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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

In the National Council one of the Socialist members (Sigg) asked the Federal Council whether in view of the apparently pacific spirit exhibited by the League of Nations delegates and the re-affirmation by the latter of the neutrality of Switzerland the moment was not opportune to proceed to a complete disarmament and abolishment of our conscript army. In its reply the Federal Council stated that the question raised an important problem which at a future date may become pressing but that present conditions did not justify its consideration.

\*\*\*

The funded debt of the Confederation at the end of last year amounted to 2,068 million francs and that of the Federal Railways administration to 2,585 millions. Added to the indebtedness of the cantons (1,560) and of the larger municipalities (1,015) this brings the total to 7,2 milliards or about Frs. 2,000 per head of population.

\*\*\*

As a result of the diplomatic representations made to the Italian Government in the Canevacini affair (when the Ticinese States Councillor of that name was not allowed to cross the frontier whilst acting as a member of an official delegation) it is now stated that this refusal was based on a misunderstanding and that the incident is now closed.

\*\*\*

On the tractanda list for the coming winter session of the Swiss Parliament, which opens next Monday, is a motion to increase the salaries of Federal Councillors from Frs. 25,000 to Frs. 30,000.

\*\*\*

A memorandum signed by Prof. Paul Robert, of Fribourg, on behalf of a group of Swiss resident in Russia before the revolution and received by the Federal Council contains vigorous and threatening protests against the Russian delegation to the Preparatory Disarmament Commission being allowed to sojourn on Swiss soil.

\*\*\*

By a decision of the Federal Tribunal a Zurich lady practitioner has been mulcted in the sum of nearly Frs. 70,000 as damages to a patient for negligent application of X-rays.

\*\*\*

New regulations for motor traffic in the canton Berne have been enacted by the Grosser Rat; during night-time the cantonal roads are closed to lorries and large cars (over eight seats).

\*\*\*

In a recent issue of the "Adula" an amalgamation of the two cantons Ticino and Grisons was advocated; the capital of the "Reno-Ticino" would be Bellinzona. The suggestion has not been favourably received by the Romantsch.

\*\*\*

On the occasion of their golden wedding Mr. and Mrs. Stähelin-Algeier, of Basle, have handed another Frs. 100,000 (making in all Frs. 200,000) to the Society for Public Utility for a special fund benefitting young people.

\*\*\*

The annual charity stamps "Pro Juventute" which are now on sale in Switzerland commemorate the life work of Heinrich Pestalozzi; three of the stamps have been designed by the Zurich artist Ernst Rüegg and the fourth by B. Bickel of Wallenstadt.

\*\*\*

Former States Councillor Ad. Soldini died suddenly in Chiasso at the age of 70. He was a well-known personality in Ticinese politics but for some time had quitted public life; he will best be remembered as Sindaco of Chiasso, which distinction he held uninterruptedly for 20 years.

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## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### Education in Switzerland.

A very instructive article on this subject has appeared in the *Spectator* (Nov. 19th). It is somewhat one-sided as it ignores the educational facilities for foreigners in other parts of the country. We also doubt whether the writer is well-informed when he states that 15% of the students at the various universities and colleges are English. The fees payable in state schools and mentioned by him probably apply to very few districts as, speaking

generally, both primary and secondary education is absolutely free in Switzerland.

" Switzerland, the home of the League of Nations, the meeting-place of so many peace and other conferences, the playground of Europe, is fast becoming the class-room as well. A position in the heart of Europe at the fusion of the Latin and Germanic cultures, three official spoken languages—French, German and Italian—a tradition of neutrality and a certain sense of stability and security in the character of its people and government, give it important natural advantages, to which must be added the great and varied beauty of its scenery and the excellence of its climate.

On the foundation of these natural advantages, the various Cantonal governments have built up and endowed an elaborate system of State education, intended primarily for their own citizens, but also adapted to attract foreign students. The fact that a large percentage of the students attending lectures at the various Universities and schools are of foreign parentage shows how the educational facilities of the country have been realised and availed of. Thus, at the University of Fribourg there are 251 native students and 27 foreign; at Geneva, respectively 550 and 745; at Zurich University 1,457 and 521, and at the famous Polytechnic of Zurich 1,457 native students and 669 foreign. In all, foreign students form quite a third of the University rolls.

Though liberal studies are by no means neglected, and though the tone and tendency of University life varies considerably in the different intellectual centres, the trend of Swiss education in the main is towards the technical, commercial and scientific equipment of their young men and women.

To the English student, apart from the excellence of the education in itself, Switzerland appeals on account of the opportunities it gives for the acquiring of a thorough and intimate knowledge of French and German. It is hardly necessary to point out that a speaking and writing knowledge of modern languages is not only part of a liberal education, opening up, as it does, the whole new field of a nation's literature, but also an essential to most careers. In what is known as the "Suisse Romande" or French-speaking Switzerland, comprising the Cantons of Geneva, Vaud, Neuchâtel, Fribourg and parts of Valais, French is the language of the class-rooms, the playing-fields, and of the daily intercourse of life. In the remaining Cantons, with the exception of Tessin, where Italian is the spoken language, German prevails.

A slight survey of the educational facilities at an important educational and intellectual centre such as Lausanne, will show the wide scope and variety of opportunities available. Here at Lausanne primary, secondary, gymnasium, and University courses at the State institutions are open to children of foreign parents. The fees, almost nominal for native students, are very moderate for foreign pupils. The children of foreign parents who reside in the canton and pay the ordinary Swiss taxes are admitted on exactly the same terms as the Swiss. A Swiss boy or girl pays at any of the State secondary schools 80 francs (£3 4s.) per year during the first year for pupils of twelve to fourteen years, rising to 150 francs (£6) for the final courses for pupils of sixteen years and upwards. The fees for children of foreign nationality whose parents do not pay the full Swiss taxes have been fixed at 400 francs (£16) per year. It must be understood that State-endowed institutions in Switzerland, with a few exceptions in German Switzerland, do not take boarders, so that these fees are for the bare education.

The fees for a University degree vary according to the subject. Medicine or Science would cost more than, say, Law. Roughly speaking, a degree in Law would come to £60 in fees and a degree in Medicine £100.

But good as is the State system of education in Switzerland, the English student is by no means confined to it. Lausanne, for instance, has six private schools for boys, and no less than forty-five finishing schools for girls. The percentage of English-speaking boys and girls in these schools at Lausanne would be, say, 33 per cent. in boys and 35 to 40 per cent. in girls. Taking the whole of Switzerland one might estimate at 15 per cent. the number of English-speaking students taking courses at the various Universities and "Ecoles Supérieures."

The following are some of the better-known private schools at Lausanne and on the shores

### ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

December 5th 1830.—Fighting for a new Constitution; 3,000 Peasants near Aarau.

December 6th, 1871.—Founding of the St. Gotthard Railway Company.

December 7th, 1307.—Confederates taking the Oath on the Rütli.

December 9th, 1315.—Establishing the "Dreiländerbund" at Brunnen.

of Lake Leman:—L'Ecole Vinet at Lausanne is a large and typical Swiss day school for girls, with 280 to 300 pupils, of whom about fifty are English or English-speaking. Children are taken from the earliest years and trained up to the higher secondary course at eighteen to nineteen years, when they are ready for the University. The fees range from £7 per year for the first courses for small children to £16 per year for the final classes. Lemania College at Lausanne is co-educational and prepares children from thirteen years of age up to entrance to the University. The Ecole Nouvelle, at Chailly, Lausanne, is also co-educational for 120 boys and girls, and takes day pupils and boarders from eight to nineteen years. Lycée Jaccard and La Villa at Ouchy are well-known boarding schools for boys. The Institut Carnal at Rolle, on the shores of the lake, usually known as Rosey School, is a first-class and well-known boarding school for boys, with a reputation for study and sport. La Casita, Le Grand Verger, Pensionnat Roseneck, Les Allières, are among the better-known girls' finishing schools at Lausanne.

The fees at these schools vary. The average fees would be about 4,300 francs (£172) per year, and are certainly not more expensive than schools of the same class at home. But in addition to these private Swiss schools, there have sprung up recently in Switzerland several schools owned and controlled by British masters and mistresses, where boys and girls are prepared for entrance to the Public Schools and Universities of home in the company and atmosphere of the youth of their own country. Such schools are: Chillon College at Territet, Montreux; Captain Fox's School at Geneva; Captain Mocatta's Preparatory School at Glion, and Mr. Reeve's English Preparatory School at Chateau d'Oex, 3,200 feet in the Alps, established in 1911 and the oldest English school in the high Alps. These schools are for boys, while Châtelard School and St. George's School at Montreux take girls. The terminal fees at these schools vary, but are in or about £40 to £60.

At Lausanne, in addition to the five faculties of the University, Theology, Medicine, Law, Letters, and Science, there is, attached to the Faculty of Letters, a special course of Modern French for the benefit of foreign students; while attached to the Faculty of Law are special schools of Social, Political and Commercial Economics, with a valuable course of Consular and Diplomatic instruction, unique of its kind.

A special feature of Swiss education is the forty State-endowed "Ecoles supérieures de Commerce" which one finds at Lausanne and elsewhere throughout Switzerland. These schools take boys and girls from fourteen years of age and train them for any commercial career, as well as for most of the State services. At each there is a preparatory class called the "Classe de perfectionnement" for foreign students to enable them to follow the regular classes with advantage. St. Gall has a special Commercial School and University, as has Neuchâtel, while the Polytechnic at Zurich, universally known as the "Polly," has 2,500 students and is world-renowned.

Field sports and games of all sorts have so developed in Switzerland nowadays that British students can enjoy, with the exception of cricket, practically all the sports of home, with the addition of Winter Sports in the Alps. The English student in Switzerland comes in contact with the thought and culture of Europe. In French-speaking Switzerland he or she is in touch with Französisch, in Eastern Switzerland with Germany. In both Switzerlands the British student meets on a level, on the playing-fields and in the classrooms, students of many nationalities, and undoubtedly this contact and intercourse is all to the good."