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HOME NEWS

The newly elected Swiss Parliament will assemble on December 3rd; three days later the elections of the Federal Council and the Chancellor will take place.

Among the 198 members of the new National Council 42 are newcomers; 23 old members failed to secure re-election and 19 had definitely retired.

The retirement of Federal Councillor Chuard—our Home Secretary—has given rise in the Swiss Press to speculations as to a general change in the heads of the different departments. In the first instance it is expected that the vacancy on the Federal Council will be filled by another Vaudois, Councillor Porchet, who is a prominent Agrarian leader in his canton; he is credited with having expressed the wish to superintend a ministry where his past experience and present activity stand him in good stead. Other rumours pretend that the political department may be handed over to Federal Councillor Haab, now at the head of the post and railway department, which latter may possibly be put under Federal Councillor Musy, the present "Chancellor of the Exchequer." Federal Councillor Motta would then turn over to the Treasury.

The Federal Council has increased the annual subsidy to the Basle Fair from Frs. 30,000 to Frs. 45,000 and that to the Comptoir in Lausanne from Frs. 15,000 to Frs. 22,000.

In the elections for the Grosser Rat of the canton Schaffhausen the Communists have ousted the Socialists altogether; the latter now do not hold a single seat. In Schaffhausen itself the Communists secured 10 seats against 19 of the other parties; one of their nominees who obtained the necessary votes was disqualified as he had lost his civil rights. In the great industrial centre of Neuhausen five Communists were returned again, the other parties also retaining their former four seats; the president of the local municipal council is a Communist.

The female suffrage movement in Switzerland is to be energetically brought to the front. An initiative committee has been formed at Berne which will in due course petition parliament to legislate the necessary alterations in our Constitution.

In order to preserve and renovate the Schloss Spiez, which owes its existence to Rudolf von Habsburg and at the time of the battle of Murten was tenanted by Adrian von Bubenberg, an appeal for the necessary funds is being launched; Frs. 25,000 have already been subscribed privately and a lottery is under contemplation.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Der Verkehr während der Saifa.—Nach einer Zusammenstellung der Bahnhofskontrolle Bern sind während der fünf Wochen Saifa im Hauptbahnhof der Bundesstadt rund 900,000 Reisende eingetroffen, also fast ein Viertel der Gesamtbevölkerung der Schweiz. Neben den fahrplanmässigen Zügen mussten 1343 Extrazüge geführt werden und zwar an Werktagen deren 25 bis 40, an Sonntagen bedeutend mehr. Den Rekord stellte der 9. September auf, wo zu den Ausstellungsbesuchern noch die Teilnehmer an der Bäuerentagung und am schweizerischen Abstinenztag kamen. Zur Beförderung jener gewaltigen Menschenmenge mussten 112 Extrazüge eingestellt werden und es ließen an jenem denkwürdigen Sonntag im Bahnhof Bern nicht weniger als 3250 Personen- und Güterwagen ein und aus. An den Handgepäckschaltern wurden in den fünf Ausstellungswochen rund 90,600 Gepäckstücke ausgestellt, über 1600 Fahrräder wurden in Verwahrung genommen. Die Ausstellung brachte aber auch einen ganz ansehnlichen Güterverkehr. An Ausstellungsgut wurden nach Bern befördert 367 Gepäcksendungen, 358 Eilgutsendungen im Gewicht von 41 Tonnen, 889 Frachtgutsendungen im Gewicht von 221 Tonnen und 58 Wagenladungen mit 550 Tonnen.

—*Sursee r. Anzeiger.*

LONDON, NOVEMBER 10, 1928.

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L'internement des buveurs.—Depuis la mise en application de la loi sur le relèvement et l'internement des buveurs, 93 décisions d'internement et de relèvement ont été prises par la Chambre des tutelles. Une partie a fait bénéficier les individus qui en étaient l'objet de sursis d'une durée de 6 mois à une année.

Pour les récidivistes, le sursis ne fixe pas de limites : à la première infraction, on les soustrait à l'action néfaste de l'alcool.

Les ivrognes hommes et femmes sont internés à Devens sur Saint-Aubin, Bellechasse et Etagnières pour les hommes, à Bétheds pour les femmes.

Les registres "d'immatriculation" sont tenus par MM. Joseph Dupont, secrétaire, pour le commissariat de police, et Ernest Corboz, pour le Département.

Les 93 buveurs internés se répartissent ainsi : 44 Genevois, 15 Vaudois, 11 Bernois, 5 Fribourgeois, 5 Neuchâtelois, 4 Valaisans, 2 Zurichois, 2 François, et pour les cantons des Grisons, de Lucerne, Argovie, Soleure, Zoug, un interné chacun.

—*Pa Suisse, Genève.*

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

The Swiss Elections and the English Press.

The references in the English Press with regard to our elections, though correct as to actual results, were naturally influenced by the political views which the particular paper represents. We will commence with *The Times*, which on October 31st gave the following report :

"The results of the election of the National Council not only show that Socialist progress was checked by the united efforts of the Bourgeois parties, but also that there has been a swing to the right, as proved by the gain of four seats by Roman Catholic Conservatives in Eastern Switzerland.

The Socialists, who boasted of obtaining a majority, have secured 50 seats, a gain of one, at the expense of the Communists, who now have two members instead of three. While the left wing representatives were defeated in the contests for the Council of States, their representation in the National Council remains as it was, that is, 52 deputies.

The Radical Party has secured 58 seats, a loss of one, the centre parties 32, and the Roman Catholic Conservatives 46. The election aroused great interest in Switzerland, and the number of voters was the largest recorded for the past nine years at a parliamentary election, a sign that the menaces of the Socialist Party, which had inscribed a capital levy on its programme, had some effect on the apathy of the Bourgeois electorate."

To state that Socialist progress has been checked and that there has been a swing to the right is misleading. It is true that the left (Socialists and Communists) have failed to increase their representatives—at the previous elections in 1925 they gained six seats—but a comparison of the actual votes cast gives an entirely different picture. The Socialist votes show an increase of over 26,000 whilst the gain of the Catholic Conservatives is barely 13,000, but the latter, thanks to the peculiarities of our voting system, have actually secured four additional seats. Equally remarkable is the fact that the Radicals have a similar increase of over 13,000 votes to their credit but their strength in the new council is only 58 against 59 in the old.

The following is from the *Manchester Guardian* (Oct. 30th) :

"Although the result of the general elections to the Swiss Parliament have not yet been officially published, it is already clear that the Socialists will be disappointed in their hope of becoming strong enough to take part in the Government. They have won only one or at most two seats, which means that the Radical party remains the strongest group in Parliament. A continuation of the Government Coalition between Radicals and Catholics, with the support of the Peasants and Liberals, is now beyond doubt. The Catholics and Socialists are the only political parties that will have more representatives than in the previous Parliament, and the Catholic gains are larger than those of the Socialists. The Radicals, Liberals, Peasants and Communists have all lost. One may estimate that the new Second Chamber will be composed of 58 Radicals, 50 Socialists, 46 Catholics, 31 Peasants, 6 Liberals, 2 Communists, and 5 members of various small groups.

During the electoral campaign the Catholics won much success with their propaganda for the

British industrial peace movement, which they indicated as a movement for the introduction of democratic ideas into economic life. The Swiss Socialist party belongs to the extreme Left wing of the International Socialist movement, and has much greater sympathies for Moscow than the other Socialist parties in Europe. They are still hostile to the League of Nations. All this has made impossible the *rapprochement* between them and the Radical party, which at Basle and Geneva successfully combined with all other Socialist parties for expelling the only two Socialist members of the Senate."

If we have anything to add it would be an expression of doubt and surprise "that the Swiss Socialist Party has much greater sympathies for Moscow than the other Socialist parties in Europe."

The *Morning Post* (Oct. 30th) under the heading "Big drop in Communist vote" has the following report :

"The results of the General Election for State Council and National Council of Switzerland indicate no important changes in the composition of these Chambers. Polling took place on Saturday and yesterday, and the continuous rain affected the poll.

The outstanding feature of the State Council elections is the loss of only two seats hitherto held by the Socialists. The Radicals retained twenty, the Radical-Democrats gained one, making a new total of twenty-one, and the Catholic Conservatives succeeded in holding eighteen. The Liberal Democrat and the Social Political group each retained a single seat.

In place of two of the Peasants Party the new Council has three members of the Peasants Artisans and Bourgeois Party. The general tendency appears to be a move in the direction of the moderate parties. The definite allocation of seats in the National Council under the new system of proportional representation is as yet unknown, but the number of votes cast for the respective party lists suggests no drastic changes. The Socialists polled heavily in the larger towns, but they have little hold upon the country districts.

The Communists presented numerous lists of candidates, but for the most part met with no success. At Zurich, for example, the Communist poll dropped from the 133,222 in 1925 to 112,661 at this election. The Geneva canton scraped together only 1,740 out of a total of 222,363 cast, despite desperate efforts to gain working class support."

Actually there is a slight increase of 111 in the Communist vote (14,948); the latter, however, does not represent 2% of the total votes cast (about 801,000) which would show that their strength and influence is very much over-rated.

Somewhat at sea both as regards figures and anticipations is the article which appeared on the eve of the elections in the *Daily Herald* (Oct. 29th) :

"To-day's elections to the Swiss National Council, one of the bodies forming the Federal Assembly, see the climax of the Socialist Party's cumulative bid for power.

Since the last General Election, in 1925, several by-elections have shown the marked progress achieved by Socialist efforts. Up to that time, from 1902, the volume of Socialist votes cast had risen from 64,000 to 195,000, and the number of deputies returned from seven to 32, including three Communists.

Hopes are entertained, with good reason, of gaining still more seats to-day (Sunday), so enabling the Socialists to beat the Radicals, the strongest party hitherto, who polled 225,000 votes in 1925.

The elections are conducted on the proportional representation system, and hence may yield an eleventh-hour surprise.

In 19 Swiss cantons, 90 lists have been presented, including 727 candidates of all parties for 198 seats.

The Socialist Party has 19 lists with 150 candidates, while the Communists have eight lists with 59 candidates.

The Socialist programme embodies a campaign for the 48-hour week, the limitation of trusts and cartels, the improvement of housing, a fight against the abuse of alcohol and against tuberculosis, the realisation of social insurance, opposition to military expenditure and excesses, the revision of the system of prevention of accidents, a stand for the liberty of public meetings, and the right of asylum for foreign political refugees, and an attack on big business domination,

through the bourgeois Press, of the so-called neutral sources of information.

The left had, of course, 52 and not 32 deputies in the previous council and the exact number of votes recorded in 1925 by the Radicals amounted to 207,696 and not 225,000; with this year's increase the Radicals only polled a total of 220,800.

As an item of interest in this connection we reproduce part of an appeal published in the *Dublin Evening Mail* (Oct. 29th) :-

"It is instructive to compare the situation in Switzerland, for example, with the situation in Northern Ireland. In Switzerland there are at least three races—German, French and Italian; there are two religions—Protestant and Catholic. There is no dictatorship; yet the Government of Switzerland is one of the most stable in the world. Why? Because of the traditional regard by the majority for the rights and privileges of the minorities. The Government of Switzerland does not consist of members of one party. It includes members of two religions; it often includes members of three races. The Government is elected by parliament; it is the executive committee of parliament; it works in harmony with parliament; it is stable."

Does the abolition of P.R. without the consent of the minorities represent a higher stage of political development than the principle of fair representation adopted by Switzerland? Switzerland has a population of 4,000,000. This is larger than that of Northern Ireland, but many ignore the lessons which Switzerland can teach on the ground that it is a small country."

The above is written by the secretary of the English "Proportional Representation Society" with the object of informing public opinion in Northern Ireland, where it is intended to abolish the existing law of proportional representation. We very much appreciate the writer's remarks, but it is probably not news to him that the blessings of P.R. are not so universally accepted in Switzerland as he would like his Irish readers to believe.

The Valleys of the Forgotten.

Under this title the *Daily News* (Oct. 29th) gives a pathetic pen picture of the loneliness which with the closing of the passes is to become the lot of those who live in some of the mountain valleys.

"The Alpine passes have been closed till next June. All who are left in the remote fastnesses of the Alps are imprisoned by the snows that choke the precipice-roads for eight months.

I was a passenger in the last coach to cross the Furka and Grimsel Passes. We carried back the "good-byes" of the lone dwellers of the Valleys of the Forgotten, whose prison gates we locked behind us. People may die up there and children are born without succour. Avalanches, more likely than ever after the hot summer, may sweep down upon them, and the chalet that stands up there on the mountainside may have vanished when the snows melt. Yet they smile with the fatalism of tradition and seem content.

After a treacherous trip through the gorges in the mist and over the snowbound road, past the Swiss army drilling in the snows at Andermatt we reached Realp, at the foot of the Furka Pass.

The pass dwellers had come in for provisions, and fathers, mothers and children, laden with necessities, knelt in the snow in the village square receiving the farewell blessing of the brown-smocked, bearded priest standing barefoot save for his sandals. Nearby a St. Bernard strained at his load of flour and potatoes. They rose and gave us a cheer as we passed.

Up the side of the Galenstock, near the summit of the Furka, was a little chalet; a woman was hanging out clothes and a child was playing with a goat. They hailed us and the driver clambered up to bid them good-bye. As they talked they glanced with anxious foreboding at the snow-cap, hanging like a snow drift on the eaves, undermined by the long hot summer. When the heavy snows came to add their weight, who knew...? But they shrugged their shoulders and laughed gaily as they shouted a cheery "au revoir."

We went on through the white desolation to the crest of the Pass, on the saddle of the Furkahorn and Muttenhorn, over 8,000 feet high. In a chalet there an elderly couple were preparing for the long silence. A stockade of firewood had been built between the chalet and the snow slides. Several goats and cows were tethered within the stockade, munching at grass that would soon be finished. In the store casks of oil, tubs of pickled meat, smoked sides, and piles of provisions and fodder were stacked solid.

The old Swiss was hoisting heavy stones on to the roof to hold it down when the blizzards came. I asked him if he was not afraid of the loneliness. He smiled and as answer pulled his flute from his hip pocket and played a few notes on it. Then he took me into his little workshop and showed me his delicate carving tools and his blocks of yellow pine and nuggets of ivory and, rough-hewn, a life-size bear that was growing out of a tree-trunk.

His white-haired wife took me into her parlour, where her little handloom, her lace-block and her sewing machine stood and she showed me her store of yarn and wool.

In a little hut perched, like an eagle's eyrie, in a crevice of the precipice alongside the Rhône glacier, three men will spend the winter keeping watch upon that mighty Niagara of block ice. To anyone but these hardy, mind-cloistered mountaineers an eight months' existence in that desolation of snow and ice would mean slow madness. But they have their chessboard...

All those who could had fled from the little hamlet of Gletsch on the cantonal boundary near the source of the Rhône, to Brig, farther down the river. A few, however, remained, including the policeman, resplendent in his epaulettes and red cape. Women were in tears here, but the men waved off with grave composure.

On the road from the summit of the Grimsel Pass (over 7,000 feet high) down to the Hospice in the Bernese Oberland we met a big lorry rushing through with provisions. There was scarcely room to pass and no means of turning back. The lorry was on the precipice side, with a thousand feet drop below. The drivers, white-faced, tried to edge past.

Our coach tore the bushes from the mountainside. Then our wheels locked, and a cry of horror went up as, in trying to wrench free, the lorry was thrust nearer the brink. We backed and tried again. This time the lorry tore our footboard off and, after 20 minutes of "nerves," we were free. We descended to the Hospice. The Grimsel was crossed and another door locked.

At Meiringen the "closing of the passes" ended with sunset, and we looked back to the mountains and the "Valleys of the Forgotten" and marvelled at human constancy."

World's Wealth.

In the course of a very instructive article regarding the effect of the last war on the world's material welfare Sir. D. Drummond Fraser gives an interesting comparison of the capital per head estimated to be held by the different nations; Switzerland comes fourth in the list. The following extract is taken from the *Financial Times* (Oct. 27th) :-

"No estimate of present-day national wealth can claim even approximate accuracy, but a fair idea of the relative position of the leading countries of the world can be obtained from a series of statistics put forward a year or two ago by an American authority. A moment's consideration will show that absolute figures are of little use for the purpose.

The aggregate wealth of the Soviet Union is much greater than that of Switzerland, but the standard of living of the individual Swiss citizen is demonstrably higher than that of the dweller in the territories of the former Russian Empire. If, therefore, estimates of total wealth are related to the numbers of the population sharing in the proceeds, we find that the United States heads the list with a figure of £585 per head, Great Britain coming next with about £500.

It will be seen that, despite the pessimistic utterances which are all too numerous regarding the position to-day, Great Britain remains a "wealthy" country, judged by international standards. Next in the list comes Canada, with £486 per head (a figure which has probably registered an appreciable increase since the estimate was first made), and Switzerland with £472.

Australia—a continent of vast material resources shared among a small population—is estimated to have a per capita national wealth of £361. Among the larger States of Europe, France's wealth is put at £273 and Germany at £250 per head, and among the smaller, in addition to Switzerland, mentioned already, Belgium with £288 and Holland with £233 make a good showing, both being countries of intensive economic exploitation.

The Japanese figure is £111. Examples of great countries having relatively low standard of living as a result of a national wealth considerable in the aggregate being divided among an enormous population are furnished by British India, with an estimated national wealth of £29 per head, and China, with no more than £9.

On the whole, it is true to say that, while the world's wealth is steadily increasing year by year, the present rate of progress is slower than that prevailing during the last decade before the war. To some extent this was an inevitable feature. The earlier years of the twentieth century were distinguished throughout the world by a burst of unprecedented economic development, and the pace was probably too hot to last.

For part of the setback since the war the world has itself to blame, as the Geneva Economic Conference agreed. The policy of restricting international trade by the erection of formidable tariff barriers has exercised an appreciable influence in retarding the growth of the world's wealth, and for this reason the efforts now being made to arrest this tendency should be warmly welcomed."

DAYLIGHT SERVICE BETWEEN ENGLAND & SWITZERLAND.

In connection with the Swiss Winter Sports this year arrangements have been made to run the Day Express from London to Basle and vice-versa on the following days :

Outwards.—Tuesdays and Fridays from 18th December to 29th January.

Inwards.—Wednesdays and Saturdays from 19th December to 30th January.

The timetable of this service will be as under:

London (Victoria)	dep. 9.00
Folkestone Hbr.	arr. 10.43
Boulogne Mme.	arr. 12.20
Boulogne Mme.	dep. 13.09
Laon	arr. 16.00
Belfort	arr. 21.26
Mulhouse	arr. 22.14
Basle	arr. 22.45 G.T.
Basle	arr. 23.45 C.E.T.
Basle	dep. 10.25 C.E.T.
Basle	dep. 9.25 G.T.
Mulhouse	dep. 9.56
Belfort	arr. 10.39
Laon	arr. 16.02
Boulogne Mme.	arr. 19.00
Boulogne Mme.	dep. 19.10
Folkestone Hbr.	arr. 20.40
Folkestone Hbr.	dep. 21.10
London (Victoria)	arr. 22.50

It is, of course, understood that this service will not run in the outwards direction on Christmas Day, 25th December. It will also not run in the inwards direction on Boxing Day, 26th December.

This day train, in each direction, will be composed of 1st and 2nd class accommodation, corridor throughout, and will have a restaurant car for all the journey. This service, the quickest to and from Switzerland, will appeal to passengers who dislike night travelling.

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