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HOME NEWS



FEDERAL.

THE ZONES DISPUTE.

It is stated that this long-standing controversy will be the first item to be dealt with at the International Court which will meet at the Hague next month.

SWISS NOTE TO ITALY.

A Note of protest has been addressed by the Swiss Government to the Italian Government regarding frequent violation of frontier neutrality by Italian military airmen.

The Note also protests against frontier violation by Italian troops when in pursuit of Italian refugees who cross into Swiss territory.

SPYING ON THE ITALIAN FRONTIER.

Several Swiss papers publish reports of systematic spying on Swiss territory, along the frontier regions of the Ticino and the Grisons, by Italian agents disguised as tourists and making a liberal use of their cameras.

AN EXCHANGE OF LAND WITH GERMANY.

The little village of Busingen on German soil forms an awkward pocket in the frontier line along the canton Schaffhausen; for a long time a rectification has been suggested by the parties concerned. The Federal Council has now investigated the possibilities of embodying this "enclave" with the adjoining canton and negotiations with Germany to this effect are to be initiated.

ROYAL VISITOR IN BERNE.

The King of Iraq, who is in Switzerland, attended by his *Aide-de-Camp* and his secretary, visited the members of the Federal Council at Berne. A luncheon was afterwards given in his Majesty's honour, which was attended by all the members of the Federal Council and by the British Minister, Mr. Claud Russell.

RETURN TICKETS ON SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAY.

A welcome innovation will come into force on September 15th throughout the system of the Swiss Federal Railways; from that date the return half of tickets which are usually valid for ten days will become transferable, though any trading on such tickets is not permissible.

MOTORCAR STATISTICS.

The Federal Statistical Office has compiled and published figures illustrating the tremendous increase in the use of mechanically propelled vehicles during the last twenty years. While in 1910 every 515th inhabitant possessed a motor vehicle, at the end of 1919 every 36th claimed this privilege. Altogether 55,149 private cars (1910: 2,276) were in use and the number of motor-cycles had risen from 4,647 to 42,306. As regards lorries the number has increased 48 fold from 326 to 15,905. The origin of the cars constitutes a poor certificate for the Swiss automobile manufacturers, lorries being the only line where they have been able to hold their own to some extent; however, the percentage of Swiss lorries on the road has fallen from 82 per cent. in 1910 to 34 per cent. last year. Though foreign cars are subjected to a considerable duty the Swiss industry has derived no benefit from this protection. "Martini" with a total of 747 cars on the road is the only Swiss make which has managed to survive foreign competition, the remaining two private car manufacturers ("Pic-Pic" and "Naximag") having had to close down some years ago. Most of the cars are imported from the U.S.A. though this country seems to be losing ground in favour of France and Italy. In 1929 the U.S.A. headed the list with 21,265 (65 per cent. of the total imports) being followed by France with 15,743 and Italy with 11,688; Gt. Britain with 439 is at the bottom of the list. The most popular car is the Italian "Fiat" (8,866); next in favour follow "Citroen" (5,101), and the three Americans "Buick" (2,841), "Ford" (2,445) and "Chrysler" (2,265).

SWISS TRADE IN JUNE.

Both imports and exports recorded the lowest figures of the year, the former with 200.8 million francs, as against 211.5 million francs in May,

and the latter with 136.5 million, as against 163.1 million francs.

CLERKS AND THEIR PAY.

Very instructive statistics with reference to the earnings of commercial employees have been collected and published by the Schweiz-Kaufm. Verein in Zurich. Apart from positions of trust the commercial traveller heads the list with an average income of 6,800 Frs. p.a., accountants and correspondents follow next with about 500 Frs. less. Generally speaking the income of the ordinary commercial clerk does not exceed 4,000 Frs. p.a. In his concluding remarks the general secretary of the S.K.V. states that working conditions are not altogether satisfactory and that amongst the lower paid posts a tendency of still further reducing the earnings is still in evidence.

LOCAL.

BERNE.

According to a report of the Educational Department of the canton of Berne the number of scholars has considerably decreased during the last 12 years. The figure of 111,220 in 1919 has gradually fallen to 93,774 during 1930. The number of scholars has therefore decreased by 17,500, whereas the number of teachers has increased in the same period by 44.

LUCERNE.

In the local news from Lucerne there is something which will fill some of the readers of the S.O. with envy. It states that the Director of the special school for English in Lucerne has discovered after long years of experience a novel system by which anyone with a little zeal will be able to acquire a fluent conversation in English in 30 hours. This method consists of an easy and interesting study and has therefore had a great success with the people of Lucerne. It further states that it is not simply a distribution of printed matter for self-tuition, but personally conducted lessons for each individual student through the post, and that it is a real pleasure to learn so quickly, easily and perfectly the beautiful English language.

"It does not state, however, which pronunciation—Oxford or Cambridge—is taught."—Ed.

GLARUS.

On Sunday the 20-year-old Jack Landis from Oberrieden, who was working in Horgen met with an accident. He was missed on Monday by the cowherd with whom he left his rucksack and did not return for it and also by his parents who lived in Oberrieden. A relief column was formed in Obstdalen which found the body at the foot of a 480-feet-high wall of the Murtchenstock over which he had fallen. The body was taken to Oberrieden on Tuesday.

BASLE CAMPAGNE.

The latest report of the promotion of tobacco growing in Basle Campagne shows that the "white Burley," with which extensive trials have been made, gives the best results and that in future years only this kind will be grown.

GENEVA.

An International Catholic Week will be held from September 14 to September 21, at Geneva, during the assembly of the League of Nations.

"The Present State of Catholicism Throughout the World" will be the general subject of the conferences, and among the speakers will be Mr. Hilaire Belloc.

Other speakers include Archbishop Baudrillart, of France, Lars Eskeland, the noted Norwegian educator, and Fr. Pyschwara, a prominent German philosopher.

Paderevski, the famous pianist, and former President of Poland, and Mgr. Seipel, former Chancellor of Austria, may be present.

A protest against the persecution of religion by the Soviet will be made, and at this demonstration the principal speaker will be Professor Maklakof, now attached to the University of Lille.

ST. GALL.

On Tuesday the 26th ult. shortly after 5 o'clock a fire broke out in the roof of the main station of the S.B.B. in St. Gall, which soon took a firm hold. After an hour of hard fighting, the fire brigade was able to overcome the fire, but not before the roof part of the central block was nearly burnt out. The fire most likely started in the chimney. The rooms immediately under the seat of the fire containing the lundry, wash kitchen and bedrooms of the staff of the station

buffet have suffered extensively through water.

The whole damage which is estimated from 50,000 to 70,000 Frs. is covered by the Cantonal Insurance.

ALTDORF.

On August 31st, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the existence of Castle Bernoldingen in Seelisberg, the administration of this beautiful estate, in concert with the Society for the preservation of historical monuments and customs and the Groupe of ancient costumes of the canton Uri, arranged some jubilee festivities. On this very day the family Aschwanden von Barren celebrated the centenary of the tenancy. It is certainly very rare for a family of tenants to remain for 10 decades on the same estate.

BEZIER.

A most amusing little drama took place in Bézier after the death of the old and eccentric Pharmacist B, who was a confirmed bachelor. Some years ago he sold his pill shop and lived in very poor circumstances on a monthly allowance, which was paid to him by his successor. Although he had quite a number of relatives, they did not trouble themselves about him. He lived in an attic, rented from a poor widow for a few shillings. At his funeral only his landlady, the concierge and two old cronies followed his coffin. The State asked the relatives if they wished to enter into the heritage. They declined with thanks, as the old man had not enough to keep himself in food, they did not want to throw money away for stamp fees, etc. Eventually the landlady went to the authorities asking them to take an inventory, so that she could again let the room, as the rent she could obtain was necessary to help to pay her own rent. In due course the bailiff came to break the seal and duly wrote down all he could find. There was mighty little, only a few pieces of old linen, clothes, a broken porcelain jar and a few bottles, the remainder of his late business. There was also an old bread bag, such as was used by soldiers during the Franco-German war. When the bailiff looked into the bag he found a bundle of papers, which on closer examination proved to be shares and other valuable documents to the value of 200,000 Frs. The State took possession of these as the man had died intestate, his relatives refusing the heritage. Now these relatives go about with very long faces indeed.

N.Z.

NEW FIXED TRUST FORMED IN SWITZERLAND.

A new fixed trust has been formed in Basle with the title of Société Internationale de Placements. It is issuing bearer certificates, which are in the nature of deposit receipts, and signify that the Union Bank of Switzerland, as trustees, holds certain stocks and shares, and that the owner of the certificate is entitled to a proportion of those shares and all dividends and rights accruing to them.

A group of stocks and shares deposited in this way constitutes what is known as a fixed trust, as once they have been selected they are fixed permanently and cannot be changed. The object of such a trust is to constitute a medium which makes it possible for the investor by the purchase of a single security to invest his money in a large number of stocks and shares in the leading countries and industries of the world.

A selection of 30 different securities of well-known companies in various parts of the world has been made by representatives of leading financial houses in various countries after consultation with statistical authorities. The Société Internationale de Placements has been formed by these firms for the management of the business.

In August, 1930, the value of the unit comprising the shares in the 30 companies, together with accrued dividends, etc., amounted to approximately Swiss francs 100,000 (£4,000).

Each unit is divided into 1,000 sub-units of approximately Sw. Frs. 100 (£4) each, and for these sub-units certificates are issued in denominations of 5, 10, 25, 100 and 1,000. No single certificate may be issued until a whole unit of stocks and shares, together with cash accumulations, has been deposited with the trustees for safe custody.

All dividends payable on the deposited stocks are collected by the Union Bank of Switzerland. Subscription rights, stock dividends and share bonus distributions are collected and sold for cash,

and all funds so accumulated as on 15th September are to be distributed, free of tax, by the trustees to certificate holders on 30th September pro rata against presentation of distribution warrants. An interim distribution of funds accumulated as on 15th March will be paid by the trustees on 31st March.

As the sale of subscription rights, share bonuses, etc., represents a partial return of capital, certificate holders will be given the opportunity, for 30 days after the date of distribution to reinvest that portion of the distribution which is represented by other than actual cash dividends on the underlying stocks, at a discount of 4 per cent. below the prevailing purchase price of certificates.

In order that the annual distribution may not be less than Swiss francs 5 per sub-unit of approximately Sw. Frs. 100 in any one year, there is included in the price of the unit a sum equivalent to one year's distribution. This sum is to be held by the trustees on behalf of certificate holders.

If it is officially announced by any of the companies that no dividend will be distributed in respect of any one financial year, the Société Internationale de Placements may sell the shares of that company. The proceeds of the sale will be distributed pro rata to the holders of certificates at the next half-yearly distribution.

The 30 companies are situate in: Great Britain (4), Canada (2), France (5), Holland (3), Sweden (2), America (6), Switzerland (2), Germany (4), Belgium (1) and Denmark (1), and the companies in Great Britain comprise Prudential Assurance, British-American Tobacco, Bass Ratcliff and Gretton and Courtlands.—*Financial Times*.

SWISS TOURIST INFORMATION.

Cheap Fares granted by the Swiss Railways for Visitors to International Fairs.

The Swiss Federal Railways and most private railway companies of Switzerland grant cheap fares to visitors of the following fairs whether travelling from or through Switzerland. The reduction will be 25 per cent. on the ordinary single fare both going and returning. The supplementary tax is to be paid full both ways.

Vienna Autumn Fair, September 7th to 14th, 1930.
Prague Sample Fair, September 7th to 14th, 1930.
Zagreb Sample Fair, September 13th to 22nd, 1930.

Particulars as to duration of the tickets the dates of validity, cards of identification may be had from the Swiss National Tourist Office in Zurich and Lausanne.

Inland Custom Houses in Switzerland.

Registered luggage posted direct to Geneva will, henceforth, not be examined at Bellegarde but at the destination only.

Registered Luggage for Switzerland.

To the previously mentioned inland custom houses to which travellers' luggage can be sent direct from abroad we should like to add the following: Lausanne (Ouchy), Morges and La Chaux-de-Fonds.

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LECTURE BY PROF. DR. C. SCHROETER

The organisers of this lecture, the Swiss Mercantile Society and the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, are to be congratulated on the happy way in which this most enjoyable and interesting talk was introduced to a large gathering at St. George's Hall, Tottenham Court Road, on Thursday August 28th.

The Swiss Choral Society had given us much enjoyment by the excellent rendering of three popular Swiss songs, thus creating the right "Stimmung" for listening to a narrative about the beauty and splendour of our homeland. The last notes of that beautiful song "Teure Heimat" had hardly faded away, leaving us with that great longing for the land of our fathers, when M. M. Paschoud, President of the S.M.S., rose amidst cordial applause, to introduce the lecturer of the evening, Prof. C. Schroeter of Zurich.

It was indeed a pleasant surprise when the Chairman mentioned that the lecturer had just been honoured by the senate of Cambridge University, who had bestowed on him the degree of *Doctor honoris causa*, in recognition of his numerous works on biological and botanical subjects, for which he enjoys an international reputation. This announcement was greeted with long and hearty applause. Owing to his departure for Switzerland our Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, was unfortunately prevented from being present, the Legation was however adequately represented by Monsieur Th. de Sonnenberg, Conseiller de Légation and Monsieur L. Micheli, Secrétaire de Légation.

Prof. Dr. Schroeter, who received a warm ovation from the audience, commenced his lecture, entitled

NATURSCHUTZ IN DER SCHWEIZ UND DER SCHWEIZERISCHE NATIONAL PARK.

by a few introductory remarks as to the aims and the progress which has been made in Switzerland for the preservation of natural beauty spots by the *Schweiz. Bund fuer Naturschutz*, a Society which has a membership running into several thousands, and which is subsidised by the federal and cantonal authorities as well as by numerous private and public bodies. They do not, he said, confine their activities to the Swiss National Park, an area of over 30 square km. situated in the Canton of Graubunden, between the villages of Schuls-Tarasp and Zerne, alone, but are also interested in the preservation of natural beauty spots all over Switzerland. Countless objects of natural beauty have been saved from destruction through the timely intervention of this Society, which has become a factor of great national importance.

The address was accompanied by a great number of exquisite coloured lantern slides of our beautiful alpine flora, trees, birds and animals as well as of many snow capped mountain tops. More than once these reproductions on the screen caused the audience to express their admiration by loud "oh's" and "ah's."

For those amongst the gathering who have not had the good fortune to visit our beloved country for some time, it was a great pleasure to see once again those snow covered giants and those peaceful villages. Memories of long ago of happy rambles through the valleys and highways of that unforgettable country came back to one's mind; it was as if one could hear the church bells once again ringing—calling you to come back home.

Those who stayed away, on account of the heat wave which lay heavy over London that night, will be interested to hear that the Hall was splendidly ventilated and it was considerably cooler indoors than outside. The only victim of the heat seemed to be the manipulator at the lantern, who, on various occasions, showed us what views upside down would look like, this however hardly interfered with the performance as the lecturer was ever ready to counter the mishaps with a witty remark.

Now, Herr Professor, you have profoundly shocked me, yea my heart stood nearly still, as never in these forty years of earthly pilgrimage have I heard a University Professor "yoddlings," so my dear readers try to imagine the shock which your reporter felt when the venerable lecturer closed his talk with a hearty "yoddlings" which found an equally hearty echo from the audience. How things must have changed in the "old country" since those far-away days when I listened to the learned and sedate lectures of stately University Professors; well, they could hardly smile, let alone "yoddlings." But all the same, Herr Professor, it gladdened my heart to see that your love for the beauties of our wonderful country has kept you young in body and spirit, and I feel sure that those who spent this enjoyable evening at St. George's Hall will unite with me in the wish that we may have the pleasure of hearing you again soon.

Before parting, Monsieur de Sonnenberg expressed in a few words the appreciation of the audience for the most interesting lecture, calling for three cheers for Prof. Schroeter, which were willingly and heartily given. It was one of those evenings which bring one ever nearer to one's native country.

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