

Random jottings in Switzerland

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1921)**

Heft 6

PDF erstellt am: **22.09.2024**

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suffered during their youthful years from those terrible burdens and became affected with different diseases. After many years of work Indemini has now finally got this road connecting it with the mother country and enabling its inhabitants to use mules for the transport of food. There are only some 300 people in that village. Some business men may therefore think those 1,170,000 francs spent on that road thrown away and wasted. Happily our councillors had for once consulted their hearts instead of their pockets. If you listen to the heart, then the inhabitants of Indemini are as good Swiss as the inhabitants of a big city of the North or the West of Switzerland. There was no reason why they should live till Doomsday separated from their fellow-countrymen.

Deeds of that kind are the real cement uniting together French and German and Italian-speaking cantons. The value of such deeds is not to be estimated in mere terms of cash, while the different races are alike worthy of every consideration irrespective of their numerical strength. No doubt the *Tessin people* are now prouder than ever to belong to Switzerland. They have shown this clearly, even to those few sceptics who were not yet quite sure of it, by the unanimous outburst of indignation with which they answered the insolent action of Signor Carmine and the poet of Fiume. There is certainly no canton of Switzerland more beloved nowadays by all the others than the Tessin. We welcome also the opportunity Tessin students will soon enjoy of being able to study Swiss jurisprudence in their own language. This is due to the recent creation of a *chair for Swiss Civil Law* at the university of Pavia. At last the sons of the Tessin will have a chance to become conscious of their own particular civilisation by prosecuting their studies at a university of their own tongue—a possibility Tessin law students were denied hitherto. There is no canton in Switzerland where we have less reason to fear the intimate contact of its people with their friends of the same tongue than the Tessin. The attitude of the Tessin people during the war and since has proved this beyond any doubt. Speaking of a Tessin Irredenta is mere stupidity or bad faith. We can but welcome the fact that the third element of our national entity, the Italian, gets at length a full opportunity of developing its abilities in contact with a kindred civilisation. If it will see clearer the similarities it will not fail to remark also the differences.

The longer we think about it the greater is the wonder that the Swiss people have been able to build up a state wherein three nationalities live in peace together. We are bound to be astonished at the fact the more we realise how the exaggerated principle of nationality provokes disastrous results for the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. It may well be that the principle of the *co-operation of nationalities*—expressed by the Constitution of our country—is, in spite of the present boom of the other, the one principle of the future. At all events, it is comforting to believe it. No people is truly alive if it does not believe that it has something to give the world. Let us think that we *have!*

P. L.

A DISTINGUISHED COMPATRIOT.

Prof. Eugène Borel, advocate and professor at the Geneva University, arrived in London to take up his duties as President of the Mixed Arbitral Tribunals, created under the Treaty of Versailles as between England and Germany and between Japan and Germany.

Of the many appointments which some of our eminent

lawyers have been called upon to fill in order, finally, to dispose of the numerous thorny questions originated by the clauses of the Peace Treaty, the task allotted to Prof. Borel is of far-reaching importance and one for the accomplishment of which he is singularly qualified.

Prof. Borel, having held with distinction several offices of State, such as President of the Grand Conseil, in the canton of Neuchâtel, opened in 1906 a practice in Geneva, where he also lectured at the University on International Law. He was our delegate at the Second Peace Conference at the Hague and reporter on the convention establishing the rights and duties of neutrals in case of war on land. At the International Conferences in Budapest (1905) and Washington (1910) he again represented Switzerland, and at a conference held in London (1914) by the International Prison Commission he participated in the preliminary works for the International Prison Congress, which was planned to take place in this city in the following year.

During the war Colonel Borel was a member of the General Staff of the Swiss Army.

Prof. Borel has expressed the intention to miss no opportunity of getting into personal contact with our colony and its members; one of his first acts has been to become a subscriber to *The Swiss Observer*. On Tuesday next he will visit the City Swiss Club.

NOTES & GLEANINGS.

All the *Reviews* of this month have at least one important article on the *results of the Geneva Meeting and the future prospects of the League of Nations*. Add up all the good they have to say and deduct the sum of criticism, pessimism and imperialism which are thrown into the opposite scale—and you are left exactly where you stood before. You may go on guessing whether British public opinion is really favourable to the League of Nations or not.

In the *Contemporary Review* (January) we find the first critical article on *Spitteler* in English. Its author is Professor John G. Robertson, of London University, author of "History of the Literature of Germany" and various papers on Schiller, Goethe, Lessing, etc. The learned critic shows himself thoroughly acquainted, not only with Spitteler's work, but with Swiss intellectual life as well:

"If Spitteler is not a recognised notability, it is due to reasons that are far from discreditable to him. In all his long life he has never sought popular favour; with genuine Swiss doggedness he has gone his own way in singleness of purpose, has refused to abate one jot or tittle of his spiritual independence to appease the many-headed monster. He is a lonely poet, perhaps the loneliest poet in Europe; lonely not merely by temperament, but also by virtue of a depth and obscurity which make him inaccessible to those that would read as they run. His books were regarded as enigmas as they appeared; they are enigmas still, but enigmas which, we believe, are well worth the trouble of trying to read."

For the first time also the problem of the "*Free Zones of Savoy*" is explained to English readers by Mr. Robert Dell (*Nation*, 22nd January), the Paris correspondent of "The Manchester Guardian." We are glad to see this eminent journalist and the "*Nation*" fully adopting the Swiss point of view. There is now a movement on foot to bring the question before the Court of Arbitration of