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HOME NEWS

The Basle Samples Fair had a brilliant official opening last Saturday in the presence of a large gathering of representatives from the home and foreign Press. Many Swiss Colonies were represented at the General Meeting of the "Ausland-schweizertag," which took place on Monday.

The International Central Commission for the Rhine Navigation opened its session at Strasbourg on the 15th inst. Several important decisions of the greatest importance for our country are expected to be taken there. The Swiss Delegation submitted a scheme for the regularisation of the Rhine from Basle to Strasbourg.

The Federal Council has called the attention of the Washington Government to what is considered a violation of International Common Law on the part of U.S.A. agents, instructed by their Government to control on the spot the cost of production of goods destined for export to U.S.A., these agents usually insisting on obtaining from the firms in question a sight of their books. Great Britain, France and Sweden have made similar representations at Washington.

The Press campaign in connection with the Rothenberger Initiative for an Invalidity, Old-Age and Dependents' Insurance is now in full swing, and the voting will take place on the 23rd and 24th May next.

Our National Debt has increased in 1924 from Frs. 2,271,515,639 to Frs. 2,303,382,619.

Last Sunday's elections in the Canton of Neuchâtel have given the following results:—37 Socialists, 30 Radicals, 22 Liberals, and 16 Progressives have been elected to the Grand Conseil, whilst MM. Calame, Clotu, Béguin, Renaud and Antoine Borel will constitute the new Government, the Socialist candidate, Mr. Gruber, failing to secure the necessary quota. The elections showed a remarkable stability in the strength of the parties.

Professor Eugène Borel has handed to the Secretariat of the League of Nations his arbitration award in the matter of the settlement of the Turkish Debt. This award is a volume of 120 pages and deals with all the points involved in the dispute between the interested nations.

The new Diesel-motor-boat "Rheinfelden," destined for passenger service between Basle and Rheinfelden, was launched last week at Augst. The boat, which is 31 metres long and 5 metres wide, and will be able to carry 200 passengers, cost 160,000 francs.

At Olten Railway Station a buffet stewardess picked up on the platform a portfolio containing 485,000 gold marks.

The accounts of the Swiss Alpine Club for last year show a surplus of Frs. 46,368 (income Frs. 267,313, expenditure Frs. 220,955). The funds of the Club on the 31st December, 1924, amounted to Frs. 227,449, and the Guides' Assistance Fund Frs. 21,832. The fund for the building of new premises for the Alpine Museum amounts to Frs. 31,100.

In Zurich the Association football match between Switzerland and Holland ended in a 4—1 victory for the home team.

Last Sunday a fire, developing with extreme rapidity owing to the foehn, destroyed part of the village Sis (Lower Engadine) on the River Inn, rendering homeless about 40 families, who had had to take refuge in neighbouring villages.

From Basle the death is announced, at the age of 70, of Dr. Prof. R. Wackernagel, Chancellor of State for Basle-Town from 1878 to 1917.

The funeral of the late Dr. Jakobus Stammel, Bishop of Basle and Lugano, took place on the 16th inst. in Soleure in the presence of the Papal Nunzio, Monsignor Maglione, the Soleure Government, and a large assembly of civil and Church dignitaries.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

Swiss Wireless Laws.

I am very pleased that Mr. O. Braga has taken the trouble to correct my erroneous and, I'm afraid, mischievously flippant remarks in our issue of the 11th inst. Besides stating the position fairly, Mr. Braga has shown me how easily one falls into the error of suspecting things which do not, in fact, exist. One falls all the easier into such error when one is out to fight against excesses of officialdom and of bureaucracy, and it then happens that one is apt to do real injustice to servants of the State who cannot defend themselves. I am, therefore, deeply grateful that Mr. Braga by his letter, which was published in our last issue, has corrected any misapprehension which my incautious remarks might easily have caused, and I take the rap over my knuckles which he has administered to heart, feeling glad that I got off so lightly and resolving to be more careful in future.

At the same time, Mr. Braga's letter has given me keen pleasure, because it proved that at least one of our readers was not too tired to protest against one of my remarks, and I hope and trust that other readers will follow his example and send in protests whenever they disagree with my views or opinions. Not only will this be of interest to other readers, but it will make my work ever so much more interesting and militate against that staleness which is bound to afflict the unopposed writings of "Kyburg," as it is bound to afflict the unopposed preachings of the man in the pulpit, unless he be a superman. "Kyburg" certainly is not.

Arbitration Grows.

The *Manchester Guardian* (11th April) has the following comments aenent the recent Arbitration Treaty, come to between France and Switzerland:—

Despite Mr. Austen Chamberlain's repeated declarations that this country cannot agree to compulsory arbitration, the number of arbitration treaties which are being signed by different Continental Powers is not passing unnoticed in London.

The fact that this week a treaty has been signed between France and Switzerland, providing for obligatory arbitration in all disputes between them, is particularly interesting when one remembers how steadily the Poincaré Government refused to submit the dispute over the "neutral zones" near Geneva to any procedure of conciliation or arbitration. This Franco-Swiss treaty goes even farther than the arbitration treaties signed by Germany with Switzerland, Finland, and other European States.

Germany, as well as the Scandinavian countries, has modelled her arbitration treaties on the proposals for committees of conciliation that were adopted by the League of Nations Assembly in 1922. Some of these treaties provide for arbitration in every dispute, others make exceptions for "vital interests," but all of them indicate an increasing desire in Europe to abolish war as a means of settling quarrels—a desire that has not been entirely damped by Mr. Chamberlain's cold sponge in Geneva last month.

Zeppos to be built in Switzerland?

Daily Express (13th April):—

The Zeppelin Company has asked the Swiss Government's permission to transfer the factory, with the staff and machinery, from Friedrichshafen to the Swiss shore of Lake Constance. The company seems confident of a favourable reply, and has already sent agents to inspect sites.

It is intended to construct monster commercial airships, capable of flying safely across the world's continents and oceans. It is stated that, owing to the success of ZR 3, America is ready to place an order for a larger and faster airship.

Under the Treaty of Versailles the Zeppelin works at Friedrichshafen must be dismantled, and it is a question whether the Allies will sanction the new scheme.

I take it that the *Daily Express* knows that Switzerland is a free and independent State, and am, therefore, surprised to read the last paragraph of the above. I wonder what the D.E. would say if our Swiss authorities took it into their heads to veto the building of men-of-war in this country?

Control of Arms Traffic.

Daily Telegraph (13th April):—

The United States Government has appointed Mr. Theodore Burton, ex-Senator of Ohio, as first delegate to the League Conference on Control of International Trade in Arms, Munitions, and Implements of War, to be held at Geneva

on May 5th. Besides the American Minister in Switzerland, several military and naval technical advisers are being sent by the American Government. The following States, members and non-members of the League of Nations, will be represented:—

Austria, Great Britain, Persia, Belgium, Greece, Poland, Brazil, Hungary, Portugal, Bulgaria, India, Roumania, China, Italy, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Japan, Sweden, Denmark, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Switzerland, Estonia, Turkey, Finland, Latvia, the United States of America, Germany, Panama, Uruguay.

The conference, which is expected to last three weeks, will endeavour to carry out the Arms Traffic Convention, which was signed at Saint Germain in September, 1919, and is intended to fulfil two purposes. The first is to prevent the importation of arms except under the strictest possible control to certain defined areas inhabited by backward peoples. The purpose of this part of the Treaty is evident. The task of preventing bloodshed in great parts of Africa and in the countries which border on the Red Sea is rendered far more difficult if the inhabitants have access to unlimited quantities of arms and munitions. It was felt to be especially desirable to bring this part of the Treaty quickly into effect, in order to prevent the despatch to these parts of the world of the surplus stocks left over from the war.

The second is to secure by a system of licensing full publicity for all international traffic in arms. The parties to the Convention undertook not to allow the export of arms from their territories except with a license from the Government authorities, which should indicate the quantities the export of which was allowed and the destination to which they were sent. The Treaty further provided that copies of these licenses should immediately be forwarded to the Central Office to be established under the League, and that they should be published. It was believed that by securing in this way the fullest publicity for the traffic in arms, something at least would be done to get rid of the evils attendant upon it. The Convention of Saint Germain was drafted on the assumption that it would be universally accepted by the Governments of all countries. While, of course, it is essential to secure the co-operation of countries which produce arms and munitions, it is nevertheless desirable that every country, whether it produces arms or not, should be a party to such a convention.

The Presidential Election in Germany.

According to newspaper reports, Dr. Marx believes that the salvation of Europe will be found finally in the various States forming the "Amalgamated States of Europe." He has my earnest wishes for success over his opponent, Field-marshal Hindenburg, who, albeit a venerable and honest man, is probably too much of a child in politics—*à la MacMahon* in 1873!—and who would be a danger if he became President of Germany, a danger not only to Germany, but to Switzerland and the rest of Europe as well.

Swiss Village Life.

Bromley District Times (10th April):—

Despite the intense quiet which pervades villages in mountainous Switzerland, especially during the off-seasons, it is remarkable how happy and contented are the people who live there. Unlike visitors, whose enjoyment of the beautiful natural conditions prevailing knows no bounds, the inhabitants are so used to all the loveliness around them that they appear to take but little interest in it. After all, have they not, most of them, lived in its midst all their lives? Their mode of life, too, is of the simplest kind, and with it they seem quite satisfied. They are accommodated, for the most part, in wooden dwellings, the appearance of which usually leaves much to be desired, though curiously enough these habitations, frequently shared with cows, which occupy the ground floor, are particularly up-to-date as regards heating and lighting, for electric power is everywhere. Another essential of life, which the Swiss in the Grisons enjoy in abundance, is water, which is continuously running almost at every turn into stone troughs or wooden ones, constructed by splitting the trunk of a tree in half, scooping out the middle, and stopping up the ends. These receptacles are used for the cleansing of almost everything, as well as for the watering of cattle. Incidentally they make excellent wash tubs, and around Flims women may often be seen at them washing and rinsing their clothes. Although pure air is always available, it is remarkable

how few Swiss peasants take the advantage of it they might, for windows are closed rather than open both by day and by night. These good people pursue the even tenour of their way as truly as did those English peasants whom Grey had in his mind when he wrote his famous Elegy. Their lives are praiseworthy if only for their simplicity and peacefulness, and many a man has envied the simple contentment of these innocent people.

Is not the above a truly idyllic picture? Some of us could point out other advantages enjoyed by our folk in the homeland and sadly missed by us "pioneers" in the diaspora—but, then, I don't like to get homesick.

An Echo of the Bellinzona Railway Disaster.

The Times (13th April):—

An agreement has been reached by the Swiss Federal Railways with the heirs of Dr. Helfferich, the former German Chancellor, for the payment of an indemnity of £10,000. Dr. Helfferich was killed on April 23, 1924, at Bellinzona, on the St. Gotthard line, when two express trains ran into each other.

Now is Your Chance to Buy a Castle.

And one, too, in which poor Karl and his Queen, Zita, the ex-Emperor and Empress of Austria, spent two years of their exile, and which, moreover, belonged to Prince Louis Napoleon. What a chance for somebody wishing to live like a prince! For, according to the *Daily Express* (13th April) the historical Château de Prangins, with its park, old masters and furniture, is to be sold by public auction next month.

If one of our readers profits by my drawing his attention to this opportunity, I'll claim that he invites me and Mrs. "Kyburg" for at least a fortnight's holiday next year!

Motoring and the Alps—Fewer British Climbers—

Swiss Guides' Lament.

Daily Telegraph (15th April):—

Many of the leading guides in the Alps, especially those belonging to the older generation, agree that the number of British Alpinists has declined of late. The class of young man who used to visit the Alps annually during the summer climbing season has disappeared. Guides who used to be engaged a year in advance from June 15 till about Sept. 15 by men of letters, men of art, senior wranglers and senior classics, or leading lawyers and barristers, no longer find patrons. Only some of the old guard of the Alps are to be found in the climbing season in the various climbing centres, and they visit the Alps for easy ascents and excursions.

In the opinion of the guides it is motoring which has killed mountaineering; so many young men who used to take their vacations in the Alps in summer have taken to motoring, and cannot afford both the expense of a climbing holiday and the upkeep of a motor-car. Possibly also the Great War has been the cause of the breaking of the habit of many young men in continuing their favourite sport of climbing. Some well-known young Alpinists who began their climbing career in the years 1912–13 have either been killed during the war or been maimed. Others of the younger generation who belonged to a class which supplied climbing recruits belong now to the new poor, and consequently cannot afford to engage in mountaineering.

However, for the Swiss tourist industry the absence of real climbers does not matter. I should say that the country in general benefits more from the motorist than from the mountaineers; but for the guides indeed it is a very serious matter. Even the mountain hotels are not affected by the lack of climbers; on the contrary, they are probably earning more money by selling petrol and by their garages than they did when they supplied provisions for climbers and their guides when taking a climbing expedition. In fact, those who have known the Alps for a quarter of a century cannot help noticing that a change has taken place in Switzerland as regards the type of tourist who visits the country now. I have been living in Switzerland for fifteen years, and have been visiting it for more than a quarter of a century, and never before have I been so much struck by the strange and incongruous mixture of people now coming to Switzerland. Some apparently come for no other reason than because they think they might as well be in Switzerland as anywhere else. Not a few come because they find that by joining in conducted parties they can have a holiday and meet socially some of their fellow-creatures; while a few seem to come solely for the purpose of sending picture postcards to their friends at home.

These remarks apply not to any particular nationality, but to all nationalities alike. Since Sir Leslie Stephen's days Switzerland has become the playground not only of Europe, but also to some extent of the East. The summer visitors now include a good sprinkling of Japanese, Chinese, and even a few Indians, Ranees, Rajahs, and even Maharajahs, with their dusky suites, and also an occasional Siamese of a very high rank, besides Persians, and here and there some Egyptians and Moroccans. Americans constitute

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probably between 10 and 15 per cent. of the total number of summer visitors; while the number of tourists from South America, notably from the Argentine and Brazil, is steadily increasing every year, although still not very large.

This summer climbing season will probably be an early one. For one reason, the amount of snow in the high Alps is not very great, and there is every reason to hope that the winter snow will settle down by June, so that the peaks will be fit for ascents one month earlier than usual. Moreover, the spring this year came prematurely, and the buds and flowers unfolded earlier than usual—a precocity which, however, was followed by an unseasonable cold; but I seldom remember such a spring of abundant blossoming in the Alps as this one.

Where the younger generation of climbers is to come from I am not sure. The Dutch are certainly showing much energy, and I should say that they are now the best customers of the guides, but there does not seem to me to be any considerable number of young people now growing up who are taking to climbing, at any rate, any young English people. Many of those who do make ascents come to a climbing centre with the intention of merely going up one special mountain. They spend a week-end or so, then rush away again. No knowledge of mountains can, of course, ever be acquired in this wise. Excellence in mountaineering requires more perseverance and more qualities of a high order than excellence in any other form of sport; and it also requires patience and a certain amount of leisure. The tendency of the times may be said, therefore, to be against it.

And the *Manchester Evening News* (8th April) reported the visit to Cotonopolis of the well-known Grindelwald guide Hans Bürgeren as the guest of enthusiastic Muncanian Alpinists. Interviewed by the paper referred to, Hans is reported to have come to the conclusion that in Manchester one had to think of trams and motor-cars all the time. I just wonder what his impression would be of a traffic block in Aldgate on a Tuesday morning, when they hold the hay-market there?

To-night's Great Thought.

"Sufficient for the day is the work thereof."

UN JUBILÉ CINQUANTENAIRE.

Les Suisses sont connus pour leur instinct migrateur. Partout, sous toutes les latitudes, ils ont fondé des Colonies nationales, en plein steppe de la Pampa comme sous les bambous de Malacca. Et ces Colonies sont prospères, la plupart du temps: on y cultive l'esprit patriotique, les traditions de chez nous, le parler du territoire comme aussi le sens des affaires. Il en est, de ces groupements helvétiques de l'étranger, dont tous les membres ont su se créer une belle position sous le soleil.

Aussi bien commence-t-on, grâce aux efforts des patriotes éclairés qui ont lancé le mouvement des "Suisses à l'Etranger," à s'intéresser largement à ces Colonies commercantes qu'abrite un peu partout la croix fédérale. Mais sait-on suffisamment que le Suisse a créé encore une autre "Colombie," colonie étonnamment prospère si l'on y songe, ou le nom de Suisse est cheri et le drapeau rouge à croix blanche vénéré doublement parce que emblème de l'Helvétique d'abord, et ensuite parce qu'il porte le signe immortel de l'amour qui s'est sacrifié.

Cette "Colombie," elle n'est pas précisément composée d'enfants de Tell, pour parler avec le poète, car ils ont la peau noire, ceux qui en sont les membres, et ils ne parlent point le "Schwyzerdütsch"!... Mais s'il est vrai qu'il existe quelque chose comme l'affinité des coeurs, ou l'adoption des âmes, alors ces milliers de Thongas du Sud de l'Afrique auxquels certains des meilleurs et des plus courageux fils de la Suisse ont porté l'Évangile depuis cinquante ans, sont bien un peu les enfants de la patrie helvétique, en même temps que nos concitoyens sur le plan céleste.

Et c'est cette entreprise toute d'amour, de désintéressement et de sacrifice, qui a célébré cette semaine son jubilé.

Voici ce que le *Journal de Genève* en dit:

Fondée en 1875 dans le nord du Transvaal, la première station, Valdezia, en a vu six autres se constituer autour d'elle, dans un rayon de quelques centaines de kilomètres. Une église

vivante existe aujourd'hui dans cette région, comptant environ 1800 chrétiens, 2400 élèves, possédant son conseil et son corps directeur.

Mais la tribu Thonga, de la race bantou, que les missionnaires suisses connaissaient à peine lorsqu'ils se mirent à l'évangélisation, on découvrit que son véritable centre était dans la colonie portugaise du Mozambique, et que son noyau au Transvaal était le résultat d'un exode partiel de ce peuple. Quelques nouveaux convertis, retrouvés au Mozambique, y furent les premiers témoins du Christ au milieu de leur peuple, et en 1887 M. Paul Berthoud, un des fondateurs de la Mission avec M. Eugène Creux, s'établit à Rikatla, première station de la côte. Lourenço-Marquez, chef-lieu de la colonie portugaise, eut bientôt son église, la plus importante actuellement. Les stations au Mozambique sont au nombre de 11 avec 5300 chrétiens et 2700 élèves.

L'extension de l'œuvre en Afrique a eu son parallèle en Suisse. L'Eglise libre vaudoise, qui avait pris l'initiative de cette mission, ne pouvait à elle seule en assumer les charges grandissantes. Les Eglises libres de Genève et de Neuchâtel s'unirent à celle du canton de Vaud en 1881; l'Association chrétienne évangélique de Genève entra en 1907 comme quatrième membre de la fédération. Comme des souscripteurs nombreux appartenaient à des Eglises nationales, les statuts révisés en 1918 comprirent, à côté des Eglises adhérentes des groupes d'amis nationaux, qui envoient eux aussi des délégués à l'assemblée générale et au Conseil directeur. C'est tout à fait conforme à la tradition suisse, représentative et fédérative.

Le jubilé que la mission Suisse romande va célébrer sera un acte de reconnaissance envers Dieu pour les grandes choses qu'on y pourra proclamer. Toute une église constituée dans le peuple thonga, des pasteurs indigènes dont l'un, M. Calvin Mapopé, représente son église au jubilé, des milliers de chrétiens, l'influence de l'Eglise s'exerçant bien loin, c'est une réalité bienfaisante à contempler. L'œuvre est commencée, elle doit être poursuivie, et longtemps encore la Suisse sera le pays d'où viendront "nos pères" comme les noirs appellent si joliment leurs missionnaires. Le jubilé est une étape encourageante. Il doit être aussi un appel à l'intérêt et à la sympathie de toutes les Eglises de notre petite patrie romande pour la mission qui porte son nom.

Peut-être nos concitoyens de Londres désireront-ils en savoir plus long encore sur l'activité de leurs compatriotes au Sud de l'Afrique? L'occasion leur en sera donnée Dimanche matin à l'Eglise Suisse, où nous nous associerons en pensée à nos amis, pour fêter leur jubilé avec eux. Et le soir, Mr. J. Bennett, jadis au service de la Mission au Transvaal, nous contera ses souvenirs personnels, que plusieurs assurément, désireront entendre.

R. H.V.

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