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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

Next Monday, Sept. 27th, the extraordinary autumn session of the Swiss Parliament will be opened. Amongst the subjects on the agenda is an interesting proposal—already raised on previous occasions—to create a parliamentary commission for foreign affairs; the Federal Council is known to be opposed to such an innovation.

Considerable damage to bridges, aqueducts and woods has been done just above St. Maurice by the overflowing of the Rhone. The river came down last Monday morning at a tremendous pace, carrying with it large masses of tree trunks, boulders and mud. No loss of life is recorded. The cause is stated to be a sudden fissure in the Plan Nèvé glacier of the Dent du Midi massive.

Some surprise has been caused by the announcement that in order to facilitate the quick disposal of this year's fruit crop, the Swiss Federal Railways propose to grant a special rebate of 20% on inland freights whilst for export consignments the rebate is to be 30%.

The accounts for 1925 of the town of Berne close with a deficit of about Frs. 255,000, notwithstanding an unexpected exchange profit of over eight million francs which has been realized by the conversion of a municipal loan placed some years ago in America.

The "Journée des Suisses à l'étranger" (Auslandsschweizertag), which was held last Wednesday (Sept. 15th) at Lausanne in connection with the seventh Comptoir, attracted a distinguished gathering. The central government was represented by Federal Councillor Schulthess and no fewer than six Swiss ministers were present during the lectures and deliberations; they were MM. Duntant (Paris) Barbey (Brussels), Wagnière (Rome), Rufenacht (Berlin), de Stutz (Madrid), and Lady (Stockholm). M. Duntant dwelt on the necessity of bringing Swiss products to the knowledge of foreign markets by taking advantage of the many exhibitions held abroad. M. Barbey also supported a general propaganda but laid stress on the desirability of modifying same according to the needs of the particular country. M. Angst, President of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Marseilles, spoke on the tax on foreigners as recently introduced in France. M. Metzger, President of the N.S.H., Charleroi, referred to the many unsatisfied war claims made by Swiss in Belgium and asked how, in future, neutral property in belligerent countries could be adequately protected. Minister Wagnière (Rome), explained that all the necessary diplomatic steps had been taken to bring this matter home to the respective foreign governments, but that in each instance "the reply had been in the negative." In the name of the Styrian group of the N.S.H., M. Spyri (Graz), insisted that before future commercial treaties were concluded the wishes of Swiss residing in that particular country should be consulted. M. A. Kraft made a strong plea for giving the Swiss living abroad the right to vote in National matters, to which M. Angst made the remarkable retort that it was practically impossible to correctly inform the Swiss abroad on the merits of any particular question.

The Centenary of the death (Feb 17th, 1827) of Heinrich Pestalozzi, the great schoolmaster and philanthropist, will be celebrated by a number of festivities which will take place partly at Zurich and partly at the "Pestalozzi Neuhof" at Birr.

Charged with embezzlement to the amount of Frs. 140,000, Gregor Pfister, a former Gemeindepräsident of Tschuggen (Schwytz), has been sentenced to four years penal servitude; it was stated that the deficiencies arose chiefly through his inexperience in keeping proper accounts and through overwork.

The town of Berne is suffering from a superabundance of houses and flats, no less than 700 being at the disposal of prospective tenants.

Through mistaking the cry of a child passenger who had dropped a little basket, a driver brought

his large car to a standstill with such a sudden jerk near Beringen (Schaffhausen), that it overturned, burying the five passengers underneath; Frau Stamm, aged 60, from Löhningen, was killed on the spot, all the others being more or less seriously injured.

Two serious motor accidents are reported from the neighbourhood of Aigle (Vaud). In the first one Rudolf Dietrich from Montreux lost his life in collision with a motor lorry, the other two occupants, his wife, who was driving, and a friend, escaping with minor injuries. Inability to negotiate a dangerous curve was the cause of the second accident, when a car, driven by Mme. Dubois, from Aigle, was precipitated down a steep hill slope and smashed to pieces. The lady and her husband are lying at the local hospital in a critical condition.

The cantonal Obergericht in Berne rejected the appeal from the Burgdorf judgment by which a local practitioner, Dr. Riedel, and his paramour were sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for having poisoned the formers wife.

## A XMAS PARTY TO ENGELBERG.

In deference to a desire expressed by a number of subscribers, arrangements are being made for a Xmas trip to Engelberg, the well-known winter sports centre. The party will leave London on Thursday, December 16th, and return from Engelberg on Wednesday, December 29th. The cost, including fares there and back, full 'en pension' terms at the "Schweizerhof," Kur- and sports tax, will be one guinea per day per person, i.e., £14 14s. for the fortnight. We hope to publish particulars in one of our future issues and, in the meantime, shall be pleased to hear from those desirous of taking advantage of this offer.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Les faillites en Suisse.**—Le nombre des faillites a de nouveau augmenté au cours de ces dernières années, et tout spécialement cette année. Depuis la fin de la guerre, il a atteint le minimum en 1919 et le maximum en 1922. Dans la période janvier-fin août 1926, les nombre des ouvertures de faillites a atteint 432, dont 51 pour le seul mois d'août.

*Gazette de Lausanne.*

**Une inauguration au Col de la Croix.**—Dimanche 12 septembre, par un temps splendide, s'est déroulée au Col de la Croix, M. le conseiller national Maillefer, accompagné de MM. Reymond, député et archiviste cantonal, en un beau discours patriotique, a remis à la commune d'Ollon une plaque commémorative des combats livrés en ces lieux en 1798. Cette plaque en bronze est dédiée à la mémoire des soldats d'Ollon morts pour la patrie pendant les combats des Ormonts.

M. le syndic Demartin accompagné de MM. Pittier, Chevalier et Durant-Turel, municipaux, de M. Ambrezin, secrétaire, de M. François Isabel, ancien instituteur, historien local, et de M. le syndic Saussaz, de Gryon, a pris possession du monument au nom de la commune d'Ollon et a remercié les donateurs en les assurant que ce témoignage des temps passés sera jalousement gardé.

*Gazette de Lausanne.*

**Une combat épique.**—On a observé ces jours derniers dans le Sertigial, un combat épique entre deux chamois et deux aigles. Ces derniers ayant surpris deux chamois sur une anfractuosité de rocher, s'abattirent sur les deux malheureuses bêtes et cherchèrent, en volant autour d'eux, à les effrayer et à les précipiter dans le vide. Une fois fracassés sur les rochers, les aigles les auraient facilement emportés dans leurs griffes acérées. Malgré l'ardeur du combat, les deux petites bêtes, couvertes de sang, réussirent à se réfugier sous des sapins, empêchant ainsi les aigles de les saisir et à gagner un endroit moins dangereux et de là disparaurent avec toute la vitesse qu'on leur connaît. Elles avaient réussi à force d'énergie à échapper aux griffes terribles du roi des montagnes. Une caravane de touristes suivit avec une lunette d'approche toutes les phases de la terrible lutte.

*Feuille d'Avis de Lausanne.*

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### League of Nations.

"The greatest day in the history of the League" is, in short, the description given in the English press to Friday, Sept. 10th, when the ideals of the League, with large strides, approached realisation. The admission of Germany is practically the only object of the seventh assembly and this has been at-

tained; nobody begrudges the few minor sacrifices; they laid bare the narrow-minded conception which still exists in some quarters. The one thing to be regretted, I believe, is the fact that Switzerland has refused re-election as a non-permanent member of the Council. It is generally conceded that our foreign minister, M. Motta, is the most popular man in international League circles, and as he represents a country with no empire notions, his impartial active co-operation will be lost. But to return to the point, one of the best descriptions of this great historic day is given in the *Church of England Newspaper* (September 17th); it will strike one that if the whole proceedings had been studiously stage-managed, the effect could not have been greater.

This has been a week of excitement at Geneva culminating in the historic entry of the German delegates into the Hall of the Reformation as members of the League of Nations. The first two days of the seventh Assembly of the League were taken up by the formal business of electing a new President, Dr. Nintchitch, Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and six Vice-Presidents who together with the Chairmen of the Six Committees form the General Committee of the Assembly which arranges the daily business. The Committees also met during Monday and Tuesday to arrange their programme of work.

On Wednesday morning the bare, barn-like Hall of the Reformation was tense with subdued excitement. The Press and public galleries were packed to suffocation. So great was the demand for tickets that even Mrs. Woodrow Wilson had to be content with an ordinary seat in the public gallery, and some well-known journalists were shut out altogether. At the call of the President, M. Motta, the first Swiss delegate and perhaps the most popular man in the Assembly, mounted the Tribune and in clear and polished French presented the proposals of the General Committee (a) that Germany should be admitted a member of the League of Nations, (b) that she should have a permanent seat on the Council, whose non-permanent seats should at the same time be increased to nine. It was this latter proposal which raised opposition from Holland, Norway and Sweden. Dr. Nansen, the famous explorer and Norway's first delegate doubted the constitutional legality of non-permanent seats and strongly protested against its being coupled with the granting of a permanent seat to Germany. But all three powers, with good grace, declared their intention of voting for the proposal in order that Germany's entry should be unanimous.

On Thursday Geneva was discussing excitedly the historic event and looking forward eagerly to Friday and the entry of the German delegates. They arrived by special train on Thursday evening, and were accommodated with difficulty at the Hotel Metropole. The Hall of the Reformation has never been so crowded as it was on Friday morning. The German delegation had brought with it an enormous following of secretaries, experts, men of affairs and officials and their families and friends. The side aisles of the floor of the Hall were packed with the privileged and the Secretariat of the League thronged the Tribune itself. In the Press and public galleries, much nearer the semi-glass roof, the heat was terrific. As an American lady said to me, it was "an epuck-making day!" The seats for the German delegates were ready, next to Australia and just behind the British Empire. Punctually at half past ten the President demanded order, and stated that the credentials of the German delegation had been approved and asked the new member to take its seat. Amid tempestuous applause Herr Graus, the German legal expert, pushed his way through the crowded doorway, followed by the nervous-looking Herr Schubert, the second delegate, and last, Herr Stresemann himself, stolid and unaffected. As soon as the delegation had taken their seats they were almost blinded by flash-lights. The President then welcomed Germany and called upon Herr Stresemann to speak. His speech was solid, and voiced the hope of the new Germany in the League. Then came M. Briand. The situation was moving and historic. With a bow to the German delegation, M. Briand mounted the Tribune. Many must have remembered that twelve years ago the Battle of the Marne was raging; here was France giving the right hand of welcome to Germany. The great French orator surpassed himself: his speech electrified the great assembly with its wealth of sonorous phrase and dramatic gestures. With his hands outstretched and his fine head thrown back M. Briand declared: "France and Germany have had enough of glory on the field of battle: it is finished." M. Briand walked to his seat amid a whirlwind of applause.