

**Zeitschrift:** The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

**Herausgeber:** Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

**Band:** - (1928)

**Heft:** 361

**Rubrik:** Notes and gleanings

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# The Swiss Observer

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 9595

Published every Friday at 23, LEONARD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 8—No. 361

LONDON, SEPTEMBER 22, 1928.

PRICE 3d.

## PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES

UNITED KINGDOM	{ 3 Months (13 issues, post free) : 36
AND COLONIES	{ 6 " " 66
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SWITZERLAND	{ 6 Months (26 issues, post free) : Frs. 7.50
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## HOME NEWS

In connection with the Rossi affair, a memorandum has been addressed to the Italian Government by the Federal Council; the contents of same have not yet been published. In the meantime three interpellations have been tabled in the National Council, the one by the Liberal Councillor Maunoir (Geneva) being in the following terms:—

Le Conseil fédéral peut-il nous dire s'il est exact qu'un citoyen italien du nom de Cesare Rossi ait été victime, sur territoire suisse, d'un guet-apens pour l'affirer sur territoire italien et le livrer aux autorités de police de Campione.

Y a-t-il eu directement ou indirectement une intervention de la part du gouvernement italien?

Si les faits sont exacts, et si d'une manière générale des faits d'espionnage pratiqués sur notre territoire sont établis, quelles sont les sanctions que le Conseil fédéral envisage pour faire respecter la souveraineté et la dignité de la Confédération.

In the second one Dr. A. Schmid (Socialist, Aargau) asks for information as to the measures the Federal Council intends to take to stop the activities of Fascist spies, which is also the purpose of the third interpellation, presented by M. Zelli (Socialist, Ticino). Similar interpellations in the Grand Council of the Ticino have not shed new light on the affair, but it is officially stated that preliminary enquiries have confirmed the reports published in the Ticinese local papers.

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Following certain police enquiries into supposed cocaine trafficking, an extended system of espionage has been discovered in Lugano, with ramifications in the remaining part of the Ticino. Several arrests have been effected seriously implicating, according to the *Gazzetta Ticinese*, the Fascist régime. It is also officially stated that two Italian spies have been expelled from Swiss territory.

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Over twelve million francs is to be spent by the canton of Aargau on road improvements during the next nine years. The whole of the cost is borne by motor taxation.

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The hospice of Fleurier has received a further donation of Frs. 100,000 from M. Eug. Vaucher-Bersier of Fleurier.

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A hunter, Robert Gasser of Sierre (Valais), who was hiding behind a tree trunk waiting for his quarry, was mistaken for an animal by two other sportsmen who unexpectedly came on the scene: before the latter discovered their mistake he was shot at and subsequently died.

\*\*\*

An official representative of the Federal Political Committee for Foreign Affairs was present at the Auslandschweizertag in Lucerne: some of the delegates, notably the one from Milan, severely criticised the way in which the interests of the Swiss residing abroad were handled by the Federal authorities and earned a sharp rebuke from the official Government spokesman, who threatened that he would not attend these gatherings any more if such questions were raised in future.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### Sun Treatment.

The First International Conference on Light was opened at Lausanne on Sept. 10th, when about 250 delegates from sixteen different countries attended. This modern movement is without a doubt due to the initial research work of, and subsequent successful treatment in, the clinics of Dr. Rollier at Leysin. Though heliotherapy has been preached indefatigably in this country by Dr. C. W. Saleeby, medical circles seem to be somewhat slow in applying the conclusions reached elsewhere after years of scientific study and experiment. England, with its fog and smoky cities, will derive far greater benefit from an extended application than any other country. The following article is from *The Times* (Sept. 11th), and offers very instructive reading:—

"The sun, unhappily, did not shine on the first meeting of the International Conference on

Treatment by Sunlight. Even Lausanne, usually so brilliant, was overclouded, and the Alps had hidden themselves. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm of a body of delegates which is representative of every country in Europe was not diminished. It is a distinguishing feature of the young science of helio-therapy that all those who are devoting themselves to its pursuit are fired by the spirit of pioneers. Working, often, against handicaps of apathy, they have succeeded in convincing the world that, in the rays of the sun, mankind possesses a healing power of almost measureless value.

This conviction, as was pointed out by M. Chamorel, Rector of the University of Lausanne, is the foundation on which the science of heliotherapy has been built. It inspired, in the beginning, the work of Bernhard, of St. Moritz, and of Rollier, of Leysin, thanks to whose efforts the treatment of surgical tuberculosis had been wholly reformed. It inspired also the work in Vienna and elsewhere on the treatment of rickets. The rays of the sun, as was emphasised by many speakers, are capable of developing in the human skin, and in the human blood, germicidal powers which afford protection against disease. They are capable of giving to the human organism nourishment of a subtle and peculiar kind, whereby it is stimulated to energy and, at the same time, rescued from danger.

These discoveries have led, as was inevitable, to many different inquiries as to the nature of the healing which is present in sunlight. It has been established beyond all doubt that the power resides in the actinic rays, those violet and ultraviolet rays which are filtered out of the sunlight by clouds, mist and smoke. The high Alps, which so often rise above the clouds, thus afford a great natural sunbath. Switzerland is the home of sunlight treatment, largely because, in Switzerland, all the essentials of that treatment are present in a natural form.

The Swiss experience, as is granted, has informed the world. It is evident, however, that there is need for further and fuller information. Nothing is more impressive than the insistence of Swiss physicians on the need of care in the use of sunlight, especially at the beginning of the treatment. At Leysin, where, on Thursday, physicians from all parts of the world will do honour to the work of Rollier, treatment is begun with a degree of caution which would certainly astonish some of the advocates of "light baths" in our own country. Patients at Leysin are actually sheltered and protected from the sunlight during their early days in the high Alps. When at last it is deemed safe to "expose" them to light, exposure is confined to a very small area of the body, perhaps a foot, and lasts only a very few minutes.

Nor is this caution abandoned at any time. It is true that, when the skin becomes pigmented, large "doses" of sunlight can be tolerated. It is true that naked children, all of them nut-brown in colour, are permitted to play games in the sun, under the clear Alpine sky. But watchful eyes are ever ready to detect signs of "overdose" and to prevent the evil results which follow that mistake. In other words, the sunlight is used, at Leysin, to provoke natural reactions against disease; it is never allowed to overwhelm the patient. In consequence, a steady progress towards healing is usually recorded. This method stands in sharp contrast to the careless fashion in which, in so many cities of Europe to-day, "light baths" of artificial sunlight are given by un instructed persons. Sunlight treatment is bound to fall into disrepute unless the methods of its administration are brought everywhere under strict control.

The International Conference is not unaware that attacks on the new treatment are now developing in certain quarters and that further attacks are certain to be made in the near future. The inevitable reaction against the enthusiasm which heliotherapy has aroused in the public mind is due. It is, therefore, more than ever necessary just now to proceed carefully.

In fact, it is the work of artificial sunlight, and of those foods which are substitutes for sunlight, which stands in greatest need of supervision. And in the Alpine clinics which have been established in other countries the treatment is under the control of experienced physicians. But men and women of no experience whatever are now engaged in prescribing and administering doses of violet light and of those chemical substances which possess the potency of sunlight. Instances are on record of cases in which damage has been inflicted by this ill-advised therapy.

The future of heliotherapy is, clearly, a very great one. Recent research has indicated the possibility of administering exact doses, and of suiting the dosage to the individual need. Again, the British discovery of Ergosterol, the substance which can absorb light, is opening the way to a very simple form of treatment, which is especially well suited to the needs of our own and other northern countries. Sunlight can be given, to-day, just as other medicines are given. The effects of Ergosterol on the bones and on the blood are now being intensively studied. Here again, it would appear, success depends on care in administration, and on wide knowledge of the effects of the substances prescribed. The International Conference will have achieved a great service to humanity if its deliberations result in a general awakening to the need, which exists everywhere, of instituting some form of control on light treatment."

### Inherited Insanity.

The far-reaching law recently promulgated in the canton of Vaud is giving rise to a good deal of comment in the English Press. Here is what the *Sunday Chronicle* says on Sept. 9th:—

Important developments in this country are likely to follow the drastic action of the Swiss Canton of Vaud in passing a law for the compulsory sterilisation of the mentally unfit.

The *Sunday Chronicle* learns that the whole question of legal sterilisation will be raised when Parliament reassembles. It will be urged that similar measures be adopted here, the object being to prevent mental defectives becoming parents and thus passing on their affliction to their children.

There is already a large and growing body in favour of compulsory sterilisation in this country. They include several M.P.'s and a very large proportion of medical men.

Statistics are being prepared showing the very high birthrate among mentally unfit persons. Documented evidence has also been obtained revealing the extent to which such persons are responsible for swelling the criminal calendar.

Important views on the subject were obtained from a number of prominent people by the *Sunday Chronicle* yesterday.

"I am certain that before long sterilisation under strict limits will have to be made legal," declared Lady Askwith, the well-known social worker. "A medical officer of health at a recent board of guardians meeting declared that there are no fewer than 140,000 wretched creatures in our mental hospitals, as well as a similar number of mental defectives not under control.

"I heard of a case recently of 14 mentally defective women who between them have 100 children, mostly in asylums and workhouses.

"At a great establishment for the blind and deaf, which I visited not long ago, the superintendent said that three-quarters of the inmates owed their misfortunes to inherited venereal disease.

"We are rearing, with vast trouble and at enormous expense, a huge army of unfit who are a grave encumbrance to the State—and often a misery to themselves and their relations.

"Surely the State has some rights in the matter? If it is to own responsibility for its children it must endeavour to restrict the number of unhealthy births. At present it does the reverse."

Alarming figures showing the increase in insanity during the past 50 years were given by the Educational Secretary of the Eugenics Society, Mrs. C. B. S. Hodson.

"Fifty years ago," she said, "the insane numbered one in every five hundred of the population. To-day they number nearly one in every two hundred. Opinion among students of the problem in Europe is becoming more and more to the view that some check such as sterilisation is required.

"A good deal of the increase is undoubtedly due to asylum cases returning home and increasing the size of their families.

"Sterilisation is still largely misunderstood by the public. It doesn't change the personality of the subject at all or interfere with his normal health. All that it does is to make procreation impossible.

"In America, where 21 States have compulsory sterilisation, 8,515 persons had been operated upon up to January 1st this year. In California, where sterilisation has been in force for 15 years, the total number treated only amounts to 5,820."

Professor A. M. Low, the well-known

scientist, said that, broadly speaking, compulsory sterilisation was a step in the right direction.

"But the problem of deciding who are the proper subjects for sterilisation bristles with grave difficulties," he said. "Can we be quite sure that the committee, or whatever body decides who shall be sterilised, is absolutely unprejudiced and has the necessary scientific qualifications for the discharge of its duties?

"I know one or two people personally whose sterilisation would be better for the world. They exercise a bad influence, and their children may do so as well. Yet the world considers them perfectly sane."

A divergent view is expressed in the following article from the *Sunday Mercury* (Sept. 9th); it will be noticed that the writer has somewhat missed the point:—

"Last Monday the Grand Council of the Canton Vaud, in Switzerland, voted unanimously for a new law enforcing the compulsory sterilisation of persons suffering from mental diseases. Sterilisation must be recommended by a doctor and authorised by the government of the canton.

This decision is one of the most drastic ever adopted in Switzerland, and other cantons are likely to follow suit. It may even find repercussion in other countries where propaganda for a similar "reform" has been carried on for some time.

There are a number of serious objections to such a procedure. One of the most important is the difficulty of ascertaining where is the borderline between sanity and insanity.

Some of our greatest men were eccentric to an extent as to be considered insane by the people with whom they were in immediate touch.

Yet such an interdict against them would have been criminal.

For people who believe themselves normal, and happen to be in the majority, to take such high-handed action with regard to a person who may, perhaps, be above their comprehension, is nothing short of barbarism.

The isolation of what is called a mental case is only justified when the patient becomes either a danger or a nuisance to society. There the duties of society end. The community is not justified in usurping any greater powers over the individual who may seem to it objectionable or incomprehensible.

There is no doubt that many people would prefer us to produce men like Bombardier Wells, "Kid" Lewis, Dempsey and Tunney, than "abnormals" like Byron, Dostoyevsky, Napoleon and Poe. We can have no quarrel with them, as tastes differ.

When, however, they want to impose on us the standard they consider proper and suggest that the other must be sterilised as abnormals it is time to shout halt!

Insanity itself is not a definite disease, but a deviation from the normal standard which itself varies with the country, climate, time, environment, conditions of life, etc.

For instance, a man or woman who cannot stand the strain of factory work and slum life, and consequently becomes a mental wreck and falls a charge on the rates, could lead a successful life in some quiet country place and be a useful, self-supporting person as a farmer. This would show the difficulty of generalisation on such questions.

A large proportion of the mental degenerates are not insane.

We frequently see people of very poor stock producing excellent offspring if the conditions of life under which they are placed are at all congenial. As a whole we know at present too little of the influence of heredity on the individual to be dogmatic about this question.

Wise men would think twice before entrusting doctors with such important duties as to be the arbiters who should be allowed to propagate and who should not. It is a function which the conscientious doctor will be very reluctant to assume.

Considering that even the best human material will deteriorate when placed in unfavourable circumstances and improve with the establishment of humane conditions, the chief aim should be the providing of conditions for the best development of the mental and physical characteristics in man."

#### Thoune Pottery.

It is gratifying to gather from the following descriptive article in the *Newcastle Daily Journal* (Sept. 7th) that the potters of Thoune enjoy a considerable reputation far beyond the local frontiers of the Bernese Oberland, and that the ancient lake dwellers' craft has survived in spite of modern scientific mass production.

"In the quaint little Alpine town of Thoune, men have moulded the red and blue clay into ornaments, bowls and cups for thousands of years. In prehistoric times, when the Thoune district was a lake, and men dwelt in huts perched upon poles, they attempted a vague form of decoration on their sunbaked clay utensils. Wavy lines, drawings of animals, patterns traced with a pointed stick or a finger nail, can be seen on the

relics of the lake-dwellers' pottery which are found from time to time in the muddy soil.

Modern Thoune pottery has been carried by travellers to mantel-pieces in the four corners of the earth; yet the fearsome modern giant of mass production and monopoly has left this ancient craft practically untouched. In almost every other house along the road between Heimburg and Thoune there is an oven and a wheel, and you will find the potter busy kicking the lower disc round while he forms his clay on the upper one. Overhead, just low enough to make you stoop, are shelves filled with articles waiting to be decorated and fired; and at a table a man stands thumping the famous red and blue clay.

Round about are all sizes and shapes of the brown glaze milk pots, with their wreath of Edelweiss and Alpine roses; the undecorated brown bowls waiting for their ladleful of yellow fluid which is the inside glaze that is swished around and then thrown back again into the tureen. Here, in fact, are all the humble articles in daily use in the Swiss peasant kitchen.

Other potters have an American or other foreign connection, and such man will be proud to tell you how many platters or dishes or bowls he has sent to New York, and will show you the treasured letters with the foreign postmark.

It takes a year to master the first of the four movements required to work the wheel, and it takes many years before the beautiful objects which we know as "Thoune" can be produced. The old designs are generally applied to the vessels by women who paint them on the objects with a species of ancient "fountain pen." A small clay vessel is filled with thick colouring matter which flows out of a quill attached to the end of the vessel. The colours thus painted on become very vivid after the pottery has been fired.

As a contrast to these simple, ancient methods stands the factory at Thoune, aggressively superior, with its electrically turned potters' wheels and its great alternating ovens. The most striking point about its wares is the great number of rows of liquor bottles, designed for America, of all places, and curiously designed with a space at the bottom for a musical box. Many hundreds of these are sent across the Atlantic every year.

Teapots and tobacco jars, with animal figures as handles, coffee pots shaped like a cat with a raised paw, and various other little vessels in the shape of pigs, cows, and dogs are among the work for which Thoune is famed.

All are made by people whose forebears have done the same work for who knows how many generations; whose children will go on turning their fathers' wheel until they are swallowed by the super-efficient factory which towers above their cottages, on the site of a prehistoric lake dwelling, the piles of which are still embedded in the clay beneath."

#### Castle of Chillon.

The picturesque and historical castle on the Lake Leman immortalised by Byron's famous poem is described in the *Scotsman Weekly* (Sept. 8th):—

Chillon Castle, the most interesting of Swiss fortresses, is well-known to English-speaking people through the medium of Byron's poem, "The Prisoner of Chillon," the pathetic story of the Swiss patriot Bonivard, who was imprisoned here for six years, from 1530-1536.

Its origin is obscure, but it certainly dates to the ninth century, this ancient stronghold of the Dukes of Savoy, which has undergone so many architectural changes and has been used for many purposes, not all of which were good. For a considerable period the castle was used as a state prison, and many deeds of injustice and cruelty were committed within its battlemented walls.

Since 1803 Chillon Castle has been the property of the Canton of Vaud, and in 1887 an "Association pour la Restauration du Château de Chillon" was formed, and under the able guidance of Professor Albert Naef, archaeologist, Lausanne University, the restoration is gradually being completed, and thanks to this professor's careful research work, and the enthusiasm of this Society, one can now inspect the castle in what was practically its original condition.

Along the north shores of Lake Geneva run the trans-Continental expresses, via the Rhône Valley to the Simplon Tunnel and thence to Italy. This railway line follows what was in bygone days the main highway between France and Italy. Conveniently situated a few yards from the edge of the lake was a small rocky islet about 100 yards long and 50 wide, and on this the Castle of Chillon was built. Commanding as it did the narrow defile along the lake on this very important highway, the castle underwent many sieges both from the land and lake sides. The tramp of troops in its cobbled courts is echoed to-day by the many tourists and classes of school children who visit it annually, and to whom the grim story of its massive towers is related by uniformed guides or harassed teachers. Children must find this method of learning history more attractive than the schoolroom variety, but in Switzerland teachers frequently conduct

tours of their classes to places of historical or other interest, a practice which might be adopted more generally in our own country.

Access is gained to the Château by a wooden trestle bridge which was built in 1750. This bridge replaces a drawbridge over the natural moat by which entrance was originally effected. Here at the turnstile every visitor subscribes to the Restoration Fund in the form of an entrance fee of either a franc or half a franc, according to the day and the time. In addition to admission, this sum provides the visitor with a most excellent plan, printed in four languages, with a suggested itinerary to be followed through the various buildings.

Following this plan so thoughtfully provided, we pass the guardroom and enter the first courtyard. On our left are buildings dating from 1536, and which were used as stables during the Bernese occupation of the castle. Immediately below these, and in some parts below the level of the lake, are the dungeons to which we now descend through the Arsenal. At the further end of the Guards' Hall we pass through a small apartment giving direct access to the lake. In this the gibbet is erected, and the victims of many "judicial errors" were conveniently disposed of at this point where the Lake of Geneva is over 500 feet deep.

"There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,

In Chillon's dungeons deep and old.

There are seven columns massy and grey,

Dim with a dull imprison'd ray."

These are in Bonnivard's prison, the long narrow vaulted chamber beyond the execution cell. Byron visited Chillon in 1816, and the well-known poem of François Bonnivard's incarceration was the result of this visit. Little sunlight reaches this cold droll vault, and what there is is like a "sunbeam which has lost its way," as Byron described it.

The gloom of former days is somewhat lightened by a beautiful piece of white marble sculpture depicting "Liberation," the figure of a prisoner freed from his chains. This new feature of interest was gifted to the Swiss nation by the Alsations in recognition of their humanitarian services to interned Allied soldiers during the War.

Before ascending again to full daylight and viewing the more lightsome apartments, we can inspect the crypt, which contains the second oldest Christian altar in Switzerland, the oldest being in the Abbey of St. Maurice in Valais.

On reaching the courtyard level again we see the castle fountain, with its ever-flowing clear crystal stream. The trough, hewed from a large boulder, is similar to those seen in nearly all Swiss mountain villages, and is dated 1726, and from the fountain are wooden underground con-

#### QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

	BONDS.	Sept. 10	Sept. 17
Confederation 3% 1903	81.00	80.75	
5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln.	100.60	101.85	
Federal Railways 3 1/2% A-K	86.00	86.40	
" 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	101.20	101.50	
SHARES.	Nom.	Sept. 10	Sept. 17
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	821	829
Crédit Suisse	500	950	946
Union de Banques Suisses	500	734	733
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	3347	3350
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	5330	5300
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappo	1000	4167	4190
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	599	595
C. F. Bally	1000	1510	1532
Nestle & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	920	938
Entreprenes Suizex S.A.	1000	1227	1235
Comp. de Navig n sur le Lac Léman	500	538	530
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco	100	339	344
Maschinienfabrik Oerlikon	500	905	890

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duits carrying water to the kitchen apartments, and these are of the thirteenth century.

Continuing our ramble round, we pass through a second courtyard to reach some of the larger apartments along the lake side of the castle. These halls were occupied by the Dukes of Savoy or other Bailiff Commandants of the fortress, and their present condition dates from about 1260.

The Banqueting Hall is interestingly arranged as it would be during the tenancy of the various Governors. The Hall retains its original ceiling, which is supported on two massive pillars. These are the complete trunks of chestnut trees and are carved and coloured round the capitals with the arms of the House of Savoy.

Modern housewives think themselves very up-to-date with their tiled grates, but in this room there is a huge charcoal burning stove, about 12 feet high, and covered with green and white glazed tiles. This stove is supposed to be of German construction, and is dated 1602. Stepped seats beside the stove provided a warm corner for the servants during the wintry days.

Mounting a covered stairway outside in the third courtyard we reach the "Knight's Hall," really the reception room of the ruling Dukes and communicating with their private apartments. This part, the northmost corner of the Château, is called the "Duke's Tower" or "Tour d'Ainge," and was raised to its present level early in the fourteenth century. The "Knight's Hall" is immediately above Bonnivard's Prison, and from the windows overlooking the lake a glorious panoramic view is to be had. From these windows above "Clear, placid Leman" Byron looked out on the Alps, on the left to the Dent du Midi with "their thousand years of snow," and in front the French Savoy Alps with the Grammont rising straight up from the Lake. "The Blue Rhône in Fullest Flow" can be seen entering the lake at the south-east end, and its course followed for a considerable distance so great is the volume of water carried down.

Round this lofty hall are painted the crests of the Dukes of Savoy and others who have dwelt in the Tower, and in one of the windows is a stained glass panel with a crest dated 1714.

Leaving these domestic apartments in the Duke's Tower, we see further features of interest. We have now reached the land side of the Castle, and passing through a small chapel, which has been entirely restored by the previously mentioned Association, we pass down a covered stairway and come out again into the third courtyard. Directly facing is the "Donjon," the centre of the castle and built on the highest part of the little island.

The Donjon Tower would originally be built for observation purposes rather than for defence. In the thirteenth century the "Donjon" or dungeon tower was used as a prison, and in it are some gruesome "oubliettes," small cells with no opening except at the top, and best described by a literal translation of the French word—"place where one is forgotten." From the upper part of the tower we reach a long wooden gallery connecting the three defence towers overlooking the moat. These galleries are among the most picturesque of the constructional work carried out during the Bernese occupation at the end of the sixteenth century.

Our examination of these features of military architecture brings a short but interesting visit to a close, and passing out by the narrow wooden bridge over the moat we recall the lines in Byron's sonnet,

"Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,  
And thy sad floor an altar."

### EIDGENÖSSISCHE GLOSSEN.

#### Auswärtige Politik und Vertretung im Auslande.

Das Wichtigste des Auslandschweizertages war unbedingt die Kritik und die Verteidigung unserer auswärtigen Politik und unserer Vertretung im Auslande, die wir zu hören kriegen. Der Kritiker, der mit italienischer Energie und Leidenschaftlichkeit an das Thema herantrat, war Herr Huber, Mailand. Seine Hauptsätze lauten :

Die neue Zeit stellt neue Anforderungen. Die gewaltige Verschärfung des Wirtschaftsnationalismus zwinge unser Politisches Departement, sich in die neue Lage hineinzudenken und Vorkehrungen zu treffen, um den Schweizer im Auslande zu schützen. Leider ist zu konstatieren, dass recht wenig geschehen ist, was auf eine bedenkliche Schwäche der leitenden Organe, auf Mangel an Voraussicht und Einfühlungsvermögen schliessen lässt.

Gegenüber den einschneidenden Massnahmen auf dem Gebiete des Wirtschaftslebens, die einerseits (durch Verbot des Grunderwerbes, durch Ausschluss von Staatslieferungen, Ausschluss aus Wirtschaftsverbänden) schon heutige wirksam sind, anderseits (Erlass von Naturalisationsgesetzen) ihre Wirkung erst in der Zukunft zeigen werden, kennen wir leider nichts anderes als den Ausdruck des tiefsten Bedauerns. Wir überlassen uns mit Vorliebe einer philosophischen Resignation, die gerne über den Weltlauf orakelt, ausgehend von der Ueber-

zeugung, dass die Schweiz als kleines Land doch nichts machen könne. Diese Resignation findet man nicht nur in den Amtsstuben, sondern auch in der Schweizerpresse. Nicht verwunderlich also, dass sich unsere Ausßenpolitik durch Schwächlichkeit und Planlosigkeit auszeichnet. Alle unsere organisatorischen Massnahmen helfen nichts, wenn wir uns nicht von der geistigen Einstellung, es könne nichts getan werden, befreien. Es kann etwas getan werden !

Unsere Organisation der Auslandsvertretung ist nicht befriedigend. Wir müssen darüber wachen, dass der geistige Zusammenhang zwischen dem Vaterlande und den Auslandschweizern nicht verloren gehe. Wir verlangen darum eine tägliche Förderung aller Bestrebungen, die dahin zielen, den Kontakt der Auslandschweizer mit der Heimat enger zu gestalten. In den Regierungen ist leider der Gedanke noch nicht durchgedrungen, dass die Pflege der geistigen Beziehungen ebenso wichtig ist, wie die Pflege der kommerziellen Beziehungen.

Wir unterrichten uns zu wenig, was in andern Ländern im Geschehen ist. Wir überlassen es, unsere Landsleute über wichtige Neuerungen von Gesetzen aufzuklären (siehe die Syndikalgesetze in Italien, die in Vorbereitung befindliche obligatorische Stellenvermittlung). Wir treten zu wenig energisch auf, wenn diese Gesetze im Widerspruch stehen zu den Niederlassungsverträgen. Wir dulden Rechtsunsicherheiten, die jahrelang andauern.

Unser Konsularwesen sollte reformiert werden. Unsere Behörden sehen zu leicht das Schreckgespenst der finanziellen Folgen. Gebt man genügend Mittel oder man verzichte ! (Wenn ein auf den Export angewiesenes Land überhaupt verzichten könnte !) Der Ausbau geschieht allzu sehr nach dem Grundsatz der geringsten Kosten. (Wenn ein Gesandter eine als notwendig erachtete kleine Reise machen will, so muss die Bewilligung beim Politischen Departement eingeholt werden !) Aus Sparsamkeit hält man krampfhaft am System der Honorar- (Ehrensold-) Konsuln fest.

Der Wunsch der Mailänder nach einem Berufskonsul ist nicht Ausdruck der Unzufriedenheit gegenüber ihrem Honorarkonsul, sondern Auflehnung gegen ein System des ungenügenden Schutzes. Wer einem eigenen Geschäft vorsteht, kann nicht auch noch die Geschäfte eines Konsuln führen. Nach italienischem Vorbilde wäre eine Vereinigung von Konsulardienst und diplomatischem Dienst anzustreben.

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Es war verständlich, dass Minister Dinichert, der Chef der Abteilung für Auswärtiges, in seiner Antwort einleitungsweise betonte, dass die Nützlichkeit seiner Teilnahme an der Versammlung durchaus abhängig sei von der Art und Weise, wie hier diskutiert werde, und von den Fragen, die hier angeschnitten würden. Seines Erachtens sei in der Auslandschweizertagung nicht der Ort, um ganz allgemein schrankenlose Kritik zu üben an der schweizerischen Politik, am Verhalten des Bundesrates oder des Politischen Departements dem Auslande gegenüber. Dafür seien die verfassungsmässigen Organe da. Er, der Sprechende, wünsche an späteren Tagungen nicht mehr in dieselbe Lage zu kommen...

Zur Sache selber führte er aus : Das Politische Departement spürt, dass des im Parlament und im Volk auf festem Boden steht. Dass wir gewisse Fragen, an die wir vor 12 Jahren nicht gedacht haben, heute nicht lösen können, beruht darauf, dass das internationale Recht noch nicht Schritt gehalten hat mit diesen Schwierigkeiten. Wir haben keine rechtlichen Mittel, um uns Recht zu verschaffen; denn die entsprechenden Rechtsätze sind noch nicht da. Wir tun alles, um die unregelten Fragen einer Regelung zuzuführen. Wir wollen unsern Auslandschweizern helfen, aber wir können nicht mit der Faust auf den Tisch schlagen, sondern wir müssen rechtlich vorgehen. In den Schiedsverträgen seien wir ein Mittel, unsere Schwierigkeiten mit dem Auslande einer freundlichen Regelung entgegenzuführen. Es ist nicht richtig, von Unfähigkeit irgendwelcher verantwortlichen Stellen im Lande zu reden.

Wir begreifen, dass die Frage der Berufskonsulat periodisch immer wieder auftaucht. Wir selber tun es durch Erörterung und Überprüfung von Fall zu Fall. Wir sind zwar Anhänger des Honorarkonsul-Systems, weil kein anderes Land dank seiner besonderen Umsätze so geeignet ist wie die Schweiz, dieses System erfolgreich durchzuführen. Ich gehe noch weiter : Ich glaube nicht, dass wir irgend ein Land der Welt um seine Vertretung zu beneiden brauchen. Ich benütze gerne die Gelegenheit, um den hochverdienten Vertretern im Konsulardienst Lob und Anerkennung auszusprechen. Wir können in unsern Kolonien nicht nur jederzeit den geeigneten Mann, sondern auch den Mann mit dem Opferwillen und der Liebe zur Heimat, die diese Stellung erheischt, finden. Der Mann kennt Sitte, Sprache, hat seine angesehene Stellung, das alles stempelt ihn zum beauftragten Vertreter seines Landes. "Wie wir uns die Sache auch überlegen, so müssen wir zum Schluss kommen, dass in Anbetracht der ganz besonderen Verhältnisse der Schweizer Kolonien im Auslande bei diesem System bleiben müssen."

Herrn de-Rabours danken wir für seine Worte. Er weiss, dass wir gegen eine Strömung, gegen Vorurteile im Parlament und im Volke zu kämpfen

haben. Verdienen wir Kritik, wenn wir nachgeben ? wenn wir den Verhältnissen Rechnung tragen ? Wenn wir auf das Mögliche abstehen, so ist das nicht Schwäche.

Mit mehr Mitteln könnten wir vielleicht Verbesserungen erreichen. Wir halten sie nicht für gross. Mit wenig Mitteln haben wir ein Maximum an Resultaten erhalten.

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So standen sich die beiden Männer, der Jüngere und der Ältere, der Geschäftsmann auf exponierten Posten und der Diplomat im Bundeshaus gegenüber. Der Leser wird je nach Temperament und politischem Glauben Stellung beziehen. Was mir gefährlich erscheint, ist die erstarrte, vor Eigenlob nicht zurückkehrende Selbstsicherheit, mit der Minister Dinichert unsere Einrichtungen pries. Es gibt keine Einrichtungen auf der Welt, die nicht noch besser sein könnten ! Und wogen ich mich immer wenden werde, ist jener Begriff des Möglichen, der als Göttje aufgestellt wird. Wer weiss denn zum voraus, was möglich sein wird, ehe er mit allen Kräften versucht hat, den Rahmen des bestehenden Möglichen zu sprengen ?

Mit der staatsmännischen Klugheit eines Dinichert, aber doch auch mit dem ungestümen, drängenden Temperamente eines Mannes wie Huber, werden wir unsern Weg durch die moderne politische Welt suchen müssen. Mit Klugheit und Vorsicht allein und der Überzeugung, dass eigentlich schon alles zum besten geordnet sei, kommen wir nicht zum Ziel. Und es kann kein Zweifel darüber bestehen, dass weite Kreise unseres Volkes heute für eine Tat zu haben sind !

*—Felix Moeschlin in 'N.Z.'*

### MY FOSTER-LAND.

#### Her Expression before the World.

Switzerland could have given no man more than she has given me, therefore I grieve the more, in my love of this foster-country of mine, that she should be so usually misunderstood and so often the bait and butt of the writers of other countries. For it is curious indeed that a country so friendly in its national expression towards the world at large should evoke so much hostility from journalists, and that a people so little aggressive in the expression and exploitation of its arts and aims should be attacked so often with bitterly critical pens. The immediate cause of this reflection is the publication of an English translation of Count Keyserling's book, which leaves no doubt in the reader's mind but that he despises and dislikes the Swiss people. I do not give the title, for this review of the peoples of Europe is worthy neither of your time nor your money.

#### Attacks on Switzerland.

One wonders why such an attack is made. You yourselves must be puzzled to explain why the old German of the not-so-old regime should stagger into print with this defamatory of the Swiss character which has no basis on present or historical fact. You must also wonder, in a milder way, why a savage attack was recently made in a London literary if not musical paper against a Swiss director of orchestra who is perhaps the first specialist in the world on modern music. Indeed, you may have been justly annoyed when you read the ignorant attack on Swiss mentality and character, as I should have been had I not known the pitiable circumstances of the author, which appeared in a good English paper, and which I have not forgotten to this day. However, I cite these instances of journalistic injustice which I happen to have noticed within the last year or so. But I also have the impression of having seen extracts from many another similar attack or misrepresentation quoted in these columns, and only ten days ago patrons of the 'wireless' must have heard a fantasia purporting to express Swiss life, and this with the best intentions, which must surely have given the innocent listener in the impression that Switzerland was peopled by *opera bouffe* characters who passed their time entirely in cafés, where they jabbered all the tongues of Babel and sang (the women not very well). If I had known nothing of Switzerland I should have formed the impression, which I fear thousands of listeners-in must have done, that Switzerland was a hysterical miasma, in which the only good things were the male choirs !

#### Why do they Happen ?

An intelligent Swiss observer abroad may well ask why these things happen. I think I know the fundamental cause. It lies in the maxim of Napoleon that the best way to defend is to attack. The Swiss do not do much attacking on their own part. Even when they were the greatest soldiers in Europe they were mostly fighting for others. The Swiss are content and sensible, but contentment and good sense do not breed that boyish spirit of *réclame*, that intense conviction of national pride, which forces itself upon the consciousness of such people, for instance, as Count Keyserling. There is a well of national pride in the heart of Switzerland, but it does not achieve much expression abroad; consequently Switzerland stands weaponless and defenceless where on all sides are nations armed with the conviction that their own way of living, their own ideas, their own art and their own dreams are the best. Thus, because beyond her borders she is dumb, she is being misunderstood.