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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The Federal accounts for the year 1924 close with a deficit of 21.6 million francs, the amount anticipated in the budget being 38.2 million francs. The deficit in the preceding year—1923—exceeded 45 million francs.

For the first time since 1918 the number of factories subject to the Swiss Factory Law shows an increase; they had been decreasing year by year. At the end of 1924 the number was 8,103, employing 357,507 workers; the watch trade has been chiefly responsible for this improvement.

In the new code of civil procedure, which is now being elaborated by the Grosse Rat of the Canton of Thurgau, poor litigants may have their legal costs remitted if the local authorities or guardians certify that beyond the necessary income for the needs of his family the litigant does not possess any other means.

The Glaris Landsgemeinde decided to maintain the present restrictive motor traffic regulations; during the summer months the speed limit on Sundays must not exceed 18 kilometres per hour.

In order to encourage the building of houses, the Lucerne municipal council has voted a further credit of about Frs. 380,000, which brings the total earmarked for this purpose to over five million francs. Most of this amount is secured by mortgages and loans.

The results of the universal aliens restrictions are illustrated by the official figures just published by the Swiss Emigration Office. Whilst in 1923 8,006 persons left Switzerland to seek a livelihood abroad, the number fell during last year to 4,140. The United States, Canada and Central America have received about 75 per cent. of that number, the remainder, just over a thousand, showing preference for Africa, Asia and Australia. As regards their different callings, half of them are farmers and skilled workmen; the commercial side is represented by 18 per cent., and the hotel side by just over 5 per cent.

On the occasion of its 92nd anniversary, the Zurich University has conferred the degree of Doctor *honoris causa* on Mr. Louis Colmobi, of Bellinzona, in recognition of his eminent services in translating into the Italian language standard books dealing with the Swiss legislature and jurisprudence.

M. Jean François Lacroix, a former bill broker in Geneva, has bequeathed the whole of his fortune, with the exception of a few minor legacies, to the local Hospice Général, which will thus receive an amount of about Frs. 700,000.

During an altercation in the Geneva courts between two rural councillors it was disclosed that the maire of a local suburb was the president of a little social club founded for the sole purpose of enabling its members to obtain regular supplies of absinthe. The sale and consumption of the "Fée verte" is, of course, prohibited throughout Switzerland.

## AUSLANDSCHWEIZER-TAG. SOME REFLECTIONS.

For the last eight years, ever since the movement was initiated culminating in the annual conference under the above title, we have kept our hopes at a high pitch in the expectation that something tangible would result sufficiently engaging and practical to rouse and rally the spirits of the close on half-million Swiss who, away from their country, are scattered over the whole of the globe. Far be it from us to belittle any achievements, but the progress has been slow enough to stifle the original enthusiasm. We gather that the expenses of the central secretariat in Fribourg exceed Frs. 40,000 per annum, and that its existence and activities are largely due to the personal efforts of Dr. A. Lätt, who for this purpose had collected no less than Frs. 60,000. The several lectures delivered during the two days April 19th/20th are mostly of an "academical" nature, and hardly capable of stimulating the in-

terest of those delegates who travelled from abroad in order to benefit by them; the hall was anything but overcrowded, and the only foreign representatives of note whom we noticed—and who were officially referred to—were Monsieur de Pury, the Swiss Minister in Paris, half-a-dozen Swiss Consuls from French towns, and the Consuls from Frankfurt and Stuttgart. It was announced that a school or reference book dealing with Swiss history and ideals, and specially compiled for children educated abroad, was in course of preparation; it is to be published in German and French, and possibly later on in Italian and Spanish. An English edition does not seem to be in contemplation, which will be regretted by the large colonies in English-speaking countries; maybe, this is a compliment to the unbiased and liberal spirit in evidence at British educational institutions.

The "Leitmotiv" of practically all the speakers was the maintenance of the Swiss *cachet* of our compatriots and the prevention of their children being assimilated to foreign surroundings and notions. The orators—several of them probably have never resided abroad for any length of time—had studied the subject thoroughly, and their conclusions were prompted by the highest ideals. There is, however, another side to this question, and one which has been fully realized by our own authorities in Switzerland. We all know that great efforts are made at present to encourage and even force foreigners permanently residing in our country to embrace Swiss nationality. The lasting presence of aliens—aliens in spirit and fact—who enjoy the protection and privileges of the country of their adoption is considered a danger to the State and an eyesore to the population. We have experienced a striking example in the canton of Ticino, where some of our own compatriots hailing from beyond the St. Gotthard have established a community of their own, religiously adhering to customs foreign to the native population, until the latter violently protested against this affront. If the—no doubt well-meant—tenets and recommendations of our educationalists at home are carried out abroad, the same thing will happen, with results that are not only disastrous to the particular alien, but also to our mother country. We are not thinking of small isolated patches of Swiss in the tropics or elsewhere, but of the large colonies where the success of the individual largely depends upon his ability to adapt himself to prevailing conditions, and if in this process we and our children become "assimilated," we cannot suffer any harm. Emigration is for Switzerland a safety-valve without which our very existence is jeopardized. We know scores of Swiss whose families became assimilated, and who have left their mark in the country of their adoption, incidentally contributing more to enhancing the prestige of their own country than if they had diligently followed those counsels. We also know not a few—though their double nationality imposed other duties upon them—who in the hour of danger *voluntarily* rushed back in order to defend their old country. We think our patriotism is sufficiently deeply implanted without the necessity of having it annually revived by official fatherly reminders and exhortations that we and our children are in danger of losing the Swiss *cachet*. Our well-wishers at home are also apt to forget that the material future of our children is of more concern to us than the fostering and nursing of ideal considerations for a country which only in exceptional cases can offer them the possibility of remunerative livelihood in later life.

The annual gathering closed with the traditional banquet and concert at the Stadtkasino. The Federal Council was not represented, and it seemed to us that the meeting was not as representative as in previous years. We also missed our old friend Stucki, who had been so closely identified with the movement. The social part was in the hands of Dr. Emil Schaub, whom we wish to compliment on the excellent patriotic programme which he had been able to marshal with the help of musical, choral and gymnastic societies. Apart from the yodler turns, the gala number was, no doubt, the tableau representing marble groups which, under the direction of Mr. F. Estermann, portrayed historical events, the conception and execution of which aroused general ecstasy.

Before concluding our "critical" remarks, a little suggestion for the future may not be out of place. Every year Swiss societies and clubs abroad are urged to send delegates to this conference. For obvious reasons the response is not very great, but the reception of those few who do not grudge the time and expense is not such as to encourage a second visit. We do not suggest a formal reception, but as the names are previously

communicated, we submit that the local committee or a member of the latter should at least enquire whether these delegates have safely arrived, and perhaps welcome them with the conventional questions whether they had an agreeable journey and whether they were interested in cross-word puzzles.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

### Our Swiss National Sport.

During the week-end, on an all too short visit to my native town of Winterthur, it was my good fortune to spend an evening with my friends of the Stadtschützen. The chief topic of conversation was the selective rifle match which took place on Sunday, the 3rd May, at Solothurn, and from my friends who were about to take part in this shoot I learned some very interesting details afloat the methodical, careful, scientific and exacting training to which they had subjected themselves for months in order to have a chance of qualifying. Shooting, as a sport, is not an easy affair when it comes to the top of the list, I gathered, and in one instance, just to give my readers an idea, the question as to the probable success of one of the members revolved almost entirely around the discussion as to whether his age was not too great to allow of the pupilule of his eyes being able to contract and distend sufficiently quickly! The point being that, in taking aim, the eye has to focus in rapid succession on three points which are separated by great distances. For a lover of the sport, but one who knows the easier side better than the really serious one, the discussion carried on by really experienced marksmen, whose names are well known wherever rifle shooting is talked of, was really illuminating. Well, I do not yet know what actually happened at Solothurn, and whether my friends topped the 1,040-point mark or not, as I had to return to my second home on Sunday evening again. But I do hope that our Swiss team will be successful at St. Gall when the international match takes place this summer, and that they will then earn the reward of their dogged perseverance.

### Death of the Bishop of Basle.

*Université et Catholic Weekly* (24th April):—

Mgr. Dr. Jacobus Stammel, Bishop of Basle, Dean of the Swiss Episcopate, died at Soleure, his episcopal residence, at the age of 85. His Grace was one of the oldest dignitaries of the Catholic world, and celebrated two years ago the diamond jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood.

The deceased bishop was well known and appreciated as a man of great learning and ability, respected and esteemed by all denominations. While never yielding on points of principle, he was successful in maintaining good relationship with the non-Catholic local governments he had to deal with.

His diocese, over which he ruled for 18 years, is by far the largest in Switzerland. It comprises eight German-speaking Cantons and the French-speaking Jura, with a Catholic population of nearly 600,000 souls, some 430 parishes and about 800 priests. R.I.P.

### International Child Welfare Congress.

*Bayswater Chronicle* (25th April):—

The first International Congress on Child Welfare (organised by the Save the Children Fund International Union) will be held at Geneva next summer from the 24th to the 28th August. Its comprehensive character marks the greatly increased importance which has been attached to the question of child welfare in all countries since the war.

The Congress is under the patronage of the Swiss Federal Government and influential Patronage Committees, including many men and women of great distinction, have already been formed in connection with it in a dozen different countries. The British patrons are Lord Eustace Percy (President of the Board of Education), Mr. Neville Chamberlain (Minister of Health), and the Duke of Atholl, who is President of the Save the Children Fund. The British Organising Committee includes representatives of all the organisations which are concerned with different aspects of the subject.

It is anticipated that at least a thousand delegates, drawn from fifty different countries, will attend the Congress, and a large number of eminent specialists will participate in the discussions. The Ministry of Health has sanctioned the sending of delegates by Local Authorities.

Previous to the Congress, the Save the Children Fund International Union will hold an International Summer School at Geneva. This will afford a delightful holiday in beautiful surroundings, at very moderate cost. Full particulars