

Notes and gleanings

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HOME NEWS

The provision of further funds from taxation for extricating the Federal finances from their present unsatisfactory state will be the foremost task of the Swiss parliament which assembled for the winter session last Monday.

The "corn monopoly" has been rejected by the Swiss people by the small majority of about 6,000 votes. The Bill, i.e., a new proposed article in the Federal Constitution, sought to incorporate in the latter certain measures—rendered necessary by war conditions—so as to secure a regular supply of cereals for our daily bread. Incidentally, the Bill would have encouraged home production by guaranteeing the farmers a regular and fair price for their corn independent of the fluctuations in the world's markets, and another result would have been the elimination of the profits of the middleman. We give below the official figures so far completed, from which it will be noted that eight cantons voted in favour, the remaining 14 declining the proposal.

Cantons	Yes	No
Zürich	61,574	53,565
Bern	69,548	49,213
Luzern	13,637	19,439
Uri	1,216	2,864
Schwyz	2,108	8,839
Nidwalden	563	3,072
Obwalden	451	2,331
Glarus	3,112	3,992
Zug	2,185	3,690
Freiburg	12,934	14,848
Solothurn	13,701	12,036
Basel-Stadt	8,895	11,209
Basel-Land	7,465	9,005
Schaffhausen	6,597	4,121
Appenzell A.-Rh.	1,606	9,595
Appenzell L.-Rh.	234	2,338
St. Gallen	14,118	43,571
Graubünden	9,855	11,728
Jurgau	29,589	26,131
Thurgau	14,523	14,680
Tessin	9,726	6,556
Vaud	46,538	27,548
Valais	16,900	7,500
Neuchâtel	7,286	12,114
Genève	11,140	12,330
	365,103	371,809

(The italics indicate the eight cantons which scored a majority for acceptance.)

In view of the statement broadcast by some of the opponents that the proposed bill was of Socialistic origin, it may be useful to point out that the measure was worked out by the Federal Council and endorsed by large majorities by the Swiss Diet (National Council 148 against 37 and States Council 23 against 14). The popular vote has, therefore, bluntly ignored the considered opinion of the elected representatives. The reasons are manifold. In the first instance, there is a general disinclination to invest the central authorities in Bern with further powers; the inner cantons with pronounced agricultural interest have all with no uncertain voice recorded a protest. The only two cantons which may be said to have voted in a manner consistent with their interests are Vaud and Valais, both of which have a very large agricultural population, though generally speaking, the Western part of Switzerland is rather unsympathetic to any Government proposals identified with the name of Federal Councillor Schulthess. An outstanding result is the one from the canton Ticino where the Liberal and Conservative party leaders headed the agitation against the Bill. It is evident that in the whole of Switzerland party-line voting has been thrown overboard, as a considerable number of Socialists and farmers have gone against the instructions of their respective headquarters.

A number of other cantonal proposals were placed before the electors during the last week-end. The Canton Geneva declined by a very small majority to sanction the much-debated scheme of joining, for administrative purposes, the outlying districts and thus creating a Greater Geneva.

In the cantons Baselstadt, Schaffhausen and Thurgau several proposals establishing compulsory

insurance and funds for old age, invalid and accident benefits found favour with the electors.

Dr. Paul Maillfer (lib. Vaud) was elected, in the second poll, president of the National Council, the Socialist Gros-pierre (Berne) refusing to accept the presidency to which he was elected on the first poll, on the ground that he had never offered himself as a candidate and that the honour belonged to his colleague, Grimm. The Council, however, though evidently conceding this coveted honour to the Socialist party, was not prepared to place itself under the dictation of the well-known extremist.

The budget for 1927 of the town of Zurich shows a small deficit, though it is confidently expected that the actual results will be similar to the two previous periods; for 1925 a surplus of about six millions was recorded in the final accounts, a deficit of about half a million having been originally budgeted for. The municipal finances have during the last six years undergone a remarkable improvement; not only has the war debt of about 24 million francs been entirely written off, but the general rates have enjoyed a reduction of about 30%. Exceptionally large amounts have been—and are being—spent in connection with the housing problem and other building schemes. The municipal council is at present controlled by a socialist majority.

In conjunction with the adjoining cantons, Schwyz proposes to take measures—somewhat retrogressive—in order to counteract the rapid deterioration of the cantonal roads as the result of the heavy motor traffic, which latter is to be prohibited on Sundays altogether.

The Federal Tribunal in Lausanne has practically confirmed a decision of the cantonal courts of Vaud when a motor-cyclist who dashed with his side-car into a two-wheeled builders' cart travelling in the darkness without any lights was declared partly responsible for the accident. The latter happened a few months ago on the road from Lausanne to Geneva; the motor-cyclist saw the cart travelling on the crown of the road and promptly hooted so as to obtain sufficient space to pass. Contrary to expectation, however, the cart kept to the middle of the road and the cyclist was unable to pull up quickly enough to prevent a collision. It was afterwards discovered that the driver of the cart had fallen asleep.

The two railway stations Chur and St. Moritz are to be partly rebuilt and enlarged, the former at a cost of nearly 1½ million francs, whilst Frs. 200,000 is to be spent on the St. Moritz terminus.

The aviator Mittelholzer left Zurich last Tuesday morning on his flight to Capetown; he successfully crossed the Alps and made a short halt at Pisa (Italy) whence his wife, who had accompanied him so far, returned.

Art. Colonel Ferdinand Affolter died in Naefels (Glarus), where he lived in retirement, at the age of 79; he was for nearly forty years lecturer on military science at the Federal Polytechnic in Zurich.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

The avalanche of alluring articles in the English press extolling the charms and attractions of a winter holiday, illustrates the gigantic progress made by the Swiss touring industry in the fleeting space of a generation. In our time there was nothing more exhilarating than a bobsleigh slide down the "Friedensgasse" in Basle or, before skating on the "Landhoff," blushing fastening the skates to the barely visible boot of the girl of one's heart and being privileged to buy her some hot chestnuts from the Italian vendors always in attendance. Now the whole of the Alps has been organised from end to end, and the host of luxurious hotels and palaces are catering for the exacting tastes and whims of modern civilisation as interpreted by the pleasure-seeking youth of two continents.

The Murren Fire.

Here is a narrative from the pen of Sir Henry Lunn communicated to some of the provincial papers:—

"On Friday morning (Nov. 19th) we received simultaneously the following two telegrams from Mr. Baroni, the manager of the Palace and Grand Hotel des Alpes:—"Hotel Alpes burning down. Fire started at the Edelweiss. Föhn blowing hard"; and "Palace building saved.

Alpes entirely burnt down." For the purpose of description I think it best to use the terms of "Palace" for the new section and "Hotel des Alpes" for the old section.

Dr. Bircher, our Swiss lawyer, and I left London at 2 o'clock on Friday. We arrived at Interlaken at 11.30 on Saturday, and heard on the telephone, to our great satisfaction, that the Palace was not burnt and that the ballroom and dining-room, common to the two hotels, were only slightly damaged; but that the Hotel des Alpes was completely destroyed. The firemen were working heroically to prevent the fire spreading to the Palace Hotel.

We motored from Interlaken to Stechelberg, where a horse had been provided for me to ride up to Mürren. We reached Mürren at 8.30, and my satisfaction was very great when I went into the dining-room of the Hotel des Alpes and found that, although the floor was under water, as was the case also in the ballroom, no serious damage had been done excepting at the entrance from the lounge, where the fire had destroyed the service rooms. The ballroom, which old visitors will remember is connected directly with the new part of the dining-room, is most miraculously preserved. The four windows looking from the lounge of the Palace into the ballroom were, of course, burnt out, and a space that measured three metres by one metre of the parquet floor was burnt. The other two thousand odd metres of the parquet floor are undamaged excepting for the flooding from water, which can soon be put right.

The roofs of both the dining-room and ballroom were nearly intact. Dr. Bircher and I took an architect with us from Interlaken, and builders and decorators speedily arrived. It was not possible to begin repairs until an inspection had taken place on Monday by the Insurance authorities, but now the work is under weigh and the architect has no doubt whatever that it will be finished in about three weeks. The amazing fact is that the palace Hotel, so near the Hotel des Alpes, has entirely escaped. "The smell of fire has not passed on it." The firemen behaved with the greatest courage, and stood through all the hurricane on the roof of the Palace pouring floods of water over the whole building. Other firemen were dealing with the dining-room and the ballroom.

The fire commenced late on the night of the 18th, and was raging until the night of the 20th, when the fohn again developed its full fury and the hurricane kept all the firemen hard at work until 5 o'clock on Sunday morning, when Mr. Baroni and the firemen went to bed, having put out the fire with the help of a heavy fall of sleet. As no trains were running, I left Mürren on Sunday by a toboggan and went down by Stechelberg in a storm of sleet and snow, as it seemed to me important to arrive in London as early as possible that all might be informed of the facts.

We have lost ninety beds in the Hotel des Alpes. The Palace, with 130 beds, and the Bellevue, Eiger, Jungfrau and Regina leave us 400 beds available for members of the Public Schools Alpine Sports Club. The Palace Hotel, the ballroom and the joint dining-room escaped the conflagration because they were solidly built."

The Spahlinger Cure

has been the subject of a question and answer in the Ulster parliament, as will be gathered from the following extract taken from the *Belfast Evening Telegraph* (Nov. 24th):—

"Mr. M'Mullen, in the Ulster Commons on Tuesday, asked a question concerning the Spahlinger treatment for consumption, and whether it was a fact that this treatment was not available in Ulster and other countries owing to the fact that Monsieur Spahlinger had not sufficient money to place it on the market in a manner to protect the treatment and the public against spurious and deleterious imitations; and, if so, whether he would state what financial assistance the Government was prepared to give so that the treatment may be made available for all sufferers from this dread disease in Northern Ireland.

The Minister for Home Affairs: The work of Professor Spahlinger in connection with the treatment of tuberculosis has engaged the attention for some years past of the Government of Northern Ireland as well as of other Governments. In the early part of last year the Government, in conjunction with the Belfast Corporation, arranged for a special mission of Northern Ireland experts to visit Geneva with the object

of studying this special form of treatment on the spot. The result of this investigation bears out the opinion of many medical experts, and goes to show that the Spahlinger treatment undoubtedly possesses distinct possibilities. However, it is not possible for a considered opinion on the scientific soundness of Professor Spahlinger's methods to be given unless and until he is prepared to have the complete technique and details of the preparation of his serum and vaccine submitted to scientific investigations. Repeated representations have been made to him with this object in view, and financial undertakings have been promised to him in the event of his agreeing to follow out this course and of the results being considered satisfactory."

I am rather surprised at the definite statement made in the concluding sentence. If true, it places Dr. Spahlinger in a somewhat unfavourable light in the eyes of the profession and the public. What I had gathered up till now was that he always resolutely refused to disclose details of his serum for commercial exploitation.

Motoring in Switzerland.

I have in previous issues given publicity to criticism levelled against the imposition of road taxes when motoring in Switzerland, and I am pleased to give the other side a hearing. A correspondent in the *Autocar* (Nov. 26th) compares conditions in this country with those in Switzerland, and says:—

"Your correspondent Mr. Douglas Fawcett complains, and with reason, of the taxes he had to pay on certain mountain roads and passes during his excursion in the Swiss Alps, taxes which constitute, says he, "one of the many vexatious innovations with which the Swiss are harrasing motorists."

Would you oblige by publishing the following paragraph from an article which appeared a week later in the *Oversseas Daily Mail*, entitled "Bridge Tolls:—

"It is rather astonishing to learn, now that motor cars and motor coaches have made us a nation of home travellers, that there are still 64 toll roads and 127 toll bridges in this country (England). Motorists and motor vehicle users are naturally protesting. They all pay State taxes towards the making and maintenance of roads. On the top of that there are these private taxes levied!"

Switzerland thus finds herself in very good company, even after taking into account the difference between your tolls and ours.

In England the tolls concern bridges and roads which do not reach altitudes of from 4,000 to 6,000ft. or more, and of which the upkeep ought not, in consequence, to be very onerous.

Long ago such tolls, which did exist on certain roads and bridges in Switzerland, were abolished, and if, on the other hand, tolls on mountain roads have been recently re-instituted, on account of the intensive automobile traffic, the cause is that the upkeep of these roads is extremely expensive, as Mr. Fawcett himself had the proof when in midsummer he was prevented from crossing the Saint Bernardino by an earth avalanche.

The Swiss nation will shortly be called upon to vote the acceptance of a federal law governing automobile traffic, a law which anticipates the suppression of these taxes.

The revenue which they procured up to now to the cantons that applied them will be replaced by the tax on petrol, part of which, added to special subsidies, will be devoted to the upkeep of mountain roads and passes."

The Swiss Stage.

A short note in the *Stage* (Nov. 25th) refers to the financial crisis through which most of our municipal theatres at home are passing:—

The Swiss theatre is passing through a financial crisis such as has been previously unknown. Geneva, Zurich, Bale, Lausanne, Berne, all towns, large or small, are to-day sufferers in common. An example which is typical is the Municipal Theatre of Berne, opened in 1903, whose interior is a copy of the Opéra Comique of Paris. After twenty-three years of activity its existence is in peril. A tax put upon all spectacles in the town—concerts, cinema, football matches, lectures, etc.—has for many years enabled the municipality to give a subsidy of £13,000 annually; but in spite of this a debt of £8,000 has accumulated. Artistic Berne, capital of a serious-minded and intelligent country, applies the rule of contraries to its theatre, for it is the revue and light dance programme that fills 63 per cent. of the seats. After consideration, and not without much public opposition, the town authorities have, by their withdrawal of the subsidy, closed the theatre doors; and it is probable that in the near future this once-famous theatre will join the ranks of the many that have been given over to impresario. Well may we cry "O Berne, Quo Vadis!"

Swiss Cheese.

With reference to my remarks a fortnight ago, a correspondent sends me the following information and explains why the genuine article cannot be obtained in this country. "Petit Gruyere" no

longer denotes the origin, but is being used in other countries to describe a cheesy concoction daintily wrapped like chocolates:—

"Ancient your article in Friday's *Observer*, I am able to state that I have brought the first lot of "Emmenthaler" to this country some 40 years ago that ever was imported into England. I introduced the cheese to the two best known retailers in the City, but they reported that the public did not like it, owing to the strong flavour, and discontinued to sell it; it got the nickname of "weeping cheese," owing to the trickling of drops of water from it, but which really only proved the well matured quality of the cheese.

After this I brought over what was called the *real* Gruyere cheese, which was made by the farmers up the mountains and brought down on the backs of donkeys or mules. This cheese was not liked principally because it had no holes in it, but connoisseurs, of course, preferred it, owing to its flavour, to the factory make."

Socialists.

In view of the hue and cry which has been raised in the Swiss Press against the traditional promotion of Robert Grimm, the present vice-president, to the presidency of the National Council, the following report on the meeting of the Swiss Socialist Party will be of interest. The report is written by Halvard M. Lange, a well-known Norwegian socialist and student of political economy, and appeared in the *New Leader* (Nov. 19th); in it Grimm is not arrayed in the robes of a grim dictator, but appears as a sincere apostle of universal peace:—

By 249 votes to 71, and 31 abstentions, the National Conference of the Swiss Socialist Party has decided to join the Labour and Socialist International, thus ending an isolation which has lasted since the dissolution of the Vienna Union in 1923.

By a second vote of 190 to 101, and 60 abstentions, the Conference decided to accompany the application for affiliation by a statement, re-affirming the programme of the Party, its faith in extra-Parliamentarian and revolutionary action, its opposition to all policies of coalition and to all war, defensive as well as offensive.

In fact, if not in form, the decision to join the L.S.I. is a victory for the pacifist and "democratic" minority of the Party, who have consistently advocated this course ever since the reorganisation of the International at Hamburg, Whitsun, 1923. Up till now the majority of the members, however, under the leadership of Robert Grimm, have opposed the entry, preferring to "wait and see." The aim of their international policy has been, and still is, the formation of an all-in proletarian International, capable of united action in war as well as in peacetime. They have not felt that either the constitution or the activity of the L.S.I. and the affiliated Parties up till now have given sufficient proof that the new International is determined not to repeat the errors that led to the disaster of 1914.

On the other hand, they have wanted to keep in touch with the Third International, hoping to serve as an intermediary between the two bodies when the time for reunion should come. The 102 who opposed the decision to join, or abstained from voting, hold that nothing has happened to justify a change of this attitude. The pacifist minority, on the other hand, while endorsing the criticism of the L.S.I. as regards its weak attitude on the problem of defensive war, have long urged that the right course would

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

BONDS.	Nov. 30		Dec. 7	
	Fr.	£	Fr.	£
Confederation 3% 1903 ...	79.62	79.50		
5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln ...	101.10	97.50		
Federal Railways 3½% A—K ...	81.35	82.67		
" " " " 1924 IV Elect. Ln ...	100.70	100.62		
SHARES.				
	Nom	Nov. 30	Dec. 7	
Swiss Bank Corporation ...	500	775	786	Fr.
Crédit Suisse ...	500	805	812	Fr.
Union de Banques Suisses ...	500	662	672	Fr.
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2540	2547	Fr.
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3975	3997	Fr.
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe ...	1000	2785	2725	Fr.
S.A. Brown Boveri ...	350	496	499	Fr.
C. F. Bally ...	1000	1202	1232	Fr.
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	552	549	Fr.
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be to enter the International and help change it from within.

The real reason why Grimm and the majority have hitherto kept aloof from the L.S.I., and the explanation of their present change of attitude, must, however, be sought in the field of national politics. The partisans of the International, as pacifists who are opposed not only to international wars but to all violence, strongly oppose the advocacy of revolutionary methods, especially of "dictatorship" embodied in the Party programme of 1920. They insist on the necessity of winning the peasants and the lower middle class for Socialism, and hold that the constant use of terms such as "revolution" and "dictatorship" does nothing but harm.

They further advocate co-operation with bourgeois parties of the "Left" in the municipalities, the Cantons, and the Federal Parliament, and have actually accepted seats in mixed Radical-Socialist governments in some of the Cantons. They hold that participation in the Federal Government is all the more natural, as it is elected by Parliament on a proportional basis, and the Socialist Party, with 49 of 198 seats, might lay claim to important Ministries.

The latter point was not raised in the debate at the Conference, but it is really the heart of the controversy. Grimm and his followers are convinced that any participation in a united Government would paralyse the Party in the constituencies. They oppose any dilution of the Party programme to make it more palatable to the peasant or middle-class electorate, and insist on the fact that of a total of some 400,000 voters, 195,000 only vote with the Party, and 33,000 only are members of it. Accordingly the first need is to awaken and organise politically the mass of the workers before going out of one's way to win over the peasants and the middle classes.

To achieve this aim of a strong working-class Party it is necessary to keep up a clear policy of revolutionism. At bottom it is the fear that by joining the L.S.I. they would strengthen the hands of those who advocate Governmental co-operation, which has determined the attitude of the majority up till now.

Recent developments in the economic world situation, however, especially the creation of new international trusts and combines, and the apparent permanence of unemployment in most countries, have so emphasised the international character of our social and economic problems that it seems impossible to keep up a policy of international isolation, even though it be temporary. On the other hand, certain developments within the L.S.I. and its affiliated parties, e.g., the change of policy in France, and above all, the formation of a "Left Wing" within the International standing for the Vienna programme, has made it possible for Grimm and his friends to enter the International by underlining their intention to join the "Left" group.

The whole Party is united in its opposition to all war. The minority has a clear record of consistent voting against all military credits right through the last war, and since 1916 the Parliamentary Party as a whole has followed this course. The minority got through a resolution calling for the working out of a definite plan of resistance in the case of a war or a general mobilisation.

It is clear, therefore, that the Swiss Party will support all efforts at making the International an effective instrument of war resistance.

It also follows, from the attitude of the Party since the war, that its representatives will back the I.L.P. proposal for International Working Class Unity. Grimm, who was appointed delegate to the L.S.I. Executive, made it clear that he will work hand in hand with the "Left."

EIDGENÖSSISCHE GLOSSEN.

Volksgesundheit.

Die nationalrätliche Kommission hat den Tuberkulosegesetzentwurf in seiner Gesamtheit einmütig genehmigt. Folgeschwer ist es jedoch, dass sie in zwei wichtigen Punkten, die hier in ihrer Bedeutung schon ausführlich dargestellt worden sind, Bestimmungen des Entwurfes gestrichen hat. Mit einer Stimme Mehrheit verneinte sie die Ausrichtung von Subventionen zur Verbesserung von Wohnungen. Desgleichen lehnte sie die Unterstützung der Arbeiter ab, die aus prophylaktischen Gründen aus einer Fabrik entlassen werden. Die nationalrätliche Kommission hat also leider gerade dort, wo durchgreifende Massnahmen gegen die Tuberkulose angestrebt werden, ihre Zustimmung nicht gegeben.

Tuberkulose und Wohnung stehen in einem längstbekannten und leicht zu beweisenden Zusammenhang. Wenn es immer noch Fälle gibt, wo der Tuberkulose nicht einmal über ein eigenes Bett verfügt, geschweige denn über ein eigenes Zimmer, so ist damit die schädlich auswirkende Funktion der materiellen Not (in einzelnen Fällen auch der Gleichgültigkeit) genügend gekennzeichnet. Wohnungen verbessern heisst Tuberkulose verhindern. Kein Wunder, dass man darum eine entsprechende

Subventionierung in das Gesetz aufgenommen sehen wollte. Beim Fehlen entscheidend auswirkender Massnahmen wäre eine solche Subventionierung wenigstens eine Möglichkeit, um der Tuberkulose in einem grösseren Masse vorbeugend auf den Leib zu rücken. Es ist zu hoffen, dass der Nationalrat den Standpunkt der starken Kommissionsminderheit, nicht der schwachen Mehrheit teile.

Aehnlich verhält es sich mit der Ablehnung einer Unterstützung in den Fällen, wo Arbeiter aus Gründen der Ansteckungsgefahr für die andern aus einer Fabrik entlassen werden. Auch in dieser Bestimmung des Entwurfes sprach ein wenn auch nicht genügend straff und rücksichtslos durchgeführter Wille, die Tuberkulose nicht nur zu heilen, sondern sie in ihrer Entstehung zu verhindern. Wenn es keinen andern Ausweg mehr geben sollte, die Gesichtspunkte jener Männer, die das Uebel an der Wurzel anpacken möchten, im neuen Gesetze mit-sprechen zu lassen, so böte eine solche Unterstützungspflicht die Möglichkeit, ja die Nötigung, dem ganzen Problem der Tuberkulose-Isolierung auf eine produktive Weise näher zu treten. Dann wäre die Gründung von Arbeitskolonien im Sinne von Professor Gigon mit Unterstützung des Bundes im Rahmen dieses Gesetzes wenigstens keine Utopie mehr.

Es wird nun von der Einsicht des Nationalrates abhängen, ob er mehr Geld aufwenden will—in kürzerer Zeit, um gegen die Tuberkulose in entscheidender Auswirkung vorzugehen, oder ob er scheinbar weniger Geld aufwenden will—in viel längerer Zeit, um ein Uebel zu behandeln, ohne seine Quelle zu verstopfen.

Einheitliche Energiewirtschaft.

Die schweizerische Elektrizitätswirtschaft macht immer wieder von sich reden. Alles deutet darauf hin, dass die Diskussion nicht so bald verstummen wird. Ja, man darf sogar schon heute gestrotzt behaupten, dass diese Diskussion nicht nutzlos geführt werden wird. Allzusehr decken sich die Interessen der Allgemeinheit mit den Interessen der Werke selber. Wird schliesslich auch nicht die absolute Forderung verwirklicht, so kommt doch ein Werk der Verständigung zustande, das der künftigen Schweiz besser dienen wird als der gegenwärtige Zustand der Schweiz von heute. Daran ist nicht zweifeln.

Als Etappe auf diesem Wege verzeichnen wir die Eingabe des Schweizer Energie-Konsumenten-Verbandes vom 13. November an den Bundesrat. Es handelt sich um die Aufstellung von Richtlinien, die vom Bundesrat innerhalb des Rahmens der geltenden Verfassungsbestimmungen zu befolgen wären. Der Aufstellung dieser Richtlinien sind wiederholte Besprechungen mit dem Verband schweizerischer Elektrizitätswerke vorangegangen. In vielen Punkten ist eine Verständigung erfolgt, wenn auch nicht im Hauptpunkte: Der planmässigen Entwicklung der Elektrizitätsversorgung unter behördlicher Aufsicht. Der Energie-Konsumenten-Verband verlangt eine Garantie dafür, "dass das Gemeinwohl bei der Behandlung von Fragen, welche die Elektrizitätsversorgung des Landes betreffen, gegenüber den Interessen der Produzentengruppen unter sich oder gegenüber den Wiederverkäufern in den Vordergrund gestellt wird." Besser kann das ganze Problem nicht umschrieben werden. Es handelt sich nicht um eine Verstaatlichung, sondern um eine Kontrolle im Sinne einer planmässigen Gemeinwirtschaft, "um Massnahmen, die geeignet sind, den Ausbau der Wasserkräfte und die Energieversorgung des Landes zu fördern und dem Gedanken einer zielbewussten, rationalen, allgemein schweizerischen Energiewirtschaft unterzuordnen," wie es im Artikel 2 dieser Richtlinien heisst.

Als vermittelnde Stelle denkt sich die Energie-Konsumenten-Verband eine vom Bundesrat ernannte Elektrizitätskommission. In dieser Kommission wären Produzenten und Konsumenten elektrischer Energie durch Fachkundige in gleicher Zahl vertreten. Die Sekretariatsgeschäfte würden von einer auf den Vorschlag der Kommission durch den Bund zu bezeichnenden Amtsstelle geführt, die ihrerseits die Geschäftsstellen des Verbandes schweizerischer Elektrizitätswerke und des Schweiz. Energie-Konsumenten-Verbandes zu Mitarbeit heranziehen könnte.

Damit gewinnen wir die zentrale Amtsstelle, die uns noch fehlt. Die Werke wollen anscheinend heute noch nichts von dieser Elektrizitätskommission wissen. Sie werden wahrscheinlich den Antrag stellen, eine neue zwischenverbändliche Schiedskommission zu schaffen, durch die ihrer Meinung nach die heutigen und künftigen Fragen erledigt werden können. Auch dies schon wäre ein Fortschritt und ein Beweis dafür, dass wir uns dem Zeitpunkt nähern, wenn auch nur Schritt für Schritt, wo unsere Elektrizitätswirtschaft zur Volkswirtschaft wird.

Felix Moeschlin in "N.Z."

GRIMM ET LE MONOPOLE.

Nous vivons des journées fiévreuses et que certain même, appellera historiques! Il passe un vent de civisme exalté sur la Suisse entière, et les passions sont déchaînées. Aujourd'hui c'est la veillée des armes! Au moment où vous lisez ces lignes "Le" grand résultat vous sera connu, vous saurez quel est l'homme qui, une année durant, présidera nos assemblées législatives; mais vous ne pourrez jamais vous rendre compte du déchaînement des convictions, des idéales opposés, des prétentions réelles ou folles, auxquels nous assistons depuis bientôt un mois.

Disons franchement que la candidature Grimm à la présidence du Conseil National aura été une bonne chose. Elle est de ces événements qui par leur énormité crée un lieu de rapprochement certain entre tous les Confédérés sans exception. Ici, plus n'est question de langues, de dialectes, de religions ou de partis; tous les bourgeois, tous les paysans, tous les Suisses, tous ceux enfin chez qui le sentiment de "patrie" prime encore celui de "l'internationale," se sont levés comme au temps jadis de notre glorieuse histoire pour affirmer "non." Il faut avoir assisté à ces vibrantes manifestations cantonales—dans tous les cantons sans aucune exception—il faut avoir vibré des accents patriotiques et de l'atmosphère qui animaient les rencontres intercantionales pour se rendre compte que cette fois, sans veulerie, mais aussi sans crainte, les citoyens soutiens de notre Confédération, se sont levés pour barrer la route aux menées bolchévistes ou bolchéviantes. Il faut avoir vécu les minutes solennelles de Sempach, où sur le champ de bataille glorieux, plus de 4,000 citoyens affirmèrent leur volonté; il faut être allé à Fribourg dans l'antique hôtel de ville pour avoir retentendu 3,000 Romands clamer à même affirmation. Il fallait être au "Safran" à Bâle pour constater la même farouche décision...

De l'autre côté de la barricade, la fureur est grande! Le parti socialiste gronde, étonné de cette résistance soudaine, habitué qu'il est de voir le "bourgeois" céder devant la menace. Pour une fois les rôles sont inversés, c'est le drapeau rouge qui craint, et la vision de cette possible déroute l'affolle. Ses organes ne cachent point leur point de vue; la défaite de Grimm serait un appel à la révolution. Déjà les masses sont convoquées pour 6 heures à la maison du Peuple, le cortège a ordre de se diriger vers le Parlement...

Il y a de la menace dans l'air. Le résultat du vote sur le monopole de blé n'est-il pas un signe indicateur? Il rend plus sombre le tableau de ce soir! Le peuple suisse à une légère majorité d'électeurs, mais à une forte majorité cantonale, vient de repousser le projet d'étatisation cher à son excellence Sieur Schulthess. Les rangs serrés au socialiste passait son bras sous celui du paysan se sont dénués. Il y a eu débandade, peut être même traitrise! Certains paysans se sont brusquement aperçu qu'ils n'étaient que des jouets bien dressés dans le jeu socialiste; certains travailleurs ont hésité à l'ultime seconde de remplir à nouveau le bas de laine campagnard. Des deux côtés il y a eu méfiance, des deux côtés les chefs n'ont pas été suivis par le gros de leurs troupes. Ce moment d'hésitation a suffi, le bloc bourgeois, uni, décidé est sorti victorieux de la compétition. Mais de part et d'autre la rançune est grande. Son excellence est furieux, il prend son échech très à coeur; il en veut particulièrement aux Romands (on ne sait au juste pourquoi), il se sent amoindri diminué, et accable de reproches son bras droit, le fameux Docteur Laur, qui s'est institué Chef de Paysans. Voici bien le grand vaincu, et il faut espérer que cette déconfiture fera réfléchir un peu l'homme bouillant des bords de l'Aar. Son étoile commence à pâlir, l'échech est rude, très rude pour lui, il s'était trop engagé, il paye aujourd'hui ses fautes. Son parti lui en veut le paysan sent instinctivement qu'il a plus perdu que gagné à cette aventure monopolesque et serrant le poing dans sa poche il rage.

Les socialistes sont complètement dérouterés; ils étaient sûrs du succès; ils l'auraient tenté avec leurs seules forces; ils étaient certains de la victoire avec l'aide des paysans. Aux premières nouvelles ils prennent très mal leur échech. Ils le lient intimement à l'élection de ce soir, ils y voient une double attaque de la réaction, et s'ils ont perdue la première manche ils veulent gagner la seconde.

Comme vous le voyez les minutes que nous vivons sont passionnantes.

Le soir approche, les députés se dirigent vers le Palais Fédéral. Il leur est cette fois impossible de donner un démenti à l'élan populaire qui réclame l'exclusion du sieur Grimm. Il leur faut pour une fois faire table rase de leurs détestables petites combinaisons, écarter les marchandages et obéir, oui obéir, aux ordres de ceux qui dans les villes, les campagnes, les montagnes, les ont appelés à siéger. Oui, compatriote, qui sur la terre anglaise perdus un peu de la saveur, de l'apreté d'une telle lutte, puissent ces lignes te prouver que le pays où de 1914 à 1918 tu accomplis ton devoir, n'oublie pas ton abnégation et ton sacrifice anonyme. C'est en ton souvenir, pour son propre respect et pour le tien, qu'il tente aujourd'hui de chasser un indigne.

Une petite revue de 1918.

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