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HOME NEWS

The two Houses of the Swiss Parliament re-assembled last Monday for the autumn session. In the States Council the clause of the convention agreed to at the seventh session of the International Labour Conference and abolishing night work in bakeries came up for ratification. After a protracted discussion the convention was rejected, its application in Switzerland under present conditions being found impracticable.

An address delivered by the French Senator Fernand David in opening the Conseil Général de la Haute-Savoie has, on account of its unfriendly tone and strange insinuations, given rise to articles of protest throughout the Swiss Press (see Extracts).

In reply to an interpellation in the Berne Grosse Rat asking for protection against the Swedish Match Trust it was stated that four factories in the canton were still able to maintain their output, but that the existing import duty was utterly insufficient.

A party of 23 Italian political fugitives has been discovered camping on the Passwang (Soluturn) making use of a holiday home established there by a Basle philanthropic society. They are said to be Italian Communists who managed to cross the frontier and travel through Switzerland though not possessing any passports.

Government stock and banknotes amounting to over a quarter of a million francs have been discovered by Excise officials in the garden of Emil Häfeli, of Locherhaus (Thurgau); he had on several occasions drawn the 'dole,' and for this and similar offences had been convicted eight times.

Through missing at a turning the street border on the road from Côte-aux-Fées to Fleurier Mr. Emile Bändi from Fleurier was thrown underneath his car and remained in a helpless condition the whole night until the next morning, when he was discovered and conveyed to the hospital at Couvet.

For setting fire to his own house in order to claim the insurance money Johann Herzog, a 51-year-old married silk weaver from Oberegg (Appenzell) was sentenced to five years' hard labour.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

La mauvaise humeur de M. Fernand David.—Le problème des zones s'achemine enfin vers un premier dénouement heureux : la ratification par la Suisse de la suppression de la zone militaire sera sous peu définitive, aucun referendum n'ayant été lancé, et le Sénat français ratifiera à son tour le compromis arbitral sur les zones économiques.

Cette judicieuse solution d'un vieux conflit ne fait pas l'affaire de M. Fernand David, qui vient d'exhaler en ces termes sa mauvaise humeur en reprenant possession de la présidence du Conseil général de la Haute-Savoie :

"Les servitudes économiques et politiques que la Suisse prétendait abusivement faire peser sur l'arrondissement de Gex et les départements de la Haute-Savoie et de la Savoie ont été définitivement abolies par l'article 435 du traité de Versailles. En contre-partie, la France apportait à la Suisse, dans cet article, la reconnaissance par l'Europe de sa neutralité, ce qui a permis son admission dans la Société des nations sans assumer les charges. Malgré qu'elle ait ainsi tiré de l'article 435 tous les bénéfices qu'il comportait pour elle, la Confédération n'a pas consenti encore à en exécuter les prescriptions pour ce qui nous concerne. En dépit de son acceptation par les Chambres fédérales, elle a repoussé en 1923 l'accord économique de 1921 parce que nous occupions la Ruhr. Elle étudie, de même sous des prétextes variés et malgré le désintéressement des puissances, les engagements qu'elle a pris au sujet de la neutralité de la Savoie du Nord.

Dans l'arrêté fédéral adopté dans le texte du Conseil des Etats qui modifiait celui du Conseil national, elle fait dépendre son adhésion à la suppression de cette neutralité, de la ratification du compromis d'arbitrage actuellement soumis au Sénat. J'ai déjà dit à notre session de

mai comment cette prétention était formellement contraire à l'interprétation donnée par la Suisse elle-même de l'article 435 dans sa note du 5 mai 1919 figurant aux annexes du traité de Versailles. Il convient d'ajouter que le récent vote des Chambres fédérales sur cette question détruit le contrat de bonne foi officieusement intervenu avec la commission des affaires étrangères du Sénat pour aboutir à une solution de conciliation et qu'il prétend faire peser sur les délibérations des Chambres françaises une sorte de menace sous condition proprement insupportable.

Si de tels procédés devaient prévaloir dans l'application des instruments de garantie et de paix que la Société des nations s'efforce d'élaborer à Genève, son travail deviendrait illusoire et nous devrions perdre notre espoir dans l'organisation d'un monde meilleur. Ne nous décourageons pas cependant et pour défendre notre Savoie comme pour assoir sur des bases solides le nouveau statut du monde comptons sur les hommes de clairvoyance qui nous gouvernent et sur le Parlement dont la tribune restera libre."

A la lecture de pareilles élucubrations, on reste confondu que les collègues de M. F. David puissent écouter sans sourcilier des déclarations aussi contraires aux faits et à la vérité.

C'est la commission du Sénat français elle-même qui a clairement fait entendre que dans son esprit les deux questions des zones économiques et de la zone militaire étaient liées.

La France, qui craignait un referendum suisse contre l'abrogation de la zone militaire, voulait avoir des certitudes à ce sujet. La Suisse, qui craignait des tergiversations du Sénat sur le compromis arbitral, désirait être rassurée. Afin de se donner un gage mutuel de leur bonne volonté, les parties intéressées convinrent que l'échange des ratifications serait fait simultanément sur les deux objets.

C'est—pour ne citer que cette affirmation extraordinaire de M. Fernand David—ce que le président du Conseil général de la Haute-Savoie appelle "détruire le contrat de bonne foi" et "faire peser une sorte de menace sous condition."

Journal de Genève.

Le nouveau Palais du Tribunal fédéral.—C'est aujourd'hui qu'a lieu l'inauguration du nouveau Palais de Tribunal fédéral à Mon Repos.

La cérémonie sera digne et simple, comme il convient aux temps encore difficiles que nous traversons ; les invités du Conseil fédéral se réuniront le matin dans la grande salle d'audience pour entendre des choeurs et des discours ; puis, après la visite du nouvel édifice, ils assisteront à un déjeuner offert dans un hôtel de notre ville.

Ce qu'on peut dire avant même d'avoir visité l'intérieur de ce magnifique bâtiment, c'est qu'il constitue un embellissement pour la ville de Lausanne, en même temps qu'un enrichissement de notre patrimoine artistique national. La Confédération, qui ne fut pas toujours inspirée du goût le meilleur dans la construction de ses bâtiments, a cette fois admirablement fait les choses. Par la majesté de la façade, par l'ampleur de sa conception et la sévérité de ses lignes, le nouveau Palais donne au plus haut degré cette impression de calme grandeur qui doit se dégager du temple de Thémis.

Mais ce n'est pas pour des raisons d'ordre esthétique seulement que nous devons nous réjouir de cette journée et en souligner la signification. C'est aussi pour des motifs d'ordre patriotique et national ; parce que la date du 12 septembre 1927 consacre à nouveau, avec éclat, des principes qui, à l'expérience, se sont révélés bienfaisants à la patrie suisse.

En plaçant dans le chef-lieu du plus grand canton romand sa Haute Cour de justice, en faisant de Lausanne la capitale judiciaire de la Suisse, la Confédération a accompli à la fois un acte d'équité et un acte de sagesse politique. Elle a donné à notre canton une preuve précieuse de sa confiance et de son affection, et d'autre part, elle a affirmé de façon durable le principe fédératif sur lequel repose notre patrie.

Il n'est pas sans intérêt, à ce propos, de rappeler les considérations qui, en 1874, engagèrent le Conseil fédéral et la majorité des Chambres à fixer à Lausanne la résidence du nouveau Tribunal fédéral.

La question s'étant posée de savoir si la résidence du pouvoir judiciaire serait dans la même ville que le siège du pouvoir politique, le Conseil fédéral se prononça nettement pour la négative.

Si le Conseil fédéral se prononce pour que le Tribunal fédéral et les juges aient un seul et même domicile, disait le message, l'estime d'autre part que ce domicile ne doit pas être la ville fédérale. *La décentralisation est de l'essence même d'un Etat fédératif, et la concentration des divers pouvoirs*

ne s'y justifie que si elle est commandée par un besoin réel. Or, si la réunion au même siège du pouvoir législatif et du pouvoir exécutif est une nécessité, il n'en est pas de même du pouvoir judiciaire. Il peut y avoir, au contraire, de sérieux avantages, au point de vue de l'indépendance, à ce que le Tribunal fédéral siège en dehors du courant qui se concentre nécessairement autour des pouvoirs politiques et à ce qu'il ait sa sphère particulière et tout à fait indépendante.

En même temps, le Conseil fédéral constatait que "toutes les parties de la Confédération ont le droit de demander leur part des avantages matériels qu'offrent les institutions politiques de la Suisse, que sous ce rapport la justice distributive est de rigueur et qu'elle est commandée par les égards qu'on se doit entre Confédérés."

Aux Chambres, la question donna lieu, comme on sait, à un débat assez vif. M. Sahlî, député de Berne, protesta au Conseil des Etats contre l'exclusion de sa ville. M. le conseiller fédéral Paul Ceresole qui, en sa qualité de chef du Département de justice et police, était appelé à défendre le premier projet du gouvernement fédéral, répondit à M. Sahlî que le message ne visait qu'un principe et nullement la ville de Berne.

Le Conseil fédéral, dit-il, estime que si la bonne marche des affaires ne commande pas expressément la concentration des pouvoirs sur un seul point du pays, les pouvoirs doivent être répandus sur la surface du pays tout entier comme la souveraineté elle-même : c'est là l'esprit de la Constitution fédérale nouvelle, et c'est à ce principe que le projet rend hommage. Il ne s'agit donc point d'une mesure d'exclusion ou d'occasion ; il s'agit d'un point de doctrine. Il s'agit aussi de prouver par des faits que l'on n'entend pas tout réunir et tout absorber au centre, mais que l'on veut laisser aux divers éléments qui constituent la Confédération tout ce qui est accessible à une vie propre et à un esprit public fortement développé.

Quelques jours plus tard, une discussion semblable s'éleva devant le Conseil national. Là aussi, ce fut la thèse "fédéraliste" qui triompha et, après plusieurs tours de scrutin, Lausanne fut désignée par 71 voix (contre 43 données à Lucerne) comme siège de la Cour.

Depuis lors, Lausanne et le canton de Vaud n'ont pas cessé de se montrer dignes de la confiance que leur témoigna la Confédération. Les juges fédéraux ont trouvé chez nous, avec l'attrait d'une des plus aimables contrées du monde, l'atmosphère de sérénité propice à leurs travaux, et ils vivent au milieu d'une population où, comme on l'a dit, le respect de la loi est une tradition.

Depuis lors aussi, l'importance de notre Cour suprême s'est constamment accrue non seulement par le nombre des juges qui, de neuf au début, a passé à vingt-quatre, mais aussi par les attributions nouvelles qui leur étaient conférées. Qui dira la somme énorme de labeur et de science qui, en 52 ans, fut dépensée dans les paisibles salles du beau palais de Montbenon ! On est saisi de respect lorsqu'on contemple d'un coup d'oeil d'ensemble le magnifique monument que représente la jurisprudence élaborée jour après jour par nos juges.

Les tâches nouvelles les attendent sous les ombrages de Mon Repos. La juridiction administrative sera bientôt (enfin !) une réalité. Notre haute cour aura-t-elle aussi à appliquer le futur Code pénal fédéral ? Cela est plus douteux, car les chances d'adoption de cette nouvelle mesure centralisatrice vont sans cesse en diminuant ; mais n'insistons pas, en ce jour de fête, sur ce sujet délicat...

Ce qu'on peut aujourd'hui affirmer avec joie, avec gratitude, c'est que nos juges fédéraux ont toujours été à la hauteur de leur difficile et noble tâche et qu'ils sont entourés de la confiance et du respect de tout notre peuple.

Puisse-t-ils, dans leur nouvelle demeure, accroître et consolider toujours davantage l'autorité et le prestige dont le Tribunal fédéral de Lausanne jouit en Suisse et à l'étranger !

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Conferences.

Apart from the League of Nations there have been a number of quite important conferences in Switzerland. The speeches and theories make very interesting reading, but it is difficult to select an unbiased report from any of the papers which have devoted space to the matter. We refer to the conference of the Churches in Lausanne and the Zionist Congress in Basle ; as far as the layman is able to judge, they have not produced any practical results, though they may have prepared and cleared the ground for similar meetings in the future.

There is not much in this week's gleanings suitable for reproduction in this column. One short article in the *Daily Herald* (Sept. 12th) strikes us as rather pathetic; fiction plays probably a greater part in it than facts. It is entitled

The Shadow of Eden.

I had gone for an early morning walk outside Chateau d'Oex, one of the loveliest high spots among the Swiss mountains that I know. The grass and flowers were sparkling, the woods on the slopes were ringing with cowbells, every face of the mountains, grey stone or green pasture, that was presented to the newly-risen sun was glorified by it. The air was light and innocent.

I turned off the road on to a meadow full of canterbury bells and the beautiful wild geranium. Its far edge fell steeply to the river. At the border a woman and two men were hay-making on a small patch. One man was scything the short grass, the other two, a little further off, were tossing with light wooden rakes what he had already cut. The grass was so short that it rose and fell like green dew sprinkled on the air. Far below the haymakers the river lay in its ravine like a solid silver S. The first light of Eden seemed to bathe the scene, and the people at their work.

Going a little farther, I saw a primitive chalet perched on the border of the meadow-dip. Outside it toddled a small child. I had an apple in my pocket and offered it to her. She took it, smiling shyly.

"Say 'thank you' to the lady," said in French a gentle voice, and at the chalet door appeared a slender young woman with a simple peasant face.

"Merci, madame," lisped the child.
"What is your name?" I asked her.
"Tell the lady what your name is," said the young mother.

"Lé-o-nore," said the child, slowly and distinctly in her vernacular. "I am four years and ten months old."

"Lé-o-nore is my name, too," I said. "E-lé-o-nore."

"There!" said the mother, smiling. Both she and the child seemed pleased. "Madame is fond of children?"

"Yes."
"I've another little baby in there, only two months." She invited me into the chalet, and I went through a sort of outer kitchen into the chief room, where a very tiny baby lay in a cot.

"Mimi! Mimi!" said the mother, picking it up, dandling and kissing it. She put it into my arms and began to chatter. "She was only eight months when she was born. She was so little. But she gains already. I was very ill. I had the puerperal fever. I had another little boy, such a beautiful little boy. He died, madame. It was winter, and I was all alone. My husband was away, he could not come to me. He was ill in hospital, and I was alone, and the child died. See, madame, what a pretty boy he was." She showed me, with love and pride, a little snapshot in a frame.

"Yes, he was very pretty. What did he die of?"

She touched her head and said something I did not understand, but I caught the word "faim" (hunger): then she repeated, "I was alone, my husband was away."

Together we looked at the dead boy's picture, then she replaced it on the chest of drawers and I laid Mimi again in her cot.
"Has madame any children?"

"No, none of my own. I have some little nieces. Where is your husband now?"
"He has some work in the town."

The baby began to hiccup.
"She does that so much," said the mother. And she asked me anxiously and naively, as though it were her first and I the mother of a dozen, "Is it good when she does that?"

"Not if she does it too much." We patted the tiny Mimi till she was quiet, and then went out again into the lovely morning. She showed me a new path leading back to the town, and we shook hands and parted. But I wanted to give the baby a present. I was not sure if I had brought anything with me, and went a few steps, and looked in my bag for one of those big Swiss coins like a medal. There was one, so I returned to the chalet. The mother was among her utensils in the kitchen-entry. She glanced round with her gentle smile as I came in.

"Look," I said, putting the silver piece in her hand, "this is for a present for Mimi. Buy something with it."

The mother's eyes suddenly filled with tears. She put her arms round my neck, and laying her cheek against mine, said:

"I shall buy bread."

Photographing the Sun.

One of the members of the expedition, Mr. L. S. Crawshaw, sent to the Gornegrat by the British Astronomical Association for the purpose of photographing the corona of the sun has published a preliminary report in the *Sunday Times*

(Sept. 4th); it will be noticed that they did not altogether return empty-handed.

I was fortunate to be selected by Dr. Steavenson to accompany him to the top of the Gornegrat mountain, on account of some familiarity with Continental travel, and a jack-of-all-trades handiness with scientific instruments. The expedition was the result of Dr. Steavenson's observations with the Royal Astronomical party at Giggleswick at the recent total eclipse. He then observed the corona, from the time its wonders flashed into sight, for the long time of about three minutes beyond the end of totality.

Calculation showed that a thirtieth of the sun's light was then shining in a pale sky, and Dr. Steavenson argued that if the sun could be obscured, or occulted, by an artificial moon against a sky thirty times as dark, or blue, as that of Giggleswick, it might be possible to obtain sufficient contrast to record it upon a photographic plate. This has been attempted before, notably by Sir William Huggins, but the general result has been to obtain a false effect due to the glow of sunlight shining through our atmosphere. We were attempting to photograph the corona without the aid of a total eclipse, and the difficulty is diffusion, or scattering of the light, due to dust, smoke and water vapour in the air. The corona is easy to photograph at total eclipse because the moon cuts off the light from our air and prevents diffusion, and at a great height most difficulties disappear.

Gornegrat was chosen for the experiment as it is two miles high, and there is an admirable hotel at the top. Even stargazers must be housed and fed! A rack railway runs to the Kulm, or summit, and it is surrounded by a ring of mountains, including the famous Matterhorn, which protect it from snow flurries in summer.

The Swiss Legation facilitated the transport of our instruments, which included a rigid camera 7ft. long, with a simple spectacle glass at one end, and a lot of gadgets inside to catch unwanted rays. At the focussing end there was a black disc, or artificial moon, to make the eclipse. Another important instrument was a coelostat, or heavy mirror, which can be rotated by machinery to neutralise the rotation of the earth, or, in other words, make the sun appear to stand still, and appropriately nicknamed Joshua! Now, Joshua requires careful adjustment by the stars, and on frozen nights shivering astronomers stole to their beds past hasty sleepers who intended to be up at dawn to see the wonderful sunrise at Gornegrat. These visitors are mostly continental, and either rush up for sunset or sunrise, or during the day for the wonderful mountain panorama. Few English people visit Gornegrat, but if it were better known two days at least would be devoted to the excursion. It is worth it, and we had splendid opportunity of admiration whilst attending to our instruments.

Mounted upon our camera, and dead in line with it, a small telescope projected a second image of the sun, which could be accurately located by means of sunspots, so as to ensure that the image in the camera was exactly central, in order to obtain a total eclipse on the plate. Special colour screens were used to cut out the blue light of the sky, yellow, red, and deep ruby being tried in turn, with varying results. All this meant ceaseless watch to catch a favourable moment when the sun's disc was absolutely clear of the faintest trace of haze due to spicules of ice high up in the air. Just when we were ready to take the first photograph a bomb of publicity burst upon us.

The news of our attempt had leaked out somehow, and we were beset by messages asking for news and a stream of curious tourists. In defence we put up a big placard asking people to leave us alone. In view, however, of the unwanted publicity and the interest aroused, we are glad to give the results of our adventures, so far as they can be made public at present.

Has Dr. Steavenson succeeded? Well, he is inclined to be cautious, and insists that the plates must be subjected to scrutiny before a final verdict is given. But I am at liberty to say that they show markings similar to the corona. Whether these are true or false comparison with photographs of the corona will show. If they are false, and due to atmospheric glow, is success possible? I am convinced that it is. In this case, it may be attained in the clear atmosphere of the observatory at Mount Wilson in America.

But we did not return from Gornegrat empty-handed, for in addition to our precious plates we brought some fifty species of Alpine plants, with which the slopes of Gornegrat are all aglow. Tiny stars of the earth, we fear that you will miss your blanket of snow this winter in an astronomer's garden in England.

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The new Swiss Federal Railways loan, of which an amount of Frs. 75,000,000 was offered to the public recently, met with a ready reception, and was over-subscribed. The result was gener-

ally expected, but the extent of the foreign interest manifested in the issues appears to have come as somewhat of a surprise in some quarters in Switzerland. On the other hand it was, of course, the numerous applications from banks and investors in Switzerland itself which were eventually responsible for bringing about the over-subscription. Since no announcement of this loan has hitherto appeared in these columns, it may be of interest to our readers if we give a few brief particulars of the terms of the issue, which was made to provide funds for the consolidation of floating debt and to increase the general working capital available. The total nominal amount of the issue was fixed at Frs. 100,000,000, but of this total the Federal Treasury reserved an amount of Frs. 25,000,000 for special Federal and Federal Railway purposes. The balance of Frs. 75,000,000 was issued in the form of 4½% bonds at 95%, redeemable in 1945.

Following close upon the heels of this Federal Government issue come the French authorities with a 6 per cent. loan on behalf of the Alsace-Lorraine Railways to the amount of 20 million Swiss francs, the balance of the issue having been made in Holland.

The failure of the "Gewerkschaft Wintershall" to meet its obligations in repaying its so-called "Currency Bonds" which fell due for redemption on the 1st July this year has caused not a little stir in Switzerland, as evidenced by the amount of space devoted to the question in all sections of the Swiss Press during the last few months. This concern, which is a not unimportant member of the "Kali" group—or, as it is better known on this side, the "Potash Syndicate"—borrowed funds in the year 1918 which were to be repaid eventually in July, 1927, at a rate fixed in Swiss francs. The object of this arrangement at the time is obvious, and besides providing a certain guarantee of stability in case of the depreciation of the German exchange, they offered attractions to investors in Switzerland, who were not slow to pick up the bonds. Meantime the identity of the original borrower has been more or less merged in the great syndicate which in the end of 1925 issued an international loan to a total of £15,000,000 in the various European markets, including an amount of £5,000,000 in seven per cent. bonds offered in London.

In spite of conversion offers made to holders of the Currency Bonds at the time, there are still outstanding a considerable number of these bonds, the majority of which are in the hands of Swiss investors. The Wintershall Company, instead of meeting the outstanding balance at due date, have let the matter go to law and declare their intention of appealing against any judgments in the Lower Courts, basing their attitude on clauses of the German "Aufwertungs" legislation.

Their ability to pay, especially in view of their membership of the Potash Syndicate and their connections, through directorships, with important banking interests, is hardly questioned. The whole unfortunate affair is declared openly in the Press to be a matter of bad faith towards creditors, and such behaviour on the part of an important German industrial concern towards its Swiss bondholders is not calculated to raise the general prestige of German credit at a time when a good name for punctilious accuracy in meeting all engagements is of the utmost value to German industrialists in their search for foreign credits.

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

BONDS.	Sept. 14		Sept. 20	
	Frs.	Fr.	Frs.	Fr.
Confederation 3% 1903	79.75	79.60		
5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln.	101.50	101.50		
Federal Railways 3½% A—K	84.12	84.12		
" 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	100.95	100.80		
SHARES.		Nom	Sept. 14	Sept. 20
	Frs.	Frs.	Frs.	Frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	803	799	
Crédit Suisse	500	875	865	
Union de Banques Suisses	500	737	738	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2647	2642	
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	4225	4242	
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	2805	2830	
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	570	565	
C. F. Bally	1000	1237	1255	
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	772	781	
Entreprises Sulzer S.A.	1000	1090	1100	
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	558	540	
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco	100	140	141	
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	762	770	

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