

Home news

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HOME NEWS

The accounts for 1926 of the Federal Post Office disclose a net surplus of over 5½ million francs, that is to say, nearly a million francs more than for the year 1925.

The Federal Council has chosen Mr. Alfred Sarasin, a well-known Basle banker, to succeed the late Mr. Usteri as President of the Swiss National Bank.

In spite of the disastrous state of the Cantonal Treasury, the electors of Geneva endorsed, during the week-end, the granting of a special credit of Frs. 300,000 in connection with unemployed relief.

A new Bill embodying a total revision of the existing terms of employment and resulting in a general increase in the salaries of civil servants has found favour with the electors of Basel-Stadt.

A "patent" for ski instructors is one of the provisions of a new law approved by a small majority by the electors of Grisons.

A monument is to be erected in Rome in memory of the Swiss guards who fell in 1526 during the "sacco di Roma"; the Swiss Federal Council has voted Frs. 10,000 towards its cost.

Frs. 200,000 has been left to his native commune of Oberehrendingen (Aargau) by Joseph Frei, who about 50 years ago emigrated to America and died last month in Denver; the interest of this legacy is to be used for works of charity.

A workman who, nearly ten years ago, was arrested and accused in Schaffhausen of having robbed a mate of Frs. 50, but was subsequently liberated and indemnified, the case not being proved, has just given himself up to the local authorities admitting the theft and asking to be dealt with accordingly.

The well-known Bernese architect, Marcel Daxelhofer, to whose designs a large number of imposing public buildings in that town and elsewhere owe their origin, died in Berne at the age of 50.

An explosion destroyed one of the buildings of the Swiss Explosives Company in Dottikon, near Wohlen; a foreman named Anton Stierli, father of seven children, lost his life, whilst two other workmen sustained severe injuries from red fumes.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Pestalozzi Centenary.

The adage "By thine work thou shalt be known" assuredly finds no more appropriate application than in the case of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, our world-famed compatriot, the centenary of whose death was recently celebrated in Switzerland, London and elsewhere.

Could Pestalozzi come back but for a brief space of time he would be filled with wonderment and intense gratification at the glorious edifice called "Modern Education" raised on the simple foundation stone he laid 100 years ago.

"He was an ugly man whom children loved," says *The Schoolmistress* (Feb. 17th), "but his was a wonderful influence not only on the children of his time, but on the work of the teacher of to-day. He based his science of education on knowledge of the human being, obtained from careful, loving observation of his pupils. He thus laid the foundation of much of our modern psychology. He developed the senses by bringing the child into contact with things, and thus established the foundation upon which the direct scientific methods used to-day in the teaching of arithmetic, science and geography have been built.

"He introduced handwork into his school curriculum and showed the educational value of the subject and its relation to the mind. He brought into his schools the spirit of humanity, and held that it is life that educates.

"The influence and spirit of Pestalozzi persists. He brought to education a new and healthy life and gave us the essence of our 'modern methods and ideas.'"

"Saviour of the poor,
Father of orphans,
Educator of humanity,
All for others, nothing for himself."

thus reads the inscription on the monument that has been erected to the everlasting glory of our

co-citizen, who, although fate dealt him many a heavy blow, unceasingly worked for the good of his fellow creatures, sacrificing his life and worldly goods to promote the welfare and progress of others. Could there be a more noble testimony to the abnegation of a man who, although in penury himself never failed to give freely to those in distress, but whom God had less gifted for a successful struggle against the heavy odds of that period?

Pestalozzi is rightly considered a "great" man, and we are filled with joy to see in what high esteem his life's work is held by educationists in this country. Many are the special articles that have appeared in the British Press bestowing unstinted praise and admiration on the pioneer of Modern Education.

Those of our readers who may be interested in this matter are referred in particular to the Educational Supplement of the *Times* of Feb. 12; *Western Morning News and Mercury, Yorkshire Post, Manchester Guardian and Daily Telegraph*, all of February 17th; but so as to give our readers a succinct account of what our contemporaries say we cannot do better than quote the article by Cecil Northcott from the *Daily News* of Feb. 17th:—

One hundred years ago to-day Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, the father of most modern educational methods, and the adopted father of countless affectionate pupils, died at Brugg, in Switzerland. He began his experiments with war-orphaned Swiss children in 1798 on a ramshackle farm, and completed them at Castle Yverdon on Lake Neuchâtel, where in the year of Waterloo he established the first international school.

He determined to psychologise instruction. His early experiments, he said, "proved the possibility of founding popular instruction on psychological grounds, of laying true knowledge, gained by sense impression, at the foundation of instruction."

In spite of his frail and diminutive body, Pestalozzi had the fierceness and foresight of a pioneer. He paved the way for Froebel and Montessori. And he did this in an age when the symbols of education in England and on the Continent were the birch-rod and the "discipline master," and amidst the constant discouragement of his countrymen.

Pestalozzi's methods, which revolutionised the whole trend of modern education, were developed and perfected at Castle Yverdon. It was a wonderful school. He gathered round him over two hundred pupils from England, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Spain and America. The pupils were of both sexes, and remained until about fifteen or sixteen.

The time-table was a rigorous one. The pupils were roused at 5.30 a.m., and in the courtyard threw buckets of cold water over each other. The first lesson began at 6, and was followed by a simple breakfast at 7. From 8 until noon there were continuous lessons, with "breaks" of five minutes every two hours.

At 12.30 dinner was served. Then, until 2.30, every pupil had to take outdoor exercise. This was not organised, but each one was expected either to swim or run or play ball games. There were lessons again until 4.30, and then recreation until 5, with bread and fruit distributed. Then lessons followed again until 8.0. Bed was at 9.0. Included in this time-table were the periods of gymnastic exercises, gardening, cardboard work, and each pupil's own hobby by which Pestalozzi sought to develop latent talent and give confidence. Corporal punishment was inflicted for all willful wickedness and lying, but in other cases Pestalozzi's method was to make the punishment fit the crime. A lazy child cut firewood; the forgetful were employed as messengers, and the disobedient were not spoken to in public.

In the "castle-school" masters and pupils lived and worked together. When a master was not teaching he took his place as a pupil in a class and was taught by one who ordinarily was his colleague. One visitor remarked: "Why, this is not a school, it's a family."

Pestalozzi directed his great school through his staff conference. All difficulties were referred to him, and he settled them in accordance with his maxim that "education consists in a return to the methods of nature." This spirit was carried into every part of the curriculum.

Unfortunately, dissensions among the staff robbed Pestalozzi of peace in his last years, and the school was closed. But the pioneer work was done. He had compelled educationists to

ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

February 27th, 1453.—"Everlasting Leagues" between the Confederates and France. One of the main objects of the Confederates was the wish to be on good terms with France in all great political movements; the previous treaty of Ensheim had remained without influence and the French king was anxious to conclude a closer alliance with the Confederates, who, by their military achievements, had become world-renowned.

February 28th, 1476.—Capitulation of Grandson when 412 of the Swiss garrison were partly drowned in the lake, partly hanged on trees.

February 28th (29th).—Piercing of the Gotthard tunnel.

March 1st, 1848.—Neuchâtel quietly detaches itself from Prussia and becomes a republic; new coat-of-arms.

March 2nd, 1746.—Victory of the Confederates near Grandson against the Burgundians, who fled with the cry "sauve qui peut"; night put a stop to the pursuit. Enormous booty secured.

March 5th, 1798.—Berne captured by the French in spite of previous victorious engagements near Neuenack and Laupen; they were defeated near Fraubrunnen and in the Grauholz because the valiant Bernese commander, Karl Ludwig von Erlach, was denied the whole-hearted support of the Great Council, though the old mayor, Nicholas Steiger, had urged resolute and united action. The entry of the victors is thus described by the historian, W. Oechslin:

"At half-past two the conqueror entered the fallen town of the Zähringers: on the following day Brunne came from Morat. The Bernese forces and reserves that yet remained in the field dispersed, uttering maledictions upon the traitors. The unfortunate Erlach, who set out for the Oberland in order thence to continue the resistance, was attacked by a raging mob of Landstürmers, and murdered with blows from the butt ends of muskets and bayonet thrusts. Steiger, who in Grauholz had as by miracle escaped death or imprisonment, was threatened with the same fate; but the aged statesman made good his flight to Germany across the Brünig Pass and Unterwalden."

Subsequently a new constitution, after the French model and drafted by Peter Ochs, was proclaimed under the title "The Helvetic Republic One and Indivisible."

revise the whole of their task, and had cleared the way for his great followers, and the later apostles of child-study. He was the father of the modern love for children. Curiously enough, his last book, published just before he died in 1827, is called "The Swan Song."

A Pestalozzi commemoration celebration took place in London on the 17th instant (being the 100th anniversary of Pestalozzi's death at Brugg, Switzerland) under the Chairmanship of Lord Eustace Percy, President of the Board of Education, supported by Sir Michael Sadler, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield, the Duchess of Atholl, M.P., and others. The Swiss Colony was represented by our Minister, Monsieur Paravicini, and a number of other compatriots.

Swiss Farmers' Plea.

The following extract from the *Times* will prove of interest to our readers:—

Swiss agriculture is passing through a serious crisis. Farm produce reached a value of only £57,456,000 in 1926, compared with £61,464,000 in 1925 and £60,168,000 in 1924. The drop may be ascribed to several causes: first, the inferior quantity and quality of nearly all crops in consequence of the bad weather in the spring and early summer of 1926; a general fall in prices; and the errors made by the cheese export association. The production of cheese was practically stopped in 1926 and the stocks accumulated during the previous year have not been sold; the output of butter, also, was reduced by 30 per cent. Milk and its bye-products constitute the most important branch of Swiss agriculture, yielding some £22,000,000 to £24,000,000 a year; cattle breeding comes next with £12,000,000, and pig breeding follows with 8,000,000. Fowl breeding comes fourth with an annual yield of £3,000,000, and is the only item which showed an increase in 1926. The Swiss Farmers' Union