

# Notes and gleanings

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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

During consideration in the National Council of the policy of the Federal Council our diplomatic representations abroad were subjected to some criticism for the alleged lack of understanding and persistency in dealing with questions of economic importance. In his reply, President Motta expressed himself against the system of commercial attachés at legations, and as regards consulates would continue to preserve the honorary character for future appointments.

Though the Federal Council has accepted a motion (Savoy) asking for measures to combat the spread of Bolshevism in Switzerland, the Commission of the National Council recommends that this motion be given no further consideration.

The Swiss claim to the military neutrality of Upper Savoy has now been definitely renounced, the National Council agreeing with the respective article in the treaty of Versailles by 94 to 5 votes, and the States Council by 29 to 3.

In the elections for 29 members of the two councils constituting the "Oberbürgererrat" of Lucerne, only three were successful, all the remainder failing to secure the necessary absolute majority.

The electors of the city of Zurich passed, during the last week-end, with large majorities four uncontested financial proposals, authorising the expenditure of nearly 3½ million francs for the construction of small tenements, a new tramway shed and road improvement; the annual subsidy to the "Tonhalle" society has also been increased from Frs. 20,000 to Frs. 55,000.

In the new bill regulating the terms of employment of municipal workers now under consideration by the Zurich Stadtrat, an article was agreed to legalising a partial stoppage of the tramway service on the 1st of May (Labour Day).

Through discounting forged bills of exchange, most of the local banks in La Chaux-de-Fonds have suffered considerable losses, said to exceed Frs. 400,000. The documents are said to have been uttered by Edmond Meyer, a local speculator in real estate and former proprietor of the "Astoria" and "Splendid" tea-rooms. He has mysteriously disappeared after a supposed boating trip on the Doubs, where an oar and his hat were subsequently discovered floating. A preliminary examination of his accounts has disclosed unsecured liabilities of nearly a million francs. Later news states that his body has now been recovered from the reeds on the French bank of the Doubs.

It is stated that the number of telephone subscribers in Switzerland exceeds 165,000, i.e., one subscriber for every 24 inhabitants.

Legacies to the amount of Frs. 600,000 in favour of benevolent and philanthropic institutions have been made by the will of Fran Marie Lehmann-Seiler, of Langenthal.

Dr. Joh. Büttikofer, who spent most of his life in Holland and its colonies, and who for many years was director of the zoological and botanical gardens at Rotterdam, has died in Berne at the age of 77.

The cantonal educational establishment at Hinwil was the scene of a serious fire, when part of the agricultural annexe became a prey to the flames; the damage is estimated at between Frs. 120,000 and 140,000.

Following a sudden application of the brakes to avoid a head-on collision, a pillion rider, Mlle. Marie Chevallier, from Lausanne, was thrown off her seat and suffered fatal injuries.

Eighteen workmen had a miraculous escape when the motor coach in which they were being taken to the iron and steel works at Dornach jumped the road and fell down a steep incline into the swamps at Sewen (Solothurn); after turning a complete somersault it became embedded in the marsh. All the workers were able to crawl out before the position became hopeless, though most of them suffered from fractures and contusions. The accident is supposed to be due to negligence on the part of the driver.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Anderthalb Millionen Kirschbäume.** — Nach dem Schweizerischen Bauernsekretariat gibt es im Schweizerland rund anderthalb Millionen tragfähige Kirschbäume. Sie reifen zusammen im Durchschnitt 20-30 Millionen Kilo Kirschen aus. Es trifft somit auf den Kopf der Bevölkerung rund 7 Kilo Kirschen im Jahr. Es ist dies ein Durchschnittsertrag, der weit zurück bleibt hinter dem Heisshunger unseres Jungvolks nach der frischen, saftigen, mündenden Frucht des Kirschaumes. Bei rationeller Versorgung des einheimischen Marktes könnte also zweifelsohne der weitaus grösste Teil der schweizerischen Kirschen-ernte ohne Zuhilfenahme des Brennasses verbraucht werden. Die Kirsche verdient auch die bessere Ausnützung vollauf; denn es gibt kaum etwas Gesünderes als diese erste Baumfrucht des Jahres. Die Kirsche gehört ferner auch zu unsern nahrhaftesten Früchten: ihr Fleisch enthält weniger Wasser als die Milch und dem Gewicht nach fast ebenso viele Nährstoffe. Sie zeichnet sich überdies durch ihre leichte Verdaulichkeit aus. Gehört sie also vor allem auf den Tisch, sobald die Sonne sie am Baume ausgereift hat, so kann man sie aber nicht minder gut auch in der Küche auf die mannigfachste Weise verwenden: als Kompott, als rote Grütze, sterilisiert, ferner als Kirschen-saft und als köstliche Konfitüre. Das Dörren von Kirschen, wie es bei unsern Grossvätern in Ehren stand, ist heute vom finanziellen Standpunkte aus nicht mehr lohnend. Vom volksgesundheitlichen Standpunkte aus aber entschieden abzulehnen ist die Verwertung gesunder und guter Kirschen zum Brennen.

Nat. Zeitung.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

There is in this week's gleanings a multitude of articles dealing with financial and railway matters. One of the most instructive has appeared in the Trade Supplement of the *Times* (June 18th) under the title "Foreign Investments," and is contributed by our friend Dr. P. de Wolf, who gives chapter and verse for the prosperous year Swiss banking has enjoyed: the total deposits of the eight principal banks in Switzerland to the end of last year show an increase of about 450 million francs, as compared with the preceding period.

### Swiss Railways.

Interesting reading is offered by the annual trade report of the British Minister in Berne (issued by H.M. Stationery Office, price 1s. 6d.) Among the items dealt with, considerable space is devoted to the working and results of the Swiss Federal Railways system. I reprint the remarks, which bear out the serious effect which private motor transport has had on the gross takings:—

The growing competition of road transport has at last moved the Federal Railways to take measures to cope with it, although it is feared that these measures are not likely to enable the railways to recover more than a small part of the ground lost during the last two or three years. The loss of freight traffic alone was placed, unofficially, at the end of 1925, at about 10 per cent., or nearly one-fifth of the total railway earnings; the loss on passenger traffic, although not quite so great, is equally alarming.

In these circumstances the Federal Railways decided to use motor transport themselves, and for this purpose they floated, in July, 1926, a joint-stock company, styled Suisse Express, S.A. (*Sesa*), with a share capital of frs. 1 million. The nominal object of this company is to support all movements tending to improve passenger and goods transport in Switzerland, but it is mainly intended to recover lost traffic for the railways by acting as a feeder to the latter, and to pay its way by the direct carriage of goods where the railways cannot compete. The joint-stock company was adopted in preference to any other form of undertaking as a means of overcoming the difficulties often associated with a State enterprise, such as lack of initiative, too large a staff, excessive remuneration of the latter, etc., and also to enable the railways to transfer some of their unprofitable investments to the more remunerative lorry.

The Federal Railways retained control by their holdings and representation on the board, the remaining shareholders being the auxiliary railways, transportation companies, etc. The *Sesa* was due to start its operations on February 1st, 1927; it will work partly in conjunction with existing private firms of carriers. It is credited with the intention of reducing present

## ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

- July 4th, 1830.—Constitutional Acts of the Ticino.
- July 5th, 1887.—Thirty-seven houses fall into the sea at Zug.
- July 8th, 1778.—Great inundations at Kussnacht.
- July 9th, 1386.—Battle of Sempach. Swiss gained a decisive victory, and then prepared an asylum for Republican ideas in the midst of monarchical and feudal Europe.

carrier rates by 20 per cent., the resulting decrease in receipts to be borne by the *Sesa* and private firms of carriers in the proportion of 60 and 40 per cent. respectively.

A symptomatic development in the attitude of the Federal Railways towards road transport is shown by the fact that in the summer of 1926 they proposed to institute a service of lorries and cars instead of building the branch line planned along the thinly populated Surb Valley (cantons of Zurich and Aargau), as they were convinced that under present circumstances such a line would never pay. The proposals of the Federal Railways, which also provided for a substantial contribution for road upkeep, were, however, opposed by the inhabitants of that valley, who, with the support of local municipal and cantonal authorities, insist on their railway, although motor transport would offer better service. A final decision is still pending. The success of the motor vehicle against the railway is the more remarkable in a country in which many roads are closed for several weeks of the year and others rendered difficult by snow, and in which no private motor bus company has any chance of getting a permit to run a passenger service in competition with the railways or the post office.

As a set-off the following from the *Electrical Review* (June 17th) supplies illuminating data as to the great advantages derived by the adoption of electricity as driving power:—

The first of a new type of electric locomotive for the Swiss Federal Railways has recently been completed at the works of the Brown-Boveri Co., at Munchenstein. It is one of sixteen which are being built by the firm in conjunction with the Winterthur Locomotive and Engineering Works. The engine, which is known as the 2-D-1 type, comprises a four-wheel bogie at the front, eight centrally-located wheels, each pair being independently driven by electric motors of a total capacity of 3,100 h.p., and a single pair of wheels at the rear. On its trials on the line between Berne and Munsingen a maximum speed of over 73 m.p.h. is stated to have been attained.

Some interesting figures have been issued by the directors of the Rathschen railway, whose system is about 173 miles in length, and which has been electrified since 1922. It is stated that the adoption of electric traction has enabled a reduction of 52 per cent. to be made in the engineering staff at the workshops for the maintenance of the electric locomotives, while there has been a reduction of 48 per cent. in the track maintenance department and of 43.5 per cent. in the service personnel. As compared with steam traction it is estimated that 20,000 tons of coal are being saved each year, and that despite a considerable increase in the price of coal, electric traction is still proving more economical than steam.

### The Playground of Europe.

There is scarcely an English paper which does not at regular intervals extol the attractions of Switzerland as a holiday resort, but the following from the *Nation and Athenaeum* (June 8th) is somewhat off the beaten track, which is my excuse for reproducing it in full:—

Is it not absurd, I sometimes ask myself, to recommend anyone to go anywhere? For it all depends on what you're "after," what it is you really want when you go abroad. The best one can do in describing any country is to state as definitely as possible both what it provides and what it does not provide. Then at least there can be no deception. Then the intending traveller can look into his heart, and, having ascertained what he is after, can choose his destination accordingly.

Are you interested, for instance, in classical architecture and old gardens? Then obviously

you must not go to Switzerland, but to Italy. Stay, by all means, for a day or two at Lucerne or at Lausanne on your way, but be careful not to dawdle and get entangled in Swiss charms, or you may forget the delights of Palladio's columns and Bramante's dome, and the ilxes and statues of the Villa d'Este, and afterwards perhaps reproach yourself for your weakness. Or do you wish to study scientific agriculture? Why, then, you must go either to Denmark or Germany, for while Switzerland is full of cows and rich meadows and fruitful orchards, its conditions for the most part are so different from those of other countries that it will not help you very much. Or are you a lover of Mozart's music? In that case, when August comes, you must take a ticket for Salzburg or for Munich. In fact, it would be well to take one at once, for the crowd at those places is enormous. Not that there is no good music to be heard in Switzerland. There are organ recitals at Berne, and Beethoven Festivals at Geneva, and at Lucerne they have operas and musical comedies, and at Montreux promenade concerts, and at Vevey, that charming little town on the Lake of Geneva, with its pleasant time walks, they are to have on August 6th a grand Venetian fête, when you will enjoy, if you happen to be there, the sound of music floating over the water, and will learn how romantic a summer night can be. But nevertheless, if you have the special taste for Mozart which makes those who have it some of the happiest of mortals, you must not be turned aside by any Helvetic attractions. Either Germany or Austria is your true and proper destination. So again, if you enjoy the free spending of money and the sight of rich and highly fed men and exquisitely dressed women and the atmosphere of bowing waiters and smart hotels, why not try Deauville or Trouville or the Lido? No doubt you can find smart hotels in Switzerland also, but Deauville and Trouville are closer at hand and will probably serve your purpose better.

But if you have none of these special tastes, if your chief aim is to get a simple holiday, if you prefer the beauties of nature to the delights of crowded watering-places and big towns, if you like the scent of the morning and the tinkling of cowbells and the sound of splashing water and the sight of wild flowers in the grass, and if you like that sort of hospitality and good nature which you seem to find so much more frequently—I never know why—amongst the inhabitants of the smaller countries than in those which go in for being Great Powers—if that is the sort of person you are, could you do better than come to this little country, so ancient, so well-managed, and, on the whole, so happy, where so many of these advantages are to be found?

No doubt there are superior, highly cultivated people who have outgrown their pleasure in mountains and lakes and nature generally, who desire to enjoy more civilised effects, and are apt to raise their eyebrows in polite surprise when you speak to them of these other advantages: but for my part I prefer the unsophisticated confession of John Addington Symonds, who spent a great part of his life at Davos, and, in spite of the occasional carelessness of his style, had at least some claims to be regarded as a cultivated and intelligent man. "Of all the joy in life," he wrote, "none is greater than the joy of arriving in Switzerland at the end of a long, dusty day's journey from Paris. There is nothing in all experience of travel like this." Neither Rome nor the Riviera wins our hearts like Switzerland. We do not lie awake in London thinking of them, we do not long so intensely as the year comes round to revisit them. Our affection for them is less a passion than that which we cherish for Switzerland." Certainly, in my own smaller experience, I can recall few more delightful impressions than when, one summer evening after a week's motoring through France, we first arrived at the little Swiss town of Yverdon. We had had a week of splendid variety: had struggled over the rough roads of Normandy and spent two happy days in the little village of Les Andelys, on the banks of the Seine; had stayed in the old town at Versailles and wandered in the evening in the Palace Gardens; had visited Fontainebleau and Auxerre and climbed the steep hill to Vézelay; had lunched at the famous restaurant at Saulieu, that haunt of greedy motorists; in fact, we had thoroughly enjoyed our journey: and at last, late one evening, we crossed the frontier at Pontarlier and motored down, tired and hungry, to the Hotel de la Prairie at Yverdon; and what a charming welcome we received. Nowhere in all our wanderings did we find a more delightful hospitality. There is a sense of happiness and security in Switzerland which no one who has not felt it can understand.

But the whole country, we sometimes hear, is vulgarised and overrun; it has become too popular; it is the mere playground of Europe. Yes, Switzerland is, no doubt, an admirable playground. You may climb there and walk there, and swim and boat and play tennis and golf,

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and enjoy the snow and frost of winter: it offers you every sort of recreation, and for travellers who have not learnt to pick their way it may at times seem crowded; but nowhere else in the world are you so close to nature, nowhere is there clearer sunshine or more abundant flowers, nowhere may you more easily enjoy the pleasures of quietness and solitude if you so desire. But Switzerland is much more than a mere playground. It is the most ancient home of liberty in Europe: it is the country out of which arose the great International Association which still recalls in its red cross the shield of the country of its origin, and has done so much to mitigate some of the worst cruelties of war. It is the home of the one organisation through which we may hope some day to see established—a faint as that hope often seems—a lasting peace in Europe.

#### English Spirit for Swiss Schools.

The June number of the *Journal of Education* contains an appeal from a former rector of the Obere Realschule in Zurich: perhaps some of the older residents in our colony whose children are being educated in English schools may feel inclined to give the Swiss schoolman the benefit of their impressions and observations.

The Swiss Society Pro Juventute is investigating "How those Swiss day schools which take pupils between the ages of 13 and 19 can develop physical, social and psychological training without detriment to studies." We know that English boarding schools develop self-reliance, enterprise, good form, and fair play; and we used to attribute their success to political and geographical conditions that we cannot reproduce, since we have neither aristocracy nor seaboard.

Lately we have become aware that the English secondary schools called into being by the Act of 1902 meet with similar success. We see that your soldiers and policemen acquire such a sense of good-natured leadership that you were able to go through a general strike without bloodshed.

In our attempts to combine a *Gelehrten-schule* with a *Lebensschule* we learn little from the printed page. What we read is too vague or too systematic. What we notice is so worthy of admiration. It appears to me that your schoolboys and schoolgirls can supply us with the clue. May I suggest as a subject for an English essay: "A foreign schoolmaster wishes to develop corporate spirit in his day school. What suggestions can you offer that will not intrude on the time devoted to lessons?"

This should be an easy subject for young people, as the materials are ready to hand. The teacher may welcome it as affording opportunity of studying the psychology of his class.

If those who adopt my suggestion will be kind enough to send me, by the middle of July, such essays as they deem worthy of consideration, I may be able to give Pro Juventute a complete answer, and later to supply your readers with a general criticism from the Swiss point of view.

E. FIEDLER,

Late Rector of the Ober-Realschule.

#### QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

BONDS.	June 21		June 28	
	Fr.	£	Fr.	£
Confederation 3% 1903	80.35	79.25		
5% 1917. VIII Mob. Ln.	101.25	101.50		
Federal Railways 3 1/2% A-K	84.15	84.10		
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	101.90	101.75		
SHARES.				
	Nom	June 21	June 28	
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	765	771	
Crédit Suisse	500	815	823	
Union de Banques Suisses	500	695	690	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2380	2335	
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3718	3763	
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	2883	2860	
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	557	565	
C. F. Bally	1000	1303	1293	
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	692	672	
Entreprises Suisses S.A.	1000	1025	1010	
Comp. de Navig. sur le Lac Léman	500	560	560	
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco	100	110	110	
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	733	733	

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