generally made her husband think as she wished. (Laughter.) Women were intensely patriotic, and it was hard that because a woman was married to an alien she had to give up that which was very dear to her. Woman was always inconvenient, but she was an inconvenient necessity, or she would never have been introduced to the Garden of Eden—(laughter)—and woman would become more inconvenient if the law of the land did not go in the way which thinking women wanted. An argument against the motion was that its proposals would result in confusion in the family. There would always be confusion in families unless there was co-operation. What worse confusion could there be than that a British woman living in this country and married to a German should be a German, while her children should be British?

Mr. Harney (Liberal member for S. Shields) was equally in favour of the measure, though he did not see quite eye to eye with Viscountess Astor, who, at the close of his address, objected to his “lamentable picture.” He said:—

That a woman marrying an alien should be able to sign a declaration whether she would have her husband's nationality or her own. Under the American law a woman who married an Englishman retained her own nationality. Therefore, she was an American in America, and of English nationality in England. It was anomalous to the last degree that a woman in 1925 who had won her freedom in all other respects should be robbed of her nationality and denied her country by marriage. No woman would ever rob him of his nationality, not even the noble lady opposite (Viscountess Astor) (Ltr.). If some enticing alien should come along and the present impediment should be removed, the noble lady would be put to the choice of saying: “I will remain in the pleasant widowhood of Britain,” or “I will enter into the delightful comradeship of an alien husband.” (Laughter.)

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The statistics of Switzerland's foreign trade for 1924, which are now available, show that exports have increased in value from 1,761 million francs in 1923 to 2,070 million francs for the year just passed. The value of imports has amounted to 2,504 million francs, as against 2,243 million francs in 1923.

Preliminary figures of the results of the Swiss Bank Corporation were given in these columns last week. The English abstract of the Directors' report, which is now available, points out that banks on the whole can look back on a satisfactory year's working, the increasing demand for money and credit facilities on the part of the business world having rendered it possible for them to employ their funds at a profit during the whole of 1924.

For the past year the Corporation was able to record a steady development of its current business with satisfactory results. The total of the balance sheet shows an increase from £41,582,868 for 1923 to £42,530,560 at the end of 1924.

Referring to the new building for the London office at the corner of Coleman Street and Gresham Street, the report mentions that the work is nearly completed and that the Corporation hope to be able to take possession at the beginning of March. The address—99, Gresham Street—will, therefore, in the very near future replace that of Lothbury as a household word among the Swiss Colony.

Of the management of the London office, Mr. Xavier Castelli continues to be Managing Director, Mr. Samuel Lorsignol, who was latterly Paris manager of the Banque Française et Italienne de l'Amérique du Sud, has been appointed Manager during the year, and Messrs. W. Eichenberger, H. Jenne, W. Richardson, and E. Stevens—hitherto Sub-Managers—have been appointed Deputy-Managers.

The profits of the Crédit Suisse for 1924 amounted to Frs. 10,440,551, as compared with Frs. 9,804,509 in the preceding year. The dividend will be maintained at the regular level of 8 per cent., which has not altered since 1895. The turnover in 1924 amounted to Frs. 52,326,000, as compared with Frs. 46,825,000 in 1923.

The Banque Fédérale, S.A., in Zurich shows a net profit, inclusive of carry-over, of Frs. 4,656,435, an increase of about Frs. 100,000 on the 1923 figure. A dividend is again proposed at the rate of 8 per cent. on the share capital of Frs. 50,000,000.

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

	Bonds.	Feb. 10	Feb. 17
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	... 77.15%	77.00%	
Swiss Confederation 5% 1923	... 98.87%	98.75%	
Federal Railways A—K 31%	... 79.32%	79.85%	
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921	... 101.00%	101.25%	
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892	... 72.00%	71.00%	

SHARES.	Nom.	Feb. 10	Feb. 17
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	680	680
Credit Suisse	500	727	725
Union of Banques Suisses	500	569	573
Fabrique Chimique et dev. Sandoz	1000	3065	3075
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	1987	1975
C. F. Bally S.A.	1000	1250	1232
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon	500	660	662
Entreprises Suizer	1000	770	768
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	350	343	341
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	228	227
Choc. Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler	100	170	170
Comp. de Navig. sur le Lac Léman	500	550	545

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