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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

Federal Councillor Scheurer, head of the Military Department, in an address delivered at Zurich, expressed the opinion that the Swiss army was in a position to successfully resist an armed attack by any one of the great surrounding Powers.

\*\*\*

The Federal Council has granted a three years' leave of absence to Prof. Andreæ, of the Federal Polytechnic in Zurich, so as to enable him to take up an educational appointment offered to him by the Egyptian Government.

\*\*\*

Dr. Ed. Kellenberger, of the Federal Finance Department, has been offered by the Persian government the post of Director of the Persian Finance Administration.

\*\*\*

A request by the Socialists of the canton Aargau that the recent increase in the salaries of the Federal Councillors should be made the subject of a national referendum, has been rejected by the Central Committee of the Party.

\*\*\*

Negotiations are said to be proceeding for a complete amalgamation of the chocolate concern Nestlé, Peter, Cailler and Kohler, though no official statement has yet been issued.

\*\*\*

During a ski excursion by lady enthusiasts on the Harder, near Thun, Miss Elsa Selhofer, a schoolteacher from Berne, lost her way, her body being subsequently discovered by a search party at the foot of a rocky declivity.

\*\*\*

Mr. Arnold Billwiler, a well-known personality in the Swiss brewing industry and former proprietor of the "Schützengraben" Brewery in St. Gall, died in the latter town after a prolonged illness.

\*\*\*

A motor-cycle, in an endeavour to overtake a car on the road near Payerne (Vaud) dashed against a telegraph pole and both the driver and pillion-riders, Mr. Ami Bettex and Mr. Robert Nydegger, riding at Granges-Marnand, were seriously injured.

\*\*\*

Falling down a "snow board" on the Klingenstein, Mr. Emil Rieter, a Zurich municipal employee, was buried in the deep snow and suffocated before he could be extricated.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**"Unsere Auslandschweizer."**—Am dritten staatsbürglerischen Vortrage sprach Herr Weber-Greminger aus Basel, der bekannte Pionier auf dem Gebiete der staatsbürglerischen Erziehung, über das Thema "Unsere Auslandschweizer." Als Veranstalter und Leiter von Staatsbürgerkursen in den verschiedenen grossen Schweizerkolonien des Kontinents und aktiver Teilnehmer an allen seit 1919 stattgefundenen Tagungen der Auslandschweizer war Herr Weber-Greminger, wie vielleicht sonst kaum jemand, in der Lage, über die Lebensbedingungen, die Gesinnung, speziell die Einstellung zur Heimat und die grosse Bedeutung der Erhaltung des nationalen Gedankens bei denselben zu sprechen. Die Frage, wieviele Schweizer im Auslande leben, ist schwer zu beantworten, weil manche sich erst den Konsulaten melden, wenn Not an den Mann kommt. Nach ziemlich zuverlässigen Schätzungen dürften in den europäischen Staaten 240,000 und überseeisch gegen 160,000 Schweizer leben, was im Vergleich zur Einwohnerzahl des Landes sagt, dass jeder zehnte Mann seine Existenz im Auslands sucht. Nicht uninteressant ist die Feststellung, dass die Zahl der Ausländer mit rund 400,000 in unserem Lande der Zahl der Auslandschweizer ziemlich gleichkommt. Die Grosszahl unserer Auswanderer lebt in Frankreich, nämlich 150,000, und von diesen in Paris 50,000-60,000, dann folgen Deutschland mit 50,000, Italien 15,000, England 10,000, Österreich 6,000 usw. Ueberseeisch sind nach den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika 130,000-140,000, nach Brasilien 10,000, Kanada 8,000, Argentinien 12,000 usw. ausgewandert. Weniger gross ist die Zahl der Schweizer in Afrika, Asien und Australien, nach welchen letzteren Landen sich aber gegenwärtig eine vermehrte Abwanderung fühlbar macht. Als

höchst erfreulicher Beweis für die patriotische Gesinnung ist die Tatsache erwähnt worden, dass am 1. August 1914 25,000 waffenfähige Auslandschweizer heimgekehrt sind, um dem Vaterland zu dienen. Unter den Auslandschweizern sind alle Berufsstände vertreten. Heute ist in der Abwanderung ein kleiner Rückgang zu verzeichnen, aber dennoch ist dieselbe noch so bedeutungsvoll, dass ihr die grösste Aufmerksamkeit zu schenken ist. Der Referent verbreitete sich über eine Reihe von Fragen, die sich der junge Mann vorlegen muss, bevor er den wichtigen Schritt unternimmt, und wies besonders auf die Gratis-Auskunft des Eidg. Auswanderungsamtes in Bern hin.

Es ist nun eine der vornehmsten Aufgaben, die Ausgewanderten, die oft in der zweiten und dritten Generation noch eine rührende Anhänglichkeit an die angestammte Heimat zeigen, dem Schweizerthum zu erhalten, und in dieser Beziehung hat Herr Weber-Greminger, in fesselnden Ausführungen dargetan, wie dies geschehen kann. Da gilt es in erster Linie, zwischen den Auslandschweizern und unserm Lande geistige Brücken zu schlagen, ihnen geographische, geschichtliche, wirtschaftliche und verfassungsrechtliche Kenntnisse zu kommen zu lassen, mit einem Worte, sie Land und Leute kennen zu lehren, denn nur was man kennt, kann man lieben. Die Auslandschweizer verfolgen mit grossem Interesse die Vorgänge der Heimat und sind über manche Fragen oft weit besser orientiert als manche im Lande. Daher dürfte in Anbetracht ihrer grossen Zahl (400,000) die Frage der Gewährung von Nationalratssitzen nicht umbesehen von der Hand zu weisen sein. Als segensreich haben sich die in den Nachkriegszeit in den grösseren Zentren der Auslandschweizer durchgeführten Staatsbürgerkurse erwiesen. Der Referent, der selbst in zwölf Städten solche geleitet hat, wusste viel Interessantes davon zu erzählen. Grundpfeiler für die Erhaltung des Schweizerthums im Ausland sind aber insbesondere die Schweizer Schulen. Sie alle kämpfen mit grossen finanziellen Schwierigkeiten und können nur mit grossen persönlichen Opfern der Beteiligten aufrecht erhalten werden. Es war für den Berichterstatter und gewiss alle Anwesenden bemüht, erfahren zu müssen, dass unsere eidgenössischen Behörden für die nationale Bedeutung derselben so geringes Verständnis besitzen, dass sie ihnen insgesamt nur 15,000 Fr. aus dem grossen Bundesbudget zukommen lassen. Es ist Wunsch aller Staatsbürger, dass hiefür bedeutend mehr Mittel flüssig gemacht werden und auch dass, im Sinne des Referenten, der Ertrag der Bundesfeierkarte 1930 den Auslandschweizer schulen zugute kommt.

*St. Galler Tagblatt.*

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### Switzerland and the League.

The last issue of the *Fortnightly Review* deals with the recent disarmament proposals of the Russian delegate in Geneva and has the following reference to Switzerland:—

"Unfortunately, the British Labour Party has never sufficiently applied its mind to considering a quite different example—that of Switzerland, which is an armed Power, and a well-armed Power, but is not the cause of any uneasiness to its neighbours. That is not because Switzerland is small. Europe is kept awake at nights thinking about the intentions of States smaller and less well equipped. It is because armament in Switzerland is really defensive and because everybody in Europe knows that Switzerland has no aggressive designs. Probably the Swiss spend more than they like on war machinery and would gladly lighten the burden if they felt safe to do so; but it is not in the least probable that they would relinquish effective armament of the community. Four or five years ago a wave of the Russian movement affected one of their great manufacturing towns and Communists proposed to take charge. Down came the soldier peasants with the rifles that every man of them had been taught to use, and they asserted the power of government in a democratic country. Artillery was in that case not needed; but when it comes to fighting in a town, the use of artillery may prevent a great sacrifice of valuable life. The affair in Dublin in 1916 would have been over in twenty-four hours had even one eighteen-pounder been available at once—and the results, morally and politically, would have been no different."

One cannot, of course, argue unreservedly from the case of Switzerland to that of countries like Great Britain or France with many outlying contacts, but the Swiss model is far better worth bearing in mind to build ideas about than the

protestations of M. Litvinoff. It presents two special features, and the first is that Switzerland, more definitely than any other State in Europe, has acquired the will to peace, though Sweden is a strong competitor in this excellence. But the second feature is that Switzerland's frontiers are internationally guaranteed. We are, I think, beginning to see that there will be no stable peace in Europe till every European frontier is under a similar joint guarantee of the European Powers."

We are not much impressed with the suggested joint guarantee of European Powers, but we recommend the above extract for perusal and digestion to those Genevese school teachers who clamour for the abolition of the Swiss Army. It seems nothing short of a scandal that the instruction of our boyhood should be entrusted to irresponsible faddists. Concluding his critical remarks, the writer referred to says, "We have got this benefit at least from the League of Nations, that Europe as a community is far more conscious of the danger points and makes more effort to prevent a threatened conflagration."

### The Co-operative Movement.

The phenomenal development of the co-operative movement in Switzerland is illustrated in the following article from the *Co-operative News* (Jan. 7th). Many of our readers will probably remember one of the original founders, the genial "Papa Schäribus," who taught book-keeping and arithmetic at the Basle Commercial College. At that time many budding politicians joined the ranks of this movement, it being considered the shortest way to promotion and distinction.

"Swiss co-operators are always watching with great interest the advance of our movement in other countries, and it was with a feeling of real delight that they learned from the English co-operative Press of the striking success the movement has again achieved in the British Isles. But they themselves have no reason to be discontented with their own progress, for, taken as a whole, the co-operative movement in Switzerland has made good headway since the last report was issued.

The Union of Swiss Consumers' Societies (Verband Schweizerischer Konsumvereine), which embraces practically four-fifths of the distributive co-operative membership of the country, has in the course of 1927, increased its turnover by about 12,000,000 francs (£480,000). The total sales, which amounted to 126,000,000 francs in 1926, rose to 138,000,000 (£5,520,000) in this year.

In all its departments the Union has had a busy time. The productive activities of our movement are mainly carried on by special societies. So far as reports of these societies are already to hand, they also indicate a good state of affairs. The shoe manufacture, till 1925 managed by the board of directors of the Union but then converted into a separate co-operative undertaking, was fully occupied, and the goods produced were promptly taken over by the members. The same can be said of the two co-operative corn mills, especially that of Zurich, which is the most important of all similar establishments in the country. The Popular Insurance Society (La Prévoyance Populaire Suisse) increased the amount of its insured capital by nearly 3,000,000 francs, which brought the total up to 25,000,000 francs.

A new undertaking, worth while mentioning, is the establishment of a co-operative and trade unions bank, which began its activity on January 1st, 1928. Of the initial capital of this bank, amounting to 3,500,000 (£140,000) 2,000,000 were subscribed by the Union, 1,000,000 by the trade unions, and the rest by other bodies. There is every reason to hope that this collective enterprise will help to create a better understanding between the two movements, which, just as in other countries, were hitherto not always on sufficiently friendly terms.

In these last days the Swiss Union of Consumers' Societies, together with some other co-operative organisations, have acquired a beautiful new building at Basle for the sum of 800,000 francs (£32,000). The Co-operative House, as the new property has already been named, is well fitted for lodging the new bank, but several other departments will find shelter under its roof.

The Co-operative Union there intends to open a first-class bookselling store. This will contribute to give a wider range to the activities of the publishing department of the Union, which, in the course of the year, has made greater

efforts than before to satisfy the propaganda requirements of the movement. Among the pamphlets and books recently issued by this department we quote an "Outline of the History of Co-operative Thought" (Umriss einer genossenschaftlichen Ideengeschichte), by Henri Faucherre. This book of 212 pages, dealing with the influence of some Swiss co-operative thinkers and pioneers (Edouard Raoux, Professor Joh. Friedrich Schär, Dr. Mundling, etc.) has proved to be a notable success. The first edition of 1,000 copies was sold in less than two months. As co-operative literature is generally not an article of easy circulation, the fact deserves special mention.

There is, however, one co-operative body which shows rather a decline in trade and membership. This organisation is the Catholic Union of Consumers' Societies, known under the name of "Concordia," and founded at Zurich in 1912. Since 1921 the turnover of the "Concordia" has continually decreased, the loss of the past year being 657,000 francs, or £26,280. The societies of the "Concordia" Union are generally small, and their number has never reached five score—at present their number is eighty three. The bad situation of this Consumers' Union is a striking example of the incompatibility of exclusiveness in co-operative work and practice."

#### Mr. Ernest Ansermet.

The music critic of *Truth* (Jan. 11th) seems to be somewhat prejudiced and is evidently not in love with M. Ansermet's interpretation:—

"Mr. Ernest Ansermet, who conducted the Royal Philharmonic Society's concert last week, is a Swiss mathematician who became a conductor. He is well known in this country through his association with the Russian Ballet and his sympathy with modern music. It was only to be expected, therefore, that the principal item on his programme should have been the first complete concert version of Ravel's 'Daphnis et Chloë,' which the Diaghileff company produced in London in its original ballet form some years ago. In spite of the great beauty of some sections—such as the Nocturne and Interlude of Part III, and the exquisite 'Lever du jour' of Part III,—and the orchestral brilliance of others, 'Daphnis et Chloë' loses enormously by the absence of the ballet. This is not a defect, since the work was conceived by Ravel in terms of the ballet form, and one cannot listen to the music in the concert hall without wishing to see the ballet again. In fact, it is depressing to realise that the London public is wholly dependent upon the casual and chance visitations of Mr. Serge Diaghileff and his Russian ballet company for the opportunity of seeing such typically modern masterpieces as 'Daphnis et Chloë.'

The only absolute novelty on the programme was Mr. William Walton's "Sinfonia Concertante" for orchestra with piano forte *quasi obbligato*. Mr. William Walton is a young composer who has won a place in an International Competition with a vivacious overture, "Portsmouth Point," but he is best known in London by his amusing settings of Miss Edith Sitwell's "Façade" poems. The present work is something of a disappointment, because, while it shows an increasing technical ability, it is lacking in the originality of which one caught fitful gleams in the "Façade" settings. It is not that Mr. Walton definitely imitates anybody in particular, but his musical material is generally reminiscent and scrappy. Every now and then—as in the Andante section—one gets the impression that the real William Walton is a very simple, even sentimental composer, but that his native impulses are held in check by a consciousness of modern music and of jazz and a superficial sophistication which arrests his spontaneity. The ungrateful piano forte part was capably played by York Bowen.

The rest of the programme was made up of Beethoven's lovely and neglected "Leonora No. 1" Overture and of Schubert's "Unfinished" symphony. I cannot say I liked Mr. Ansermet's interpretation of the latter work. Schubert's marvellous rhythmic verve was broken up by meaningless *rallentando*, and the whole work was French-polished and sentimentalised in a way quite contrary to the whole spirit of Schubert. The fact is that the modern hyper-sophisticated French spirit is quite out of touch with Schubert's crystal purity and simplicity. One might as well expect to find a Parisian dandy trout-fishing in a mountain stream."

Here are a few personal notes from the *Daily Dispatch* (Jan. 5th):—

"Mr. Ernest Ansermet, the famous Swiss musician, is a remarkable personality, bearded, tall, handsome and impressive. He is able to imitate the sound of any instrument in the orchestra, and frequently does so at rehearsal to illustrate how he wants a passage played.

He removes his coat at rehearsal, puts on a woolly jacket, and is far more exuberant than when in public. He will leap into the air, to come down on the first beat of a bar. He used to be a professor of mathematics at Geneva University. On one occasion he told me that British

orchestral players were "staggeringly good" at sight reading. In every department, he said, "English players rival the best Germans."

#### "Wind Slab" Avalanches.

Quite a number of fatal accidents have taken place this season; fortunately, none of our countrymen were involved. The following note of warning appeared in the English Press and is taken from the Times (Jan. 13th):—

"The snow in the Engadine has recently been so dangerous as to necessitate notices being posted up in the hotels at Pontresina, St. Moritz, Maloja and many other winter sports resorts, warning ski runners from undertaking tours. Curiously enough the conditions are due neither to thaw nor to the qualities of new snow, but to the high winds of the last few days. Under the influence of wind the loose, powdery snow is blown into great slabs of compact snow. These slabs are known as "wind slabs," and form the greatest and most subtle danger the ski runner has to contend with. The danger, in fact, is not always obvious even to the most experienced ski runners, and many are the resulting accidents due to these avalanches.

A "wind slab" avalanche is terrifying to be caught in. At first sight the snow slopes which one is traversing appear firm and compact—sometimes so hard that one can walk on them without sinking in. Suddenly, however, the whole slope splits with a booming roar and breaks up into great blocks of hard snow. At once the ski runner is overwhelmed and carried down in this bosom of destruction. If he is not suffocated beneath the sliding mass he is likely to be crushed to death by the blocks, which are often several feet in thickness.

To distinguish a "wind slab" is very difficult, but its surface is usually marked with wind ripples. Several parties during the last few days have had narrow escapes. One party was almost overwhelmed within a few yards of the well-known Muottas Murial Hotel above St. Moritz. There is, indeed, only one motto for those who go to the mountains, and that, in the words of a famous mountaineer, is "Achtung! immer Achtung!"

#### Revolts against Decorations.

Unfortunately the indignation described in the subjoined cutting from the *Manchester Evening News* is not as general and as widespread as the promoters of the movement would like us to believe. The western part of Switzerland is quite unconcerned about it and one writer has expressed the opinion that if every Swiss could be made the recipient of a neat ribbon or other pretty decoration the protests would die a natural death.

"The Swiss are becoming more and more indignant at the way in which their democratic simplicity is being corrupted by lavish distribution of French decorations.

There are no decorations in Switzerland, and persons holding any public function are forbidden to accept a foreign decoration, but the prohibition does not extend to citizens.

It is now proposed that it should comprehend everybody, and a petition for a plebiscite on the question is being widely signed."

#### Packing for Men.

There is only one Trousered mortal we know of who can pack his own trunk to perfection; we believe he lives somewhere in Herne Hill. The dread of this exasperating task is sufficient to drive any man into matrimony. However, the *Daily Mail* (Jan. 6th) has published the following hints to bachelors still living in blissful ignorance:—

"These are the testing times for packing if you are going to Switzerland for the sports and snows, to the South of France for galas and gambling, or anywhere for business or pleasure. Packing is important, for a holiday may become tinged with tragedy because you have packed a triviality but have forgotten trousers."

The man who packs for himself should remember that the art of the good packer is really divided into two stages, the theory and the practice. The more time spent on the first, the more successful will be the second.

A pencil and paper to your hand, visualise yourself dressed as you hope to be for the coming business meeting, golf, winter sports, or dancing—and note on the paper every essential. Do not forget the weather, wet, cold and warm; do not forget the small things, such as studs for evening shirts; and do not forget sponge and soap, tooth-brush and paste, hair brushes and pyjamas. If you are wise, you will assemble on a bed covered with paper what you think you *want* to take.

Discard from this, leaving only what you need—for excess luggage may not be only a worry, it will probably cost you more to transport, especially abroad.

There are certain "dodges" that men may adopt for the packing of their clothes. An arrangement of two expanding wires—one wire of which is slipped into each leg of a pair of trousers—keeps the trousers flat in their folds as they came from the press.

When a jacket is to be packed it should be folded so that the collar is pulled up—as if for rain. Fold one side into the centre (the pocket pointing outwards) and fold the other side right over. Before it is completely folded pass a hand from the arm entrance of the jacket down each sleeve to the cuffs, smoothing out the sleeves, and thus preventing creases. Evening shirts should be placed between layers of soft clothing, underclothing or day shirts.

A dressing gown forms an excellent cover-all for the contents of the trunk, socks fill the gaps."

#### QUE SE PASSE-T-IL AU CINEMA ?

Permettez-moi de vous emmener aujourd'hui dans ces salles obscures qui ont pour nom "cinemas" et dans lesquelles, aussi bien, autour desquelles, s'élève en ce moment en Suisse Romande une violente polémique.

Les américains ont mis à la mode le film de guerre, les français, puis les anglais ont emporté le pas, les allemands enfin, avec leurs immenses ressources, ont fait de même. Nous avons vu successivement à l'écran: "La grande parade," "Le Soldat inconnu," "Au service de la gloire," "Verdun," "Pour la paix du monde." Nous attendons: "La Somme"—qui nous viendra de Londres—et nous avons présentement sous les yeux, "La Guerre mondiale"—qui nous vient de Berlin.

Les "Yankees," qui sont des hommes de commerce ayant tout, ont cherché à corser une bande d'actualités, ou une reconstitution difficile, par un roman de passion et de mœurs. Les français se sont cantonnés dans le documentaire pur en puisant aux sources mêmes des archives de l'armée. Certains conférenciers accompagnent même ces films qui répondent à un des côtés de la mentalité gaullaise. Jusqu'ici, rien que de très naturel, mais, le film allemand, sortant du cadre de la documentation et de la fantaisie, prétend faire "pièce historique." Il veut expliquer "le pourquoi" de la guerre, ses causes et naturellement en repousser pour son pays les responsabilités. Nous voyons flamber les lettres de "Sarajevo," puis le feu se transmettre aux capitales de l'Europe dont Berlin étincelle...la dernière (évidemment !)

Et, si par un effort méritoire, on sent tout le prix de la bataille de la Marne, loyalement reconnue comme une victoire française, la violation

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