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HOME NEWS

The Federal budget for 1929 foreshadows a surplus of about two million francs. This is the first time since 1910 that the Federal accounts close with a balance on the right side. The accounts for the current year, which are budgeted to close with a deficit of about eight million francs, are also expected to exhibit a much better result.

An initiative committee is being formed in the canton Uri with the object of revoking the new constitutional article of May last, when a modern election system was substituted for the former Landsgemeinde.

Another phenomenon in the canton Ticino begins to attract considerable attention; it is the "wandering village," Campo in the Maggia Valley. Official measurements have shown that its church is moving in a south-easterly direction at the rate of 35 centimetres per annum.

For refusing, on conscientious grounds, to fulfil his military duties a high official in the Basle civil service has been dismissed from his post. On the matter being raised in the Grosse Rat it was stated that all civil servants are expected to observe, and act without reservation in accordance with, the laws of the State.

The doyen of the Swiss Press, M. Louis Oderbolz, the publisher of the *Courier de la Côte*, died at Nyon at the age of 79; he was still in harness and had started his journalistic career at the early age of 25.

A pleasure trip in a military aeroplane ended in a fatal accident when Miss Clara Gerber, a schoolteacher from Berne, mysteriously dropped out of the observation cabin on to the Aletsch glacier. The machine, which was in charge of Lieut. Mauerhofer, was caught in a whirlwind and it is surmised that the accident happened whilst the pilot manoeuvred to right his plane again.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

There is an exceptional bunch of interesting articles in this week's Gleanings.

Praise of Aargau.

This is the title of the following eulogium of the "Rübiland" which appeared in the *Nation and Athenaeum* (Oct. 20th). It is not often that a foreign critic finds everything perfect in our little country; even the aromatic "Misthufe" which defends the approach to most farmhouses is made an object for admiration.

"When the Alps were pinched upwards the rocky crust of the earth was cracked longitudinally into the deep narrow valley in which the Rhine and the Rhône start east and west from the Furka. Close to this same forking, just over the notch of the Grimsel, the Aar, the noblest river of the three in Switzerland (before it surrenders itself to the Rhine) starts northwards. It grumbles turbulently, like a burrowing puppy, through the narrow gloom of the depths of its early practical joke, the preposterous Aarschlucht, down to Meiringen. Some day it will accomplish its business of making the name of Interlaken a laughing-stock by choking Brienz Lake. It has far the best of the country, for the Rhône and Rhine escarpments south of the watershed are abrupt and narrow, but the long up-tilted shelf that feeds the Aar makes nearly half of Switzerland. Its southern edges run in an almost straight line from the Diablerets to the Saurenstock in Glarus, thence northwards along the Rhine gorge to Buchs, north-west to Koblenz, where the Aar runs into the Rhine, thence along the Boksberg and Jura right into France, south-east again to the wooded Jorat north of Lausanne, and thence back almost straight to the Diablerets. It gathers the whole of the meltings impounded and filtered by the lakes of Joux, Neuchâtel, Bièvre, Thun, Brienz, Lucerne, and Zurich, with their auxiliary glacier bottoms, pouring steadily down the slope in more than a score of valleys from the whole

length of the Oberland. The river drives steadily its enormous volume eastwards at a low-water rate of about five miles an hour, amusing itself for the last time at Brugg with another deep, narrow gouging through the compacted barrier of a drift of glacier dust. Brugg must have been pre-eminently The Bridge since men were on either side of the unfordable river. A fair-sized fir tree would span the cleft, but it would need a tall one to sound it. In the final sink of its basin at Turgi, the Aar swallows into its own pale glaucous waters the flinty blue-green flood of the Reuss and the cloudy opal of the Limmat and Sihl from Zurich, and thrusts the heavy mass through its northern barrier ridge to bend the Rhine towards Waldshut. No wonder the interglacial terraces of the Aargau, the sheets of gravel laid down and channelled out again through four successive multi-millennial intervals, are so splendid. The escarpments of the second and third layers of deposit drop as sharply as the slopes of railway embankments from as level a surface forty or fifty feet in places.

Switzerland intoxicates all of us. But we mostly keep to the mountainous parts and the lakes for our special excitements. The Aar basin seems to me, on the whole, the most humanly significant part of Switzerland, and being, in its own fashion, completely beautiful, cannot be deemed less admirable in nature than is the Oberland. But the human use of the district is my theme in this eulogy. It is a region of considerable manufacturing industry. The gravels are full of lime-sulphate and there are many cement works. Cement works must needs be dusty; but these are the cleanest and most self-respecting cement works I have ever beheld. No other industry pursued in the district is conducted offensively. There is, of course, no black smoke, because electricity, bestowed by the Aar and its feeders, is almost exclusively used. I saw great engineering factories, in handsome, gleaming buildings, pleasantly tinted, with clean red roofs; and I felt unhappy when I remembered Sheffield. Swiss industrial morality manifestly demands that blackness and foulness and mountains of rusty scrap shall not be deemed the proper accessories of efficient manufacturing industry, even metallic or chemical. This difference of habit is by no means wholly due to the necessities of dealing with dirty fuel: some coke and coal are used. The filthy untidiness of the waste and scrap yards which defile our own manufacturing districts is absent. This means that care is taken and is demanded that the rubbish shall be destroyed or used up, and not thrown aside to accumulate as a normal method of business.

The most impressive thing throughout the whole of this district is the habitual character of the building, for every class of purpose. One can hardly fail to notice this in any railway journey through Switzerland, and the chalet of the mountain and forest districts is familiar as a masterpiece of construction and beauty: but the character of the smaller towns and villages of the lower districts appeared to me almost more impressive. I saw simply no bad building anywhere. Ever, house is fine in style and solid in workmanship. Even a quite new class of suburban bungalows, approaching towards the despondency of our own post-war tenements, were infinitely removed from the latter's habitual meanness. In the small rural hamlets there is nothing even so modernly decadent as these cheaper suburban tenements. Familiar all my life with English agricultural villages, and living now in a district where building used to be fine, I groaned in shame when I thought of them in comparison with the homes of the poorest Swiss peasantry. The causes of the difference lie deep, but are unmistakable. The colonisation of Switzerland was effected not very differently from that of England, by kindred Germanic tribes. There ruled there, as in England, great feudal fighting landlords. Their castles in the Aargau are as conspicuous as along the Rhine, or as William's were in England and Wales. Here is the Habsburg's eyrie. Here is Lenzburg, as ideally splendid a fortress on a specially-created hill as Salzburg or Wartburg, and in its setting even more lovely, as its name should demand. (On the castle gates there is now a curious inscription apprising the public of the limited accessibility of the precincts permitted by good favour of the proprietor, and signed "Lincoln Elsworth, Esq.," not, one infers, a Swiss or English noble). But by the fortune of history the Habsburg overlords grew too big for the country, and their attention being much occupied elsewhere

they were forcibly ousted by a progressive con-juration bred in the mountains and forests which they had never subdued, before they had had time, as in England, to subinfeudate an extensive manorial squirearchy; and the Cantons took over their lordships. The cultivators therefore retained their holdings. No Statute of Merton or Acts of Enclosure expropriated and impoverished them; no great estates were cleared for extensive farming, and men building homes for themselves went on building in the spirit in which they were building such homes in the Cotswold country up to the end of the sixteenth century, since when there has been no decent village building at all. What happened to our agricultural population after that has been told by Jeffries in "Hodge and his Masters," and again by Mr. J. L. Hammond. Here, then, are these rural villages, with every house well built and handsome, with no appearance of poverty anywhere, with the gardens all brilliant with flowers, and not only the gardens but corners of streets and little recesses of roadside waste. The people cannot be rich: but their children are well fed and well dressed. The agriculture is intensive. These gravelly flats have a hungry subsoil: it is not a wheat country. The upland husbandry is an art apart, but in these lowlands also cattle are an indispensable standby. Apart from beet crops, potatoes and other consumable vegetables, the ground is worked for fodder with rye, vetches, lucerne, clover and other seed herbage. Everyone who knows Switzerland will be familiar with the rather coarse mixed leafage of these hay-grounds. But the soil being kept covered and moist, they yield a great deal of feed.

Only one thing in the villages may disturb an English visitor not reared in a cattle country or not sharing the pious Aryan veneration for the cow and all her five products. These being the basis of the rural economy, due recognition is unashamedly given to the fact by the reverence paid to the dung heap. This is not amorously dumped here and there about open yards or trodden about the milking shed as in England; but upon the margin between the house and the street there is built a neat square concrete enclosure with walls about two feet high (convenient to sit on), in which and arising above it in the guise of an altar to the gods of fertility (honoured in other countries by other emblems) is piled the manure, the sides neatly trimmed like those of a rick, whilst the drainings accumulate in a covered tank below, to be pumped out continually and distributed on the hungry soil of the fields.

The fruit trees are wonderful. South of Lenzburg, which has a renowned jam factory in most comely buildings, the slopes of the wide valley look to me like a park with large oak and elm timber rather thickly planted about the grass. On a closer approach I realised that these were apple and pear trees, disconcertingly exaggerated in growth. Everywhere the care and condition of the trees are remarkable. They have evidently been tended for many years by proper shaping and pruning, such as we are only beginning to see in modern orchards in England. This year they carried beautiful crops of clean, well-grown fruit, whilst our old cankered orchards are cumbered with half-sized produce in equal profusion.

The personal and communal pride which maintains the beauty and dignity of all these villages is shown, by a people thus nurtured, equally in the towns. There also the whole tradition of building is solid and handsome, even in the large blocks of tenement houses that are superseding for wage-earners the family house—which is less the case in this part of Switzerland than in most industrial districts elsewhere that I am acquainted with. The towns not only maintain an impressively high architectural standard in the design of shops and offices, they are full of surprising little patches and benches of flowers, rows of lilies, hydrangeas, and fuchsias in pots, and a general evidence both of loving beauty and decency and of encouraging the manifestation of these human amenities in both private and civic life. The freedom and intelligence which the absence of landlordism has suffered to develop in all this country have led naturally both to intelligent and public-spirited civic administration and to the development of economic co-operation in business among the peasantry."

Monte Arbino.

Since the first reports of this phenomenon have been broadcast, the district has been visited by

geologists and less renowned sightseers from all over Europe. The report of Prof. Staub, of Zurich, the official Swiss expert, who predicts a far greater disturbance in the near future, is bound to keep the interest alive and we should not be surprised to hear of some enterprising touring agency arranging an air-trip around the summit to coincide with the next movement. The following description which appeared in the *Spectator* (Oct. 20th) gives the whole matter a new aspect: good may come from evil after all.

"Never so much as now have I wished that I knew more than a smattering of geology: for two reasons just become urgent.

Monte Arbino, a few miles from Bellinzona, has been slowly cracking for years, and a few days ago a mighty mass, including three minor peaks, fell into the valley of the Arbedo and made a dam across it. The event is unique, unheard of. There are countless mountains in Switzerland and Europe, but only one like this. Evidently we had to go to see it. Apart from mere size and noise and dust, there might be something precious in the mountain's heart.

First I saw it from the road which runs beside the St. Gothard railway—much threatened by coming events. We could see the new dam, about six hundred feet high, and the dust arising from it as new boulders fell; and we realised that the stream-bed at our feet was empty. Next we found the military road which ascends the broken mountain from the main road, and our car followed its steep and tortuous surface until we had ascended some four thousand feet from the plain. We had no idea how far we should be allowed to go, but were expecting a barrier with a prohibitory notice, warning us of danger if we disobeyed. We found the barrier, but no notice was necessary. Round one more curve our road ended finally.

The mountain had fallen across it, was, indeed, still falling across it, nor could we guess where the road had been. No military manoeuvres will ever use that road again. We stood on what was left of it and watched and listened for hours. The noise, exactly like artillery, never ceased, whilst stones and rocks, of all sizes up to that of, say, a small cottage, seemed spontaneously to start out of the mountain side, or from the very sky line, and hurl themselves thousands of feet into the valley below. The mighty dam was already scores of feet higher than when we had seen it two days before, and the experts are assured that what must yet fall is manifold as great as the colossal wall of earth and trees and stones and boulders that stretched beneath our eyes. From our viewpoint we could not see the lake which is forming, above the new dam, by the stream which is at present very low, but will surge and swell when the autumn rains begin. What will happen then no one knows; but the inexpert may guess that the rains which raise the lake and its pressure will also fill the vast new cracks in the mountain, will freeze and expand at night, and will hasten the precipitation of millions of tons of rock into the valley, thus strengthening the new dam. One would like to make an encampment on the opposite side of the valley and watch Nature at work during the next few weeks.

Meanwhile there is something to learn. Science has vindicated itself. The people have not been allowed to perish for lack of knowledge. The Swiss geologists and mountain engineers, admittedly without superiors anywhere, recognised the imminence of the fall, and its precise direction. The inhabitants of the doomed houses—which, one imagines, will never be seen again until the last syllable of recorded time—were all warned and evacuated a few weeks ago. This stupendous event, essentially destructive as it seems and indeed is, has not cost a single human life. The ignorant, jealous and superstitious sneer at science, but when science combines with humanity, yielding us that wisdom which, as Ecclesiasticus tells us, is a "loving spirit," then indeed she is justified of her children.

Something tangible might have come to light already, something we are about to look for everywhere. I am no geologist and neither expected nor made any great find. I picked up some freshly broken fragments of grey granite that had already fallen on the last few inches of the road. Granite is a noble and useful rock, but what I should have liked to pick up would have been pieces of smooth black stuff as unlike granite as any rock can be. Black—not yellow. We have all the gold we need, but scarcely a millionth part of our need of another element compared with which gold is simply yellow mud, and pearls one more disease.

The stuff I did not find is called pitchblende, and a devoted woman, more than a quarter of a century ago in Paris, obtained from it radium, which to-day, where it is to be had, replaces the knife for ever in the treatment of cancer and is the means of escape from hell for the victims of that dread disease. Mankind must quickly begin to break up mountains and rocks, wherever hope exists of finding this incomparably precious

element within them. If the whole of Monte Arbino, or only a thousandth part of it, were made of pitchblende, all the world would soon be kneeling for this bounty at the feet of Switzerland. It is not so: but the geologists who have studied this mountain and others are now our best hope against our worst disease; and they will not fail us. Their knowledge will ere long be worth its weight in Radium; and in Life."

Spahlinger again.

The discussion and subsequent resolution in the Geneva Council which was unsuccessfully petitioned by the local medical society to cancel Dr. Spahlinger's licence for the manufacture of serums and vaccines has re-kindled interest in the old controversy. However, no further progress has been made since the *Daily Express* endeavoured to test the veracity of his claims. The great London daily has rendered Dr. Spahlinger an immense service by arousing in this country widespread interest in his supposed discoveries; he is evidently unable to grasp the value of such publicity. We re-print the following from its issue of Oct. 16th:—

After a silence of many months M. Spahlinger has published in Geneva a pamphlet of forty-seven pages denouncing the *Daily Express* for its revelations in regard to himself and his "cure" for consumption. These revelations were made some eighteen months ago. They showed that men and women were being lured to Switzerland by the hope of being freed from tuberculosis, and in many cases were spending the savings of a lifetime with no reward but disillusion and despair. We had not then, nor have we now, any desire to discourage M. Spahlinger from pursuing his calling and his experiments. But there is one condition he must fulfil. He must submit his "cure" to an investigation in this country by an independent tribunal of medical experts. We laid down this condition in April, 1927. We accompanied it with an offer to pay £10,000 if the inquiry showed that the Spahlinger treatment afforded reasonable hope of substantial cures. We further offered, in the same event, to use our influence in raising larger sums to carry on M. Spahlinger's work. These proposals have never been accepted, and in the pamphlet just issued by M. Spahlinger there is no mention of them."

On Oct. 17th we find a notice with reference to the formation of a £41,000 company; Dr. Spahlinger has repeatedly asserted his refusal to commercialise his discoveries but he has obviously changed his mind.

"A great deal of interest, and some mystery, have been aroused in the City by the recent formation of a private company with a capital of £41,000 and with a prominent London surgeon and a medical member of Parliament on its board of directors. The *Daily Express* is able to reveal that the purpose of the company is to develop and test a vaccine prepared by M. Henri Spahlinger for the treatment of cattle.

It is not a company for the exploitation of what M. Spahlinger claims to be his "cure" for tuberculosis in human beings.

It is believed that Mr. Ian McPherson, former Minister of Pensions, was approached to be chairman of a proposed board of directors and that he did not agree to act.

The company is registered at Somerset House as Bovine Syndicate, Limited.

The directors of the company, as shown in the files, are Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice, K.C.M.G., Sir Bruce Bruce-Porter, M.D., and Sir Thomas Watts, M.D., who is Conservative M.P. for the Withington Division of Manchester."

A Most Admirable Society.

A couple of provincial papers have published an appreciation of the educational work carried out in London by the Swiss Mercantile Society (London Section of the Schweiz. Kaufmännischer Verein). The article is taken from the *Midland Daily Telegraph* (Oct. 15th).

"At the week-end I was brought into contact with the work of a most admirable society in London, known as the Swiss Mercantile Society. It conducts a school for young Swiss men and women who come over to England for the purpose of learning English. These young men and women are drawn from all kinds of professions and businesses in Switzerland, and something like 2,000 of them come over each year and remain in London for a period of some five months. After they have perfected themselves in English they are distributed all over the world, and members of the society are to be found in business positions in many parts of the British Empire as well as in foreign countries. In some places there is quite a group of them and they always form an English club. The valuable work which the Swiss Mercantile Society is doing is recognised by the Swiss Government and by leading Swiss business firms in the form of subsidies, and only modest fees have to be paid by the students for the tuition which they receive.

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES

BONDS.		Oct. 15		Oct. 23	
		Fr.	Sfr.	Fr.	Sfr.
Confederation 3% 1903	...	81.10	81.25		
5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln.	...	101.25	101.25		
Federal Railways 3½% A-K	...	86.15	86.10		
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	...	101.25	101.30		
SHARES.		Nom.		Oct. 15	
		Fr.	Sfr.	Fr.	Sfr.
Swiss Bank Corporation	...	500	836	835	
Crédit Suisse	...	500	943	939	
Union de Banques Suisses	...	500	757	957	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	3345	3310		
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	5400	5425		
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	...	1000	4207	4188	
S.A. Brown Boveri	...	350	595	590	
C. F. Bally	...	1000	1540	1500	
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	962	940		
Entreprises Suisses S.A.	1000	1240	1235		
Comp. de Navig. n. sur le Lac Léman	500	500	500		
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco	100	332	321		
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	...	500	887	883	

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SWISS, Mechanical and Electrical Engineer, with commercial experience, seeks post of trust.—Leopold Schaer, 522, Caledonian Road, London, N.7.

These young Swiss people are taught something more than the use of the English language. Every opportunity is taken of making them acquainted with English things and English ways. Parties are organised to visit the sights of London, and important centres of English life, such as the University towns, and lectures are delivered every week on all kinds of topics. Swiss people are very skilled in languages, and owing to the geographical and racial position of Switzerland many of them can speak French, German and Italian. Presumably this acquaintance with languages makes them apt in acquiring other ones, and certainly, judging by my own experience of them, I should say that they learn English rapidly and easily. They are a most delightful audience to address, and are bubbling over with youthful energy and enthusiasm."

How the Swiss Guards are Recruited.

From the *Universe* (Oct. 12th) :—

"Interesting details concerning the methods of recruiting the Swiss Guard at the Vatican have been published in the Italian Press by a Swiss correspondent.

The laws of Switzerland forbid the establishment of a recruiting office for any other Power, and aspirants for membership of the Swiss Guard must therefore apply personally to Rome.

Recruits must be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, must be unmarried, and not less than 5ft. 10in. in height.

In addition to a medical certificate they must also send a photograph, to satisfy requirements as to personal appearance, and they must also be qualified for military service in their own country.

The pay of the Guard is 600 liras a month, with a slight increase after a year's service, and a bonus at the end of every two years, which increases until, at the end of twenty years, a pension becomes payable.

Any member of the Guard may resign on giving two months' notice, a facility which attracts many young men with private resources, who find in this way a means of spending several years in Rome, during which they can pursue their studies while performing military service."

A Correction.

The *Radio Times* (Oct. 12th) has the following correction :—

"In a recent note on the Swiss National Programme I stated that the charming yodellers which formed part of that programme was performed by a choral society of waiters. This, it appears, was not so. No member of the Swiss Choral Society in question is connected with the hotel business. The dulcet tones were those of five bankers and three business men."

to which we add that we are looking forward with pleasure to the next performance of the "five bankers and three business men."

POUR L'AVIATION.

Lecteurs mes amis, je m'excuse si la chronique dont vous avez peut-être pris l'habitude vous a fait défaut quinze jours durant. J'ai, tout comme vous, pris des vacances, mais s'il vous est permis de revenir en Suisse ou d'errer le long de la Tamise pendant la belle saison, il n'est au journaliste que quelque jours de répit pris au hasard alors que déjà le brouillard emplit les plaines et attaque les versants des montagnes.

Selon ma louable habitude, je n'en ai pas moins emprunté la voie des airs et c'est précisément de ce moyen de locomotion dont je voudrais vous entretenir.

Trop souvent les journaux retraient les accidents qui se sont produits au quatre coins du monde. Ici, c'est un capotage au moment de l'atterrissage (l'instant le plus scabreux—il faut le reconnaître—dans tout raid aérien). Là, c'est un avion qui prend feu et dont les passagers sont carbonisés. Plus loin, c'est une tragique collision dans le brouillard implacable. Enfin, comme récemment sur le glacier de l'Aletsch, à quelque mille mètres du Jungfrauoch, c'est une jeune passagère qui, ayant imprudemment omis de nouer la ceinture de sûreté autour de ses jambes, ne peut pas suivre son appareil dans un vertigineux tourbillon, est jetée hors du fuselage et fait une chute fantastique sur le glacier...

Tout cela est bel et bien vrai. Mais ce qu'on ne vous dit pas, c'est que tandis que se déroulent ces regrettables mais isolés accidents, les grandes lignes commerciales de l'Europe sont parcourues journalièrement par des avions réguliers transportant de nombreux passagers, partant à des heures fixes, arrivant presque toujours en avance sur l'horaire prévu et à la totale satisfaction de ceux qui emploient ce moyen de locomotion.

Prenons au hasard de la carte géographique : chaque jour il part et arrive à Londres seize avions, à Paris vingt ; à Francfort s/Mein quarante-six ; à Cologne vingt-quatre ; à Berlin tout autant, à Bruxelles plus d'une demi-douzaine ; à Bâle, à Genève, dix, sans parler ici des aéroports d'Italie, d'Autriche et de bien d'autres gares internationales d'Allemagne au trafic incessant et certain.

Voulez-vous un exemple personnel ? Je suis parti de Genève fin octobre, malgré l'automne, la pluie, le brouillard, à huit heures du matin. Je me suis arrêté à Bâle, à Mannheim, à Francfort et j'étais à Cologne à deux heures précises de l'après-midi.

De là, en moins de deux heures, j'étais à Bruxelles. Il ne fallait guère plus de temps pour gagner Paris après avoir agréablement lûché dans la pimpante capitale belge. J'aurais pu facilement aller à Londres vous serrer la main et venir tranquillement me coucher le même soir dans un hôtel des Champs-Élysées...

Si maintenant vous quittez avec moi le Bourget à neuf heures et demie, vous serez à midi à Lyon et tranquillement de retour à deux heures à Genève. Et vous aurez accompli le trajet des bords du Rhône à ceux du Rhin avec retour par la Manche, les berges de la Seine et les tours de Fourvière, en seize heures de vol effectif au maximum. Mais c'est là un cas isolé et tout personnel. Nous sommes des milliers à avoir foi totale dans l'oiseau métallique et moderne, dans ces hardis pilotes pour qui le trajet quotidien n'est plus qu'une normale promenade.

L'aviation commerciale est aujourd'hui organisée sur tout le continent. (Vous avez peut-être vu la mère patrie la plus sûre, la plus confortable et la plus rapide des lignes qui de Croydon, par Paris et Bâle, vous ramène à Zurich en moins de six heures de vol.) Il faut que l'on s'en serve, il faut que, répondant à l'offre généreuse qui est faite aux voyageurs, ces derniers arrivent à préférer l'avion au chemin-de-fer. Ce n'est là qu'une habitude à prendre. Il faut savoir "oser" la première fois et le charme est si total que l'on ne saurait plus s'y soustraire.

Lecteurs mes amis, puissent ces quelques lignes vous donner confiance dans ce nouveau moyen de transport et quel que sera l'été prochain, le but de vos vacances, n'hésitez pas à recevoir le baptême de l'air. Vous arriverez à destination sans l'ombre d'un grain de poussière sur vos vêtements et vos narines ne seront point transformées en tuyaux de cheminée...Ce ne sera point là la chose la moins appréciable !

Erik.

EIDGENÖSSISCHE GLOSSEN.

Grosse Museen und kleines Interesse.

Die Schweiz besitzt ein Landesmuseum. Dieses Museum ist nicht klein. Aber es ist doch zu klein. (Jedes Museum der Welt ist zu klein!). Die Erklärung ist einfach. Wir wollen hier nicht auf sie eintreten.

Hingegen : Man ist im Nationalrat der Meinung gewesen, dass man die im Museum eingelagerten Bestände fruchtbringend verwerten könnte. Denn von dem Ueberfluss im Landesmuseum ist an andern Orten nichts zu verspüren. Eine Dezentralisierung solcher Gegenstände, die in Zürich im Depot ein sehr beschauliches, wenn auch nicht beschautes Dasein führen, würde manchen lokalen und kantonalen Sammlungen zu gute kommen. (Die Eignung des Schlosses Rapperswil braucht gar nicht besonders betont zu werden.) Es sah eine Zeitlang so aus, als ob dieser Weg beschritten werden dürfte. Laut Jahresbericht des Schweiz. Landesmuseums wird er nicht beschritten werden. Man fordert dafür eine Erweiterung des Landesmuseums, um alles richtig unterbringen zu können.

Dabei ist die Besucherzahl dieses Museums im Jahre 1927 wieder zurückgegangen. Es lohnt sich also wohl, wieder einmal ein Wort über das Museumsproblem zu verlieren : Ein Museum muss zwei Zwecke erfüllen. Es soll einerseits dem Publikum eine Schau bieten, die möglichst leicht verständlich, gut aufgemacht, gut ausgestellt notwendigerweise eine Auswahl darstellen muss. (Denn das Publikum wird sonst ermüdet, ganz abgesehen davon, dass es nicht in der Lage ist, selber die Auswahl zu treffen). Gleichzeitig aber soll das Museum dem Wissenschaftler das notwendige Studienmaterial möglichst lückenlos zur Verfügung halten. Das Ideal bestünde also darin, dass man ein Museum so anordnet, dass in einer Reihe von Kabinetten und Sälen das Schönste und Wesentlichste zur Schau gestellt würde (in möglichst wenig Exemplaren) und dass hinter jedem Saal, der eine bestimmte natürliche Gruppe von ausgewählten Gegenständen enthält, sich weitere Räumlichkeiten mit weiterem Material für den Öffneten, der sich besonders für diesen Zweig des Wissens oder Schaffens interessiert. (Es braucht sich dabei nicht ohne weiteres um Fachleute zu handeln, denn es gibt Dilettanten mit einer ungeheuren Wissbegierde für irgend ein Spezialgebiet, vor dem sich die andern Sterblichen bekreuzigen!).

Das wäre die ideale Forderung. Das Volk käme dabei auf seine Rechnung, und der Fachmann hätte sich nicht zu beklagen. In Tat und Wahrheit sind die meisten Museen mehr für den Fachmann (1 Promille) als für das Volk (999 Promille) gedacht. Man zeigt dem Publikum die ganze Fülle, man setzt gewöhnlich einen Stolz darein,

möglichst viel zu zeigen, "vollständig" zu sein, als ob sich der Mann aus dem Volke darum kümmerte. Und die Folge ? Die Besucherzahl sinkt ; doch mögen auch weniger Leute kommen, der Raum-mangel wird dennoch grösser, weil ein Sammler nie aufhören kann zu sammeln...

Meiner Meinung nach hätte ein Landesmuseum in erster Linie dem Volke zu dienen (in der Technik seines Ausstellens). Einem Wissenschaftler geht nichts verloren, wenn er beim Studium eines Spezialgebietes den einen gewirkten Teppich oder die eine Hiebwafler in Rapperswil, Winterthur oder Liestal suchen müsste, statt hübsch und bequem das allermeiste in einem Saal oder Keller des Landesmuseums beisammen zu haben. Dem Volke aber geht das Wesentliche verloren, wenn man ihm nicht ein Besinnen auf das Wichtige, die innere Sammlung dank einer beschränkten Sammlung ermöglicht.

Je mehr unsere Zeit jenen Göttern opfert, die nicht mehr in den stillen Räumen eines Museums (auf deutsch "Musentempel") anzutreffen sind, umsomehr müssen wir dafür sorgen, dass diese Museen so anziehend, so verlockend, so packend wie möglich gestaltet werden, sofern es uns um unsere Kultur zu tun ist. Die Fachmänner würden auch noch auf ihre Rechnung kommen wenn im Landesmuseum nur die Hälfte der Nummern ausgestellt wäre ; das Land aber kommt nicht auf seine Rechnung, wenn im Namen der Wissenschaft ein Museum so gross wird, dass man vor lauter Bäumen den Wald nicht mehr sieht !

Grosse Tabellen und handliche Zusammenfassungen.

Man kann unseren Aemtern nicht vorwerfen, dass sie nichts tun. Man kann ihnen höchstens vorwerfen, dass sie nicht genügend dafür tun, die Produkte ihres Bienenfleisses (siehe die grossen Tabellenwerke) dem Volke zugänglich zu machen. Dieser Gedanke drängte sich mir wieder auf, als ich kürzlich das "hydrographische Jahrbuch der Schweiz" durchblättere. Es gibt wirklich kein besseres Wort als Bienenfloss. Und unser Volk weiss nur wenig von ihm—wegen ein bisschen Bescheidenheit, die nicht am richtigen Platze steht, wegen ein bisschen Demokratie, die aus dem Tun nicht viel Aufhebens macht, wegen ein bisschen Unbeholfenheit in einer Welt, die ganz andere Posaunenstösse gewöhnt ist.

Und doch müsste gerade in einer Demokratie der Angestellte des Staates in einem viel engeren Kontakte mit dem Volke stehen. Nicht um seine Gunst buhlend. Das ist nicht nötig und noch weniger wünschenswert, sondern um den Bienenfloss auswirken zu lassen. Wir brauchen auf den meisten Arbeitsgebieten neben den grossen und teuren, für Fachleute bestimmten Publikationen kleine Zusammenfassungen mit viel Bildmaterial, um die Früchte der Arbeit weiteren Kreisen zugänglich zu machen. Ich denke dabei gerade auch an eine Arbeit wie die über die "Energieversorgung im Winter." Das ist eine Angelegenheit, die eigentlich jeden Strombezügler (und wer ist keiner) interessiert. Ich bin überzeugt, dass ein "Jahrbuch über Wasser und Strom" ein Erfolg sein könnte. Oder warum nicht ein Büchlein mit dem Titel nach bekannter Manier "Was muss der Schweizer von der schweizerischen Wasserkraft wissen ?" An Material fehlt es uns nicht. (Es geht uns wie dem Landesmuseum : wir haben eher zuviel als zu wenig). Es fehlt uns nur noch an der rechten Form, dies Material, auf das Wichtigste beschränkt, doch mit aller Sachlichkeit dem Volke unter die Augen und damit schliesslich auch in Herz und Sinn zu legen.

Denn : Alle wirtschaftlichen Verbände haben heute ihre Sekretariate und, was noch wichtiger ist, ihren Pressedienst. Hat beispielsweise das Wasserwirtschaftsamt einen Pressedienst ? Wahrscheinlich nicht. Was es jedenfalls heute schon haben dürfte, wäre die Form von kleinen Publikationen wie die vorgeschlagene über Winterenergie. Gerade in den Zeiten, wo bestimmte Probleme wie das Klingnauerwerk zur Diskussion stehen, könnte eine solche Publikation zur Aufhellung des Problems grosse Dienste leisten.

Bis jetzt sind es eigentlich bloss die Bundesbahnen und die Telefonverwaltung, die richtige Propaganda treiben. Ich sehe nicht ein, warum nicht auch ein Wasserwirtschaftsamt, ein Gesundheitsamt Propaganda treiben sollte—zum Wohle des Ganzen. Denn die Andersgesinnten werden ihre Propaganda schon besorgen. Warum aber soll gerade in einer Demokratie nicht gleiches Recht für alle gelten ?

Drei Städte und eine Weltstadt.

Jedesmal, wenn ich das schweizerische Städtedreieck Basel—Bern—Zürich—Basel in sechs Stunden abfahre (mit der Eisenbahn, nicht mit der Flugmaschine), denke ich wieder daran, was diese drei Städte in gemeinsamer, kultureller Arbeit leisten könnten. Ihre Auswirkung könnte so gross sein wie die einer Weltstadt vom Range Kopenhagens, doch immer noch sind die Widerstände unbegreiflich zäh.

Man erlebt es bei den Fussballwettkämpfen, dass eine nationale Mannschaft Tausende in einer Stadt zusammenführt. Sollte es wirklich bloss dem Fussball möglich sein, drei Städte, ja, die ganze Schweiz, zu einer Leistung zu sammeln ?

—Felix Moeschlin in 'N.Z.'