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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

Serious efforts are being made at home, outside parliamentary circles, to bring about a reduction of the military budget, which, experts state, can be effected without jeopardizing the efficiency of the fighting units.

\*\*\*

It is officially stated that National Councillor Col. Dollfus has been prevailed upon to withdraw his resignation, and will therefore continue to be in command of the 15th Brigade (5th Div.).

\*\*\*

For having suggested that the local results in the elections for the National Council last October were faked, the Radical paper "La Gruyère" was fined Frs. 200 by the courts in Bulle (Fribourg).

\*\*\*

The newly elevated Bishop of Basle, Monsig. Dr. Josefus Ambühl, paid an official visit last week to the Regierungsrat of the Canton of Berne, by whom he was subsequently entertained to dinner.

\*\*\*

According to official statistics, about one-and-a-half milliard francs are invested in the Swiss hotel industry; this represents about 4 per cent. of the 40 milliards at which the Swiss national fortune is estimated.

\*\*\*

Professor H. Lehmann, Director of the Swiss National Museum, has been nominated an honorary member of the Metropolitan Arts Museum in New York.

\*\*\*

The heirs of the late Kaspar Schuler-Suter, of Messrs. Schuler & Co., of Wetzikon (Zurich), have made sundry grants to the amount of Frs. 100,000; about half goes to employees of the deceased, and the remainder to philanthropic institutions of Wetzikon.

\*\*\*

A donation of Lire 25,000 for encouraging professional education has been received by the Milan section of the Schweiz. Kaufmän. Verein (Soc. Suisse des Commerçants) from a local compatriot who expresses the hope that his example may be followed by others.

\*\*\*

Poisonous gases, which are known to exist in the single-line tunnel between Münster und Grenzen, were the cause of a traffic interruption which might have had serious consequences. A goods train came to a standstill on Wednesday (Jan. 20th) in the tunnel, and it was subsequently discovered that the engine driver and his assistant had been rendered unconscious owing to smoke fumes. They both recovered in hospital, but those in charge of goods trains on this particular sector will in future be provided with gas masks.

\*\*\*

A fire, which illuminated the whole town of Lausanne, broke out late on Thursday evening (Jan. 21st) in the neighbouring village Montéta, where the timber-yard, saw-mills and part of the offices, belonging to Messrs. Wysbrodt, were destroyed; no lives were lost.

\*\*\*

For shooting and killing, at the time of the Pact Conference, a waitress who was employed at a local restaurant, the Locarno courts have sentenced an Italian to 15 months' imprisonment.

\*\*\*

Col. Rudolf von Reding, who has been in bad health for a number of years, has died in Schwyz at the age of 67; he took an active interest in local politics and represented his canton in the States Council from 1905 to 1911.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Ein idealer Kanton.** — Dass im Tellenland Uri die Kriminalistik im Abflauen begriffen ist, beweist die Tatsache, dass im kantonalen Zuchthaus nur noch drei Strafjährige ihr Dasein fristen. Alle anderen sind entweder begnadigt worden oder entsprungen. So hat man von dem bekannten Isenthaler Mörder Jauch noch keine Spur und wird wahrscheinlich auch keine finden.

(*Luzerner Tagblatt*.)

**Die Spekulation mit den grossen Goldvögeln.** — Die Spekulation hat sich rasch unserer neuen 100-

Franken-Goldstücke bemächtigt. Dass dies geschehen werde, war zwar vorauszusehen; nicht aber das Ausmass des Agio (Aufgeld), das heute für ein Stück bezahlt wird. Anfänglich, als unsere Bundesväter zu Weihnachten die Goldvögel nach Hause brachten, wurden für das Stück sogleich 120 Fr. bezahlt; heute bereits 160 bis 170 Fr.

Nicht zu Unrecht heisst es im Volke angesichts solcher Machinationen, dass der Bund besser gethan hätte, gar keine derartigen Stücke auszuhängen, oder dann mindestens im doppelten oder dreifachen Betrag. Das würde unsere Notdeckung kaum wesentlich beeinflusst haben, auch wenn das letzte Stück tesauriert würde oder in Sammlungen verschwände. Der Aufkauf aber zu derartigen Preisen wäre verunmöglich worden. Hoffentlich erfolgt eine weitere Prägung. Wir wollen nicht annehmen, dass die Schweiz einmal eine Medaille herausgeben müsse mit der Inschrift: "Gold gab ich für Eisen"; aber ein gewisser Goldföldis im Lande könnten unter keinen Umständen Schaden stifteten. (Zürichsee Zeitung.)

**Die Dornier-Werke in der Schweiz.** — Die neuen Grossflugzeuge, deren Bau eine wirtschaftliche Notwendigkeit ist, können infolge der Bestimmungen des Versailler Vertrages, sowie des Londoner Abkommens nicht in Deutschland gebaut werden. Aus diesem Grunde werden die Dornier-Werke in Friedrichshafen, die bahnbrechende Arbeit im Bau von Verkehrsflugzeugen geleistet haben, in der Schweiz bei Altenrhein im Kanton St. Gallen ein Werk und einen Flugplatz errichten. Dank der zentralen Lage im Herzen Europas und des Reichstums an Gewässern ist die Schweiz, wie die "Deutsch-Schweizerische Wirtschaftszeitung" in Zürich schreibt, berufen, eine grosse Rolle im internationalen Flugverkehr, sowie im Bau der grossen Transozeanflieger zu spielen die auf den Schweizer Gewässern vorzüglich ausgeprobt werden können. Nach vielen schwierigen Verhandlungen ist nunmehr eine Vereinbarung zwischen dem Kanton St. Gallen und den Dornier-Werken getroffen worden, aus der die Dornier-Werke zur Gründung einer Gesellschaft mit Rechtsdomizil in der Schweiz verpflichtet werden. Die Bauten werden von der Gesellschaft als Bauherr ausgeführt und bei Lieferungen und Arbeiten das schweizerische Wirtschaftsleben in erster Linie berücksichtigt. Das Flugfeld wird nach Fertigstellung auch dem Militärflugwesen der Eidgenossenschaft zur Verfügung gestellt. Die Gesellschaft ist weiter verpflichtet, die Hochbauten binnen Jahresfrist in Angriff zu nehmen und den Fabrikbetrieb binnen zwei Jahren aufzunehmen, wodurchfalls sie zur Rückerstattung der Subventionen in voller bzw. halber Höhe gehalten ist. An den Subventionen in einer Gesamthöhe von  $\frac{1}{2}$  Millionen Schweizerfranken sind der Bund mit 425,000 Fr., der Kanton mit 175,000 Fr. und die beteiligten Gemeinden mit 100,000 Fr. beteiligt. Die Gemeinde Thal, die Geschäftssitz der neuen Gesellschaft werden wird, muss 60 Prozent der von den beteiligten Gemeinden aufzubringenden Summe zur Verfügung stellen, erhält aber dadurch auch die Vorteile des Steuerbezuges. Obwohl vorläufig die Verwaltung noch in Friedrichshafen bleiben wird, ist mit der Heranbildung der Arbeiterschaft auch die Herstellung der Einzelteile im Werk in der Schweiz geplant. Vorerst wird nach den notwendigen Planierungsarbeiten die grosse Konstruktions- und Montagehalle (235 Meter zu 60 Meter) errichtet werden. Die Bauarbeiten werden vom Rheinbaubüro Korschach, der zuständigen kantonalen Baubehörde, ausgeführt, sodass keine Zeit mit mühsamen Informationsarbeiten verloren geht. Das Interesse an dem Unternehmen ist in der Gegend ausserordentlich rege, wie die Beteiligung an dem am 10. Januar stattgefundenen Volkstage in Thal beweist. (SVD.)

**La diminution des naissances en Suisse.** — Les statistiques signalent un recul de la natalité dans notre pays, recul qui se manifeste non seulement dans les cantons urbains, mais aussi dans les cantons agricoles. L'excedent des naissances est de 8,8 pour 1000 dans les cantons de Lucerne et Bâle-Campagne, 8,5 en Argovie, 7,9 à Berne, 7,4 dans les Grisons, 6,3 à Schaffhouse, 5,8 en Thurgovie. A Genève, le nombre des décès dépasse annuellement de près de 500 celu des naissances. En Suisse l'excedent de naissances ne dépasse que fort peu ceux de la Belgique, de l'Autriche et de la France, pays qui présentent le chiffre minimum sur les 32 pays compris dans l'enquête.

(*Journal de Jura*.)

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## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

The British have not had it all their own way with the Winter Sports matches in Switzerland, and the—

### Ice Hockey Championship.

was won by Switzerland. The *Daily Telegraph* says on Jan. 14th:—

In the European ice hockey championship at Davos on Jan. 13th Switzerland defeated Great Britain after extra time by 5 goals to 4. England led by 3 goals to 1 at half-time, scored by Reid, Sexton, and Cuthbert respectively, but Switzerland rallied, and at full time the score stood at 3 goals all. On extra time being played both teams made a tremendous effort, but, despite the Englishmen's vigorous defence, Switzerland got another goal, thus leading by 4 goals to 3. Shortly afterwards, however, Sexton equalised for England, and the sides changed over with the score at 4 goals all. The winning goal was scored in the second half by Dufour (Switzerland).

If you wish to know what thoughts come into my mind when Ice Hockey is mentioned, please re-read what I wrote in these columns about a year ago.

A very interesting article, dealing with an even more interesting subject, namely—

### Swiss Vineyards.

appears in *The Economist* (16th Jan.):—

Ever since the Roman occupation, the grape has been cultivated in Switzerland. The vine-growing cantons are, according to the importance of their production, Vaud, Valais, Ticino, Zurich, Geneva Neuchâtel. In consequence of the poor vintages of recent years, of the increasing cost of cultivation, of the spreading of diseases and parasites, as well as of the competition of foreign wines, the culture of the vine has decreased in importance during the last 50 years. Swiss vineyards, which occupied a surface of 71,605 acres in 1898, were reduced to 45,499 acres in 1921, a decrease of nearly 40 per cent.; a small increase has been registered during the last two years in the Cantons Vaud and Valais, so that the total area must now be nearly 45,900 acres. Swiss vineyards represent a total capital of £9,000,000, which hardly produced any monetary return from 1906 to 1914 (0.9 per cent.), and only a small one from 1914 to 1917 (1.9 per cent.). Thanks to the exceptional good vintages of 1918 and 1920, when the return was respectively 29.6 per cent. and 47.2 per cent., the average interest for the period 1906-1922 reached 8.7 per cent. The vine-growers consider as their income the wages represented by their own work and the interest of the capital invested in their vineyards; they are, therefore, satisfied when the cultivation expenses are balanced by the receipts. The profit of the good years generally makes good for the deficit of bad years, but, according to an inquiry made by the Secretariat of Swiss Peasants, the culture of the vine can be profitable if it is intensified and developed in the most favourable regions. Cultivation expenses have more than doubled during the last 25 years, owing principally to the rise in the cost of hand labour, which now represents nearly 53 per cent. of the expenses, and to the expenditure needed for fighting diseases, which reached nearly 15 per cent. of the cultivation expenses. The Federal Government is helping the vine-growers in the fight against phylloxera and mildew. It gives them subsidies for buying such drugs which destroy these pests, and for replanting the vines that had to be uprooted. From 1921 to 1923, the Federal Government spent £33,937 in subsidies for the fight against phylloxera and mildew, and £95,124 for replanting the vineyards and insuring the vine-growers against damage caused by hail. The average yield of one hectare (0.405 acre) was 1,801 frs. (£72 1s.) from 1905 to 1913, and 3,323 frs. (£132 18s.) from 1906 to 1922. The wine production per hectare differs from one year to another, ranging from 20 hectolitres (1 hectolitre is nearly 18 gallons) to 90 hectolitres, according to the regions. The average was 35 hectolitres for the period 1906-13, and 39 hectolitres for the period 1906-22. The total production of Swiss vineyards reached a yearly average of 495,990 hectolitres for the period 1913-23. It was 181,197 hectolitres in 1913—the lowest record of the period—and had a value of 9,530,000 frs. (£381,200). In 1922, which was the record year for quantity, while 1918 was the record year for quality and price

of the last 30 years. Swiss vineyards are producing about one-half of the annual consumption of Switzerland, and French, Italian, and Spanish wines are imported at the rate of 20 million gallons a year, in spite of heavy Customs duties intended for protecting the home vine-growers. Swiss wines are rather expensive, strong, but good enough, and some of them—such as "Yvorne," "Dézaley," "Malvoisie," "Enfer," "Fendant," "Dole," "Hallauer," and Swiss champagne—are well known abroad, where they are exported in small quantities. The Swiss wine industry is, in fact, one of the rare Swiss industries which is nearly entirely reliant on the home market, where it has now to meet the serious competition of foreign wines, which, thanks to the rate of exchange, may be had at very low prices.

May the foreign countries soon be able to adjust their exchanges, thereby making it easier for our Swiss vine-growers to earn their livelihood.

In this connection—exchanges I mean—the following from the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (18th Jan.) is interesting:

#### The Franc's Flight.

To check the "flight from the franc," the French Government has lately tightened up its precautions against the export of cash or precious metals. It requested the Swiss Government to obtain for it from Swiss banks lists of French citizens who had deposited shares, precious metals, jewels or specie in these banks. The Swiss Federal Government refused to do anything of the sort, but offered no objection to individual banks giving France such information if they chose. One Geneva firm accordingly provided a list, and the French public is indignant at the news which has leaked out that among the depositors were three French Cabinet Ministers, one at least famous for his eloquent appeals to the French public to support the franc.

Another Swiss financial firm, when requested to give information concerning an investment made by it for a prominent Frenchman, replied that not only were the facts as stated, but that among its other clients who held investments in foreign securities were 105 members of the French Parliament, including supporters of nearly every political party. Such discoveries may help the French to understand that no legislation will prevent people from transferring their wealth from a mismanaged currency, so long as Government policy dooms that currency to further depreciation.

Gresham long ago formulated the law that "bad money drives out good money." Under modern conditions depreciated paper drives real money abroad.

Na ja, "Und wenn zwei dasselbe tun, so ist es dennoch nicht dasselbe," or words to that effect, as the Book has them.

#### Aviation in Switzerland.

is pushing ahead, and ought to receive a big impetus, as a big factory and aerodrome are to be established. *Financial News* (19th Jan.):—

A well-known firm of aeroplane builders is constructing an aircraft factory with an aerodrome attached near the village of Altenrhein. Six hundred workmen will be employed, and the factory will occupy 45 acres, while the aerodrome will extend over 185 acres.

The site, which has been leased for a hundred years, belongs to the communes of Thal, Altenrhein and Rheineck. The communes recently approved the lease of the site. Furthermore, the communes of Rorschach and Rheineck have voted subsidies amounting to 100,000 frs. to assist in the establishment of the aircraft works.

And nicely tucked away, too, up there in the Rhine Valley!

Swiss Industry makes itself heard in this country. Sometimes interested circles beat the big alarm drum and shout the dangers of Swiss competition. More often, however, British big business men know enough of the laws of economic interplay, and that there are things which can be better done in one country, and therefore ought to be done there.

By the way, Tariff Reformers, believing that it is the foreigner, poor chap! who pays the Customs duty, please note that according to *The Times* the other day, Great Britain is still Switzerland's chief buyer of nickel watches, and does not seem to have placed its orders elsewhere since the introduction of the Tariff. Who pays the 33 per cent. *ad valorem* duty?

In other respects, talking of Swiss Industry, *Engineering* of 15th Jan. has a long and nicely illustrated article dealing with Messrs. A. J. Amsler & Co.'s Schaffhausen Universal Horizontal Testing Machine. The article can be had on application to "Kyburg."

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Vous connaissez l'affaire: nous vivions fort contents de part et d'autre de notre ignorance commune depuis le meurtre du nommé Vorovsky et rien ne laissait prévoir que dans un avenir prochain nous aurions à reprendre l'étude épique de cette triste histoire, lorsque la Société des Nations qui siège à Genève et par conséquent en Suisse, décida de convier les Soviets à deux Conférences d'une importance capitale pour l'avenir du monde: la commission préparatoire pour la Conférence du désarmement et le comité d'experts pour la Conférence économique mondiale. Les Soviets n'ont jamais dédaigné le chantage et cette invitation leur en donnait une magnifique possibilité. Il ne tenait pas beaucoup en outre à participer à ces réunions et ils trouvaient de plus à enfin, le moyen d'humilier un petit pays, qui à un moment donné s'était cru permis d'exprimer publiquement ce qu'il pensait des agissements bolchévistes. On peut penser ce qu'on veut de l'accusation de Conrad,—et je ne veux pas dans cette chronique en discuter la valeur,—toujours est-il que nous avons ouvertement exprimé notre façon de voir. C'était notre droit et même notre devoir, mais les dirigeants d'un pays où règne la terreur ne pouvaient comprendre que les "montagnards" et les "vachers" que nous sommes à leurs yeux s'en viennent condamner leur système à la face du monde.

Done, lorsqu'arriva à Moscou l'invitation du Secrétariat de la Société des Nations, on fut d'une joie sans borne. Refuser était impossible mais l'on pouvait par mille moyens se dérober sans encourir le moindre danger. On protesta donc de l'inutilité de la Société des Nations et de ses vains efforts pour donner la paix à un monde qui n'en veut pas ou qui est déjà trop corrompu pour y trouver son salut. Mais des influences firent comprendre que l'on prenait la mauvaise route. Berlin se tourna définitivement vers Genève et Paris, avec qui l'on désirait à tout prix un règlement des dettes et du reste, fit savoir que rien ne serait conclu, avant que Moscow n'accepte les invitations de la grande Assemblée des peuples. Que faire? et c'est alors que l'idée géniale de mettre la Suisse dans une très délicate situation internationale vint aux Maîtres du Kremlin. On secoua le dossier Vorovsky sur son rayon et l'on se mit à jouer de l'impossibilité de venir, non plus à une réunion de la Ligue, mais à Genève. Genève devenait le bouc émissaire et allait payer pour la déconfiture de Lausanne. De plus on savait que toutes les grandes Puissances estimait indispensable la présence de la nouvelle Russie et que l'une d'entre elles se déciderait bien à faire pression sur le petit et trop orgueilleux pays que nous sommes. Le calcul était juste et je vous assure que le ministre de France à Berne ne chôme pas depuis quelques semaines!

Vous comprenez maintenant de quel bois se chauffe notre gouvernement. Il ne vit plus! et Ces Messieurs s'arrachent leurs derniers cheveux. Même l'élegant Monsieur Haab en a pâli et n'en dort plus! Grave signe je vous assure.

Devant nos magistrats c'est l'opinion publique de la Suisse unanime qui demande une attitude ferme et basée avec dignité sur les traditions d'indépendance et de libre disposition. Derrière lui c'est le souriant envoyé des bords de la Seine qui pour être souriant n'en est pas moins tenace et même un rien menaçant! Que faire? Ou aller? Vaut-il mieux s'aliéner les nations du monde entier et paraître aux yeux de tous comme l'obstacle aux efforts de désarmement? encourrir le risque de porter à jamais la responsabilité d'un échec des efforts de paix, où vaut-il mieux foulter aux pieds les anciennes libertés de nos pères et capituler devant Moscow? Car il ne faut pas se faire d'illusion, Ces Messieurs pousseront leur chantage jusqu'au bout et exigeront satisfaction complète. Que faire? Nous voilà placés au centre d'un véritable problème européen et forcés bien malgré nous d'y jouer le tout premier rôle. Notre si sympathique ministre des affaires étrangères malgré toutes ses ambitions, n'en demandait pas autant, et la décision à prendre lui semble presqu'impossible à trouver. Ce soir lundi aux dernières nouvelles, on était plutôt pessi-

miste aux alentours du Palais Fédéral et il m'a semblé que l'on illuminait à l'ambassade de France ainsi que dans certains cercles rouges. Evidemment vous protestez et ne pouvez admettre que soit fait le moindre entorse à notre souveraineté ancestrale. Cependant mettez vous à la place de nos bons et paisibles Conseillers, comprenez leur détreesse et leur manque d'habileté de semblables questions, et bien franchement, demandez-vous ce que vous décideriez si vous étiez à leur place?

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