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HOME NEWS

The Swiss newspaper comments on the Russian-Swiss understanding are sharply divided. In the western part of Switzerland opinion is without exception unfavourable, it being considered utterly undignified to offer official regrets to Russia. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, while welcoming the clarifying of an awkward position as far as our own relations to the League of Nations are concerned, says that the arrangement in no way secures recognition of the Soviet Government or the re-opening of diplomatic relations. The *Bund* points out that while the Federal Council reiterates its regret over the assassination of Vorovsky there is no similar expression on the part of Russia over the sack of the Swiss Legation and other outrages against Swiss residing in Russia. The *Basler Nachrichten* is satisfied that before the question of an indemnity to Vorovskii's daughter arises, the many pending claims against Russia will have to be recognised and dealt with.

Two Landsgemeinde had their annual meetings last Sunday. In Sarnen the Obwaldner elected the popular story-writer Heinrich Federer (born at Brienz, Berne, in 1866), a cantonal citizen. In Appenzell the gatherings were held in pouring rain.

The vacancy in the Thurgau Regierungsrat created by the death of National Councillor Hoffmann has been filled by the election of Mr. Robert Freyenmuth (Liberal), an architect in Frauenfeld.

The popular league for the Independence of Switzerland has decided to launch, in due course, an initial demand for the modification of Art. 12 of the Federal Constitution in the sense that the acceptance by Swiss of foreign orders, pensions or other monetary distinctions shall be followed by the loss of civic rights.

The Swiss association for inland colonisation and the electricity works of the canton Zurich have installed between Oberglatt and Rumlang a model farm, called "Elektrohof," in order to demonstrate the application of electrical power for agricultural and domestic purposes; even the milking and cleaning of cattle are effected by electricity.

According to statistics just published 1968 street accidents have been reported in the town of Zurich during last year, 22 of them proving fatal.

In connection with the forthcoming "Fête fédérale de chant" (Schweiz. Sängerfest) which takes place at Lausanne in July, 1928, Mr. Jacques-Dalcroze has been entrusted with the composition of the festival-play which will include solos, choirs and rhythmic movements. The various committees are already busy making the necessary arrangements; *inter alia* three lots of 10,000 litres each of Festwein have been secured.

Evidently overtaken by a snow storm, the bodies of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Schaad have been discovered frozen to death near Cadina cabane, for which they left Airolo on Good Friday. Mr. Schaad was 40 years of age, and an engineer domiciled in Zurich.

In a motor accident caused by the slippery condition of the road between Rickenbach and Menziken (Aargau), a Mr. Heinrich Eichenberger, aged 51, lost his life.—A similar fate overtook Frau Elisabeth Büssig, aged 54, from Aussersihl, when the car in which she was travelling left the road and overturned on the railway track.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Ein April Scherz. — Der Gemeindepräsident, der arme Herr Pfarrer, überhaupt die ganze Bevölkerung Isérables, werden wohl ihr Leben lang den 1. April 1927 in nicht ganz angenehmer Erinnerung behalten. An diesem Tage wurden sie, wie jetzt allmählich rückt wird, Opfer eines auch in der welschen Schweiz so beliebten Aprilscherzes, der in diesem Fall sehr genug ausfiel.

Isérables, ein kleines Berglädchen oberhalb Riddes, im Rhonetal, klebt an den Wänden des Mont Gelé und ist nur durch einen schmalen,

äußerst steilen Saumpfad mit dem Talweg verbunden. Die Ortschaft wird manchmal etwas bösartig als Misérables bezeichnet, was wohl genügt, um zu dokumentieren, dass die Milliardäre da oben nicht gerade zahlreich sind. Und doch waren es eben die Milliardäre—die amerikanischen, natürlich!—die am 31. März und 1. April die Isérabler Köpfe verdreht hatten. Wieso, werden Sie weiter unten erfahren.

Das biedere Völklein dieses verlassenen Bergnestes hat einen harten Kampf ums Dasein zu führen. Es lebt schlecht und reich—aber schlecht von einer wenig einträglichen Landwirtschaft und hält einiges Vieh, meistens Ziegen. Seit einigen Jahren ist der Gemeindehaushalt, trotz äußerster Sparsamkeit, schlimm daran und mit Besorgnis sah der Herr Gemeindekassier der Zukunft entgegen. Eines schönen Tages, vor einigen Monaten, fiel er auf die glänzende (?) Idee, die Herren Ford in Detroit u. Pierpoint Morgan—irgendwo in den Vereinigten Staaten!—auf die verzweifelte Lage der Isérabler Finanzen aufmerksam zu machen, in der, allerding etwas kühnen Hoffnung, von dort aus Unterstützung zu erhalten.

Wochen gingen vorbei. Und jeden Tag stürzte sich der Gemeindekassier, der auch als Posthalter amtei, auf den Postack, der vielleicht ein Schreiben oder wer weiß... ein Mandat von "drüben" enthalten könnte. Bittere Enttäuschung. Alles was kam, war der Brief an Pierpoint Morgan, mit dem Vermerk: "adressee insuffisante!" Herr Ford liess überhaupt nichts von sich hören. Von den Amerikanern war also, in Gottes Namen, nichts zu erwarten!

Am 30. März, abends, bekam nun ein Herr Mount, der sein Heimatdorf Isérables vor Jahren verlassen und als wohlbestallter Bäckermeister in Genf lebt, ein grosses, dickes und mordsschweres Couvert, das aus Amerika stamme. In der nebenbei bemerkte für 200,00 Franken deklarierten Sendung befanden sich weitere vier versiegelte Couverts, die folgende Aufschriften trugen: Für den Herrn Pfarrer von Isérables: 30,000 Franken; für den Gemeindepräsidenten: 80,000 Franken; für die Fanfare: 60,000, und last not least: für die Raiffeisenkasse, immer in Isérables: 30,000 Fr. Total wie oben: 200,000 Franken!

Der brave Bäcker rieb sich die Augen und tastete die dicken, eine vielversprechende Rundung aufweisenden Couverts ab. Der Sendung war ein Zettel beigelegt, in welchem der anonym bleibende wohlbestallte Spender Herrn Mount bat, die wertvolle Couverts an die Empfänger nach Isérables senden zu wollen, eingeschrieben, natürlich. Zu diesem Zweck lag eine Hundert-Frankenknote bei. Der Bäckermeister kam nicht aus dem Staunen heraus!

Nach und nach besann er sich; hatte ihm doch sein Freund und Mitbürger vor einiger Zeit mitgeteilt, er habe gewisse Briefe nach Amerika gesandt, um finanzielle Unterstützung zu bekommen. Das war die Antwort, natürlich. Doch ein grossmütiger Mensch, dieser Ford! Denn dass es Ford war, bezeugten die staatlichen purporroten Siegel, auf welchen die verheissungsvollen Worte "Ford and Co., U.S.A." zu lesen waren.

Stracks wurde die freudige Botschaft nach Isérables telegraphiert und Herr Mount brachte die wertvolle Sendung zur Post, wo man nicht wenig erstaunen war, eine so mächtige Summe nach Isérables zu verfrachten. Kosten: 48 Franken!

Inzwischen war das Postbüro Riddes avisirt worden und als die vier wertvollen Plis (am Abend des 31. März) eintrafen, wurden sie mit Ehrfurcht in Empfang genommen und mit entsprechender Sorgfalt im Geldschrank deponiert. Zur Sicherheit soll sogar ein Postcommis die Nacht im Lokal verbracht haben.

Am Vormittag des 1. April erschien dann auf dem Postbüro eine feierliche, äusserst bewegte Delegation aus Isérables: nämlich der Gemeindepräsident, der Herr Pfarrer sowie der Président de la fanfare (die mir ihren 60,000 Franken selbstverständlich bereits neue, prunkvolle Uniformen bestellen wollte!). Klopfernden Herzens wurden die versiegelten Couverts eröffnet! Aus ihnen fielen, o je, eine ganze Anzahl weißer Fetzen! Einfache Papiere, die Tausenderoten darstellen sollten! Es waren genau 200!

Wie die Rückkehr nach Isérables sich gestalte, wo die Bevölkerung in fiebigerhafter Aufregung die Amerikagelder erwarte, mag man sich denken. Im Gemeinderat fanden stürmische Szenen statt und nach den letzten Berichten soll diese Behörde sogar Klage gegen den Unbekannten erhoben haben. Was Herrn Mount anbetrifft, der jü 52 Fränklein bei der Affäre gewann, so ist dieser heute noch stumm vor Erstaunen...und hat für den Spott nicht zu sorgen! *National Zeitung.*

ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

May 2nd, 1798.—Fight for independence in the Canton of Schwyz. Wives and daughters dragged cannon up to the mountains towards Rotenturm, and even took part in the actual fighting.

May 4th, 1584.—Great landslide at Bret, near Lausanne.

May 5th, 1799.—The French burned the village and Monastery of Disentis in revenge for their losses.

May 6th, 1831.—Acceptance of the new Constitution in Aargau.

May 7th, 1521.—Alliance between France and the Confederation.

May 8th, 1793.—Fight of Valais against the French.

Ehrung eines Rorschachers in der Fremde.

Wie die "N.Z.Z." erfährt, hat das London College of Music Herrn C. G. Hedinger in Rangoon (Indien), Sohn des Herrn C. Hedinger zur "Alpina," Rorschach, zum korespondierenden Mitglied ernannt, und Ende 1926 hat derselbe das Licentiate-Diplom erlangt. Unter Leitung unseres Bürgers haben sich Musikfreunde der europäischen Kolonie in der 400,000 zählenden indischen Stadt zu einem Symphonieorchester zusammengetan, das am 17. März ein wertvolles Programm zu Wiedergabe brachte. Wie man der "N.Z.Z." schreibt, ist es Herrn Hedinger (aus Rorschach) zu verdanken, dass Rangoon zu einer der bedeutendsten Musikstädte in Indien geworden ist. Als kantmännischer Leiter eines schweizerischen Importhauses, widmet er seine ganze freie Zeit der Musik, und nachdem er schon vor Jahren als Cellist und Pianist die Musikfreunde Rangoons erfreut hatte, gibt er nun mit seinen Sinfonie-Konzerten weitere Proben seiner musikalischen Bildung.

Wir entbieten unsern Landsmann im fernen Indien und seinen Angehörigen in Rorschach die besten Glückwünsche zu diesen erfreulichen musikalischen Erfolgen.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Russia and Switzerland.

Considerable prominence has been given in the English Press to what in some quarters is termed the "reconciliation" between the two countries, chiefly because it opens up the possibility of Russia participating in some of the many international conferences held in Geneva in connection with the League of Nations, for which body that country has repeatedly expressed its utter contempt. As to the actual advantages accruing to Switzerland, they are—as a correspondent points out to me—negligible; in spite of the boycott, a certain limited trade between the two countries has been carried on, though in a roundabout way; what little business is being done may now follow a more direct route. The text of the agreement is very vague and contains nothing definite, as will be seen from the English version:

"In view of the desire of the Soviet and Swiss Governments to settle the dispute between the two countries which was caused by the murder of Vorovsky during the Lausanne Conference and the attempts on Arens and Divilkovsky, the Swiss Federal Council declares once more that it absolutely condemns such criminal acts and very much regrets what happened. In addition, in order to settle matters amicably while the negotiations are taking place between the Soviets and the Swiss Confederation on all outstanding matters between the two countries, the Federal Council declares that it is prepared to indemnify the daughter of Vorovsky in a manner to be settled at the same time as other matters. The two Governments, therefore, declare that the dispute between the two countries is settled and the mutual boycott is raised."

The comments in the *Times* (April 19th) are possibly nearest the point:—

Opinion in Switzerland on the agreement signed in Berlin settling the dispute arising out of the assassination in 1923 of the Soviet Commissar Vorovsky is on the whole favourable. It is felt that the agreement involves no concession derogatory to Swiss dignity, but, at the same time, there is strong opposition to any resumption of diplomatic relations with the Soviet, for the part which Soviet diplomatic agents played in the general strike in Switzerland in 1918 has not yet been forgotten.

The balance of advantage in the new agreement is with the Swiss Federal Council, whose standpoint has been accepted by the Soviet Government, which has given way probably for the reason that it now considers it advantageous to its interests that it should take part in the activities of the League of Nations. An important point in the agreement concerns the compensation to be paid to Vorowsky's daughter. This matter will be raised only when the other questions outstanding between the two countries come up for discussion, and when that happens Switzerland will claim compensation for the sacking of the Swiss Legation in Leningrad, the murder of the Legation Secretary, and the losses suffered by Swiss citizens in Russia.

The immediate future in regard to Soviet-Swiss relations is not clear. The boycott no longer exists, and Soviet representatives may enter Switzerland to attend conferences promoted by the League of Nations; but Switzerland has not recognised the Soviet Government *de jure*, and will not consider the possibility either of accepting Soviet diplomatic representation in Switzerland or of sending a Swiss diplomatic representative to Moscow.

Profaning the Alps.

I am afraid the writer of the following lines in the *Westminster Gazette* (April 20th) is somewhat sensitive; he may as well condemn all the mountain railways—or, in fact, any vehicle—as we are depriving ourselves of healthy exercise by discarding Shanks' pony:—

Climbing in the Alps has long been a sharp joy to men and women of imagination. Those who are worthy of the sport, and of its kindred pleasures—ski-ing, or tobogganing—keep their bodies trained and fit so that they may use well their mountain holiday.

These will hear with dismay the news, recently published, that the owner pilot of an amphibian air taxi is starting an hourly air service from the lake at St. Moritz to a glacier 10,000ft. up. One idea is to save holiday-makers the fatigues of climbing, and another to allow them to ski or toboggan down the slopes they have not climbed.

But it is the climb up which braces the muscles, and flaccid visitors who fly if they venture the descent may end in a snowdrift. Leslie Stephen would never have written his "Playground of Europe" for such as these, and Ruskin would have been rendered incoherent.

The Swiss Federal Railways—An Appreciation.

Lest the London office of the S.F.R. should feel inclined to redress a complaint from a Scotch correspondent, I re-print the following from the *Bulletin and Scot's Pictorial* (April 14th):—

Prospective travellers to Switzerland who do not wish to join a tour would be well advised to apply to the Swiss Federal Railway Company, London, for any information desired. A recent brief enquiry sent there by a correspondent brought forth a courteous letter suggesting routes, together with necessary maps, fares, railway timetables, list of hotels with tariffs, and insurance coupons—everything, in fact, but the cheque to cover expenses!

The Savoy Zones and the Referendum.

It is to be hoped that the following, from *Truth* (April 13th) is not an intelligent anticipation:—

The French are always grumbling about something. They have just awakened to the idea that the present status of their Savoy departments is an infringement of their sovereign rights. According to a declaration of the Powers on March 29th, 1815, those departments are entitled to enjoy neutrality just as though they belonged to Switzerland, who has the right to occupy them if menaced. The Swiss and French Governments agreed to abrogate this in 1919, subject to a referendum, but this seems likely to go against France by a large majority. It would be interesting to know why the French should be so anxious to abolish a neutrality that could trouble them only if they meditated an invasion of Italy.

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The directors of Entreprises Sulzer S.A., of Winterthur, announce a proposed dividend of 6 per cent. on the ordinary shares of the Company, which will repeat last year's distribution. The annual meeting of the Company is to take place on May 25th.

The Elektrowerke A.G. in Basle is increasing its capital from Frs. 20,000,000 to Frs. 30,000,000 by the issue of 20,000 new shares of 500frs. each nominal. The new shares are being issued between the 23rd of April and the 5th of May, 1927, by a group of banks headed by the Swiss Bank Corporation in Basle. The price of issue is 540frs. per share, payable as to Frs. 290 on application, and the balance on the 30th of September, 1927.

At the meeting of the Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company which took place in

Cham on the 23rd of April, the Chairman, Mr. L. Dapples, commenced his remarks with making an eloquent tribute to the memory of his late colleague and much regretted predecessor Mr. Gustave Aguet, and also to that of Mr. R. A. Koehlin-Hoffmann, one of the directors of the Company, and of Dr. E. Schumacher-Kopp, an auditor, who died during the year under review.

The encouraging result of the year 1926 was due, according to the Chairman, to the fact that the persons in control of the undertaking did not spare any effort in adapting themselves to the continually changing circumstances which were inevitable to an organisation with ramifications as world-wide as theirs.

As regards the condensed milk industry in general, the expansion that had occurred in the United States was an indication of the place that it could create for itself one day in the rest of the world, and the increased consumption of their products was assisted, even where the distribution of fresh milk was well organised, by the innumerable uses to which they could be put in everyday domestic life: uses which were bound to multiply with any increase in general prosperity. The company's products, each in its own sphere, remained uncontestedly in the front rank.

In conclusion, the President referred to the considerable and steady appreciation in the market valuation of the Ordinary shares since the last annual meeting, which the directors attributed chiefly to the fact that as a comparatively small number came on the market new buyers were only able to acquire shares by offering a high price. The directors looked upon this state of affairs as the best possible indication, and one which they greatly appreciated, of the loyalty of their shareholders, who, having given them their confidence, retained their interest in the Company in spite of a modest return, confidently awaiting the moment when the reconstruction of the reserves would enable their legitimate aspirations to be fulfilled. He assured the shareholders that they were doing all they could to achieve this end and stated that he could not give them a better proof of this than to assure them that their house was in order and that the whole of the personnel of the Company, from the highest to the lowest, were putting forward their utmost endeavours to attain increasing prosperity for the Company.

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

	BONDS.	Apr. 19	Apr. 26
	Nom	Frs.	Frs.
Confederation 3% 1903	82.25	83.00	
" 1917, VIII Moth. Ld.	100.50	101.40	
Federal Railways 3½% A—K	83.60	84.00	
" 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	101.50	101.75	
SHARES.	Nom	Apr. 19	Apr. 26
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	755	765
Crédit Suisse	500	802	798
Union de Banques Suisses	500	685	687
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2505	2585
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	4200	4245
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	3098	3166
S. A. Brown Boveri	350	568	573
C. F. Bally	1000	1273	1278
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mkt. Co.	200	713	736
Entreprises Suizer S.A.	1000	1090	1095
Conn. de Navire sur le Lac Léman	500	570	570
Linsleut AG. Gimbischoo	100	106	102
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	723	715

DE SOUVENIRS ET DE PROCÈS.

Nous avions promis à notre Directeur, sauf erreur, en quittant Londres et le Secrétariat de la N.S.H.—mais qu'est-il donc devenu?—de ne pas cesser complètement notre collaboration au *Swiss Observer*. Mais nous ne croyons pas nous tromper en disant ici que nous n'avons pas tenu notre promesse, ce qui est évidemment regrettable—non pour nos lecteurs, est-il besoin de le dire?—Mais les affaires viennent, et, comme l'on sait, l'on travaille beaucoup plus en Suisse qu'en Angleterre! Aussi ne faut-il pas s'étonner si c'est précisément à l'occasion d'affaires que nous avons repensé à ce journal et à nos anciennes occupations. Il est vrai que si nous avions voulu oublier la colonie suisse de Londres, nous ne l'aurions pu, précisément à raison d'affaires. Car il est heureusement de ces Suisses qui savent, lorsqu'ils veulent divorcer, qu'il n'est pas nécessaire de plaider à Londres—c'est beaucoup trop cher et les journaux sont indiscrets—mais que tout peut se passer tranquillement dans leur propre pays, même s'ils n'y sont plus domiciliés ou s'ils n'y furent jamais. Bien plus, les causes de divorces en Angleterre sont peu nombreuses et graves, tandis qu'en Suisse, on n'est pourtant plus libéral. Mais revenons-en à notre objet car l'on nous accuserait autrement de prêcher pour notre paroisse.

Voici; une Anglaise indigente nous consulte à Lausanne. Un procès est nécessaire, mais elle ne peut faire l'avance nécessaire. Demande d'assistance judiciaire gratuite. Refus pour le motif, entre autres, de manque de preuve de réciprocité. La Légation de Londres, très aimablement, nous documente. En Angleterre, pas de différence de nationalité. Un Suisse reconnu indigent, sera mis au bénéfice des "Poor Laws" et n'aura rien à payer ni aux "solicitors" ni aux "Councils," ni aux tribunaux. Oui, mais voilà, on réclame des exemples de cas pratiques. Des Suisses d'Angleterre ont-ils déjà bénéficié de ce privilège ou,

pratiquement, ces textes légaux sont-ils lettre morte? Nous avouons ne pas pouvoir répondre. De là ces lignes. Nos lecteurs connaissent-ils des cas semblables, c'est-à-dire des cas où des Suisses d'Angleterre ont pu, parce qu'indigents reconnus, faire en Angleterre tout un procès, de n'importe quelle sorte, sans avoir un penny à verser. Si oui, seraient-ils assez aimable pour nous écrire?

Ils risqueraient ainsi de rendre service aux Anglais de Suisse et aussi, indirectement sans doute, à leurs compatriotes indigents de la Colonie de Londres.

Dr. Agénor Kraft, *Avocat*.
Lausanne et Montreux, le 16 avril 1927.

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