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HOME NEWS

It is officially stated that the resignation of Mr. Alfred Oswald as Honorary Swiss Consul in Glasgow has been accepted by the Federal Council with the usual thanks for services rendered. The Swiss Consulate in Glasgow will, for the present, be in the charge of the consular attaché Friedrich Kästli, from Seedorf (Berne).

* * *

At a conference in Bulle of Swiss tobacco manufacturers, Federal Councillor Musy stated that the consumption of cigarettes in Switzerland amounted to about 1,200 million annually; a duty of half a centime per cigarette (one penny for twenty) would secure for the Federal Treasury six million francs per year, while up till now the whole of the import duties on raw and manufactured tobaccos scarcely exceeded three millions per annum. He thought the latter figure could, without great hardship to anybody, be increased to about 30 million francs, or, on an average, tax of about Frs. 7 per head of the population. The present tobacco duties worked out at under a franc per head, compared with Frs. 15 in Austria, Frs. 16 in Sweden, Frs. 17 in America and Frs. 27 in England.

* * *

On the ground of irregularity, the Federal Tribunal has cancelled the election of a Justice of the Peace which took place last December in St. Gingolph (Valais). Of the two candidates, the Conservative nominee had received 58 votes, against the 52 in favour of the Liberal, but it was subsequently discovered that the number of voting slips deposited exceeded that of those entitled to vote.

* * *

The Zurich town council, which is controlled by a Socialist-Communist majority, has decided to send a memorandum to the Federal Council expressing congratulations on the settlement of the Russian conflict and the hope that steps will be taken to facilitate commercial relations between the two countries.

* * *

The Basle Regierungsrat proposes to the Grosse Rat to take over the deficit of Frs. 460,000 resulting from the "Inland Navigation" Exhibition held in that town last summer. This sum is in addition to Frs. 285,000, which has been subscribed by the promoters "à fonds perdus."

* * *

The enactment of the proposed amusement tax is not to be proceeded with in the canton Aargau on the grounds that the income derived by the State would be small, that it would not have the desired effect of curtailing amusements, and that the present attitude of the electors is decidedly against any new legislation.

* * *

Initiated in 1897 by Jean Marty, who emigrated to Riga, the income on a school fund of nearly Frs. 340,000 is for the first time this year being utilised for the education of poor children in the canton of Glarus. The benefactor deposited at that time about 941 florins, with the stipulation that this sum should be invested at 4½%, remain intact, and be allowed to accumulate for 120 years.

* * *

Through taking a road bend at too great a speed, Karl Allemann, aged 37, a teacher in Grenchen (Solothurn), lost control of his car, which overturned; he was picked up dead whilst two colleagues of his, whom he had taken out for a spin, escaped with slight injuries. The victim had only the day before obtained the certificate entitling him to drive a car.

* * *

The wife of Prof. Dr. Fehr, of the Berne University, was killed in a motor accident near Fribourg. Her body was found beneath her car

in a ditch, and it is surmised that the car was overturned when overrunning the road bank.—A similar fate befell a postman, Fritz Stämpfli, from Neuenegg (Berne), whose motor cycle turned a somersault when he found it necessary suddenly to apply the brake.

* * *

In an attempt to effect the ascent of the Great Mythen from the difficult western wall, a member of the climbing party, H. Kunz, aged 42, on the staff of a Zurich insurance company, lost his life.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

The Swiss Motor Bill.

The rejection by the Swiss people of the motor bill is quoted by most of the English dailies as a proof of the inefficiency of the referendum. Undoubtedly in the present instance this assertion is not without justification, especially when we bear in mind that this essential and progressive Bill has been discussed and dissected for two years by both the States and National Councils, and has finally been approved by overwhelming majorities in the two chambers. The following article is taken from the *Manchester Guardian* (May 17th):

The Swiss people once again confirmed the negative tendency of the referendum by rejecting the Bill on motor-cars and bicycles which had been approved by the Swiss Parliament by an overwhelming majority. The total vote for the Bill was 225,000, and against it 329,000.

The Bill had been adopted by Parliament as the only possible compromise between two opposed policies: one in favour of greater freedom for motor cars and cyclists; the other in favour of greater restriction on those means of communication and fuller protection of pedestrians against road traffic dangers. After two years of Parliamentary discussion, the compromise Bill was almost unanimously adopted by both Houses. But outside Parliament a strong protest movement against the Bill was organised. Motorists complained that the proposed speed limit of 50 kilometres an hour (about 30 miles per hour) outside towns was too low, the pedestrians that it was too high. Motor-car clubs protested against the Bill because the motorist is made responsible for any injury to a cyclist or pedestrian unless he can prove his complete innocence; pedestrians protest because the proposed obligatory insurance of the motorist against accidents caused by him shifts all financial risk on to the insurance companies, thus greatly weakening the motorist's sense of responsibility. The joint opposition of two diametrically opposed sides was reinforced by the opposition of the hotel industry and others connected with foreign visitors. It was feared that the obligatory insurance which would have to be applied to foreign motor-cars would cause a boycott of Swiss roads by foreigners. Finally, the cyclists protested against the maintenance of the obligatory number shield, which is considered a humiliation.

Last week 181 members of Parliament out of 230 from all political parties issued a common manifesto requesting the nation to recognise the necessity for some compromise and not to destroy the laborious Parliamentary work of more than two years. But their almost despairing eleventh-hour effort was in vain, and a state of great confusion is left.

Population of Switzerland.

The official statistics with reference to the last census, taken over seven years ago, have recently been published; they form the subject of an instructive survey in the *Economist* (May 14th):

The Swiss Bureau of Statistics has recently issued a complete and detailed study of the results of the 1920 population census of Switzerland. In 1920 Switzerland had a residing population of 3,876,922, an increase of roughly 127,000 persons over 1910, of which one-fifth only was formed of males and four-fifths of females. A striking fact is that births have very little to do with that increase, as their number has fallen by 90,000 during these 10 years, and that immigration mainly accounts for the increase. In 1910 there were 552,011 foreigners

ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

May 30th, 1887.—Landslip near Spiringen (Canton Uri).

June 1st, 1906.—Opening of the Simplon Tunnel.

June 2nd, 1884.—Unveiling of the monument of General Dufour at Geneva.

June 3rd, 1653.—Battle near Wohlenschwil (at the time of the Peasants' War). The peasants had assembled to defend their rights. Niklaus Leuenberger advanced against Bern with 20,000 men and forced the Government to a peace in which great concessions were made to the insurgents, but under the insidious condition that the Bernese peasants should lay down their arms and withdraw from the Huttwil League. Meanwhile, from Zurich, under Gen. Werdmüller, a force of 9,000 men had invaded the Freiamt. On June 3rd, at Wohlenschwil, the peasants attacked the army of Zurich. The well-armed artillery of this force inspired the peasants with such respect that they began to despair of the possibility of a victory and asked for a truce. The peasants agreed to lay down their arms immediately.

June 4th, 1352.—Glarus joins the Confederation.

June 6th, 1799.—First battle at Zurich, between the Archduke Charles and Field-Marshal Hotze and the French, under the command of Gen. Massena. Massena had to evacuate Zurich, and retired to a fortified place on the Utilberg and Albis, from which, however, he broke forth in the autumn of the same year.

June 6th, 1653.—Two days' battle at Gislikon. The Lucerne men, under the command of Schybis, unwilling to lay down their arms to the National troops, under the command of Col. Zwyer, attacked them at the Bridge of Gislikon. Although this was indecisive, among the peasants of Lucerne the longing for peace got the upper hand, and they agreed to accept the arbitration of the rural Cantons, which condemned them to the handing over of twelve of their ringleaders. Most of their grievances, however, received no further consideration.

residing in Switzerland, 67,129 were naturalised up to 1920, and there were only 402,385 in 1920, as a great number of them went back to their native country during the war, while many Swiss families which had been living abroad came back and settled in the mother country. Another striking fact is the continuous decrease of the agricultural population since 1860, when one-half of the population of Switzerland lived on agriculture. Since then the population has steadily increased, but the towns chiefly benefited, while the rural population progressively decreased. In 1900 there were still 1,035,030 persons living on agriculture, but that number came down to 964,000 in 1910, and to 960,000 in 1920, when it represented 26.3 per cent. of the total population, against 50 per cent. in 1860. But while the rural population has decreased in number, its importance in Swiss politics has developed so much that it now constitutes the most powerful section, thanks to its effective organisation, and the Government would be powerless without its support. The number of persons employed in industry and arts and crafts suffered no great modification during the first 20 years of the century; while industrial workers and craftsmen formed 46 per cent. of the population in 1910, they formed 45 per cent. in 1920. But a curious instance is the progressive disappearance of independent workers—those who are working at home or running small workshops of their own. These were 70,000 in 1910, and only 39,000 were left in 1920. They have been attracted and absorbed by the big factories and commercial undertakings, the staffs of which have risen from 57,000 to 76,000 from 1910 to 1920, as well as by transport undertakings and Government services. Independent workers represented 21.6 per cent. of the population in 1910, and only 19.7 per cent. in 1920. The number of