

# Notes and gleanings

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Grave political considerations are thus involved. On the one hand there is a conflict of interests between France and Germany. It is true that Articles 358 and 359 of the Treaty of Versailles oblige France to compensate Germany by surrendering to her either half the power produced or half the profits realised, but conflict is caused by the contradictory character of the two schemes authorised by the Central Committee, it being the interest of Germany to

improve the navigation of the Rhine itself, which is incompatible with the construction of the canal.

On the other hand, there is strong opposition not only in Germany and Switzerland, but in the other countries interested in the navigation of the Rhine to the diversion of navigation for about 165 miles through French territory. One obvious and very grave objection is that a Customs barrier will presumably be set up on an international navigable route.

The Comité des Etudes pour l'Aménagement du Rhin in Paris, has proposed an alternative scheme, the authors of which are the Swiss engineer Höhn, of Zurich, and the Alsatian engineer Fischer, of Fröschwiller. They say that the scheme of the canal, although justified in 1902, has become out of date owing to the progress in the construction of turbines, which has greatly increased the output of waterfalls of moderate height. Their scheme is to produce force by dams on the Rhine itself at Istein, as has already been done on the Rhine above Basel, and also on the Danube. They claim that the practical advantages of their scheme are greatly superior to those of the canal, that it would give France more power (about one-third as much again) at two-thirds of the price, and various other technical advantages. It would prevent navigation from being diverted from the Rhine, and would involve only four locks between Basel and Strasbourg instead of eight.

The respective technical merits of the rival schemes are, of course, a question for experts, but there can be no doubt about the political advantages of a solution avoiding the necessity for a canal. The supporters of the alternative scheme allege that the French Government has persistently refused even to examine it, and suggest that the reasons for refusal have been political. MM. Poincaré and Tardieu, in particular, are said to be strongly opposed to the consideration of any alternative scheme to that of the Grand Canal.

#### Lieut. Mittelholzer's Flight.

Little notice has been taken in the English Press of Lieut. Mittelholzer's great flight: what makes his feat all the more admirable is that he lacked the funds, organisation and preparations which were at the disposal of previous aviators in similar undertakings. The following report was published in the African World (March 19th):—

Lieut. Walter Mittelholzer, the Swiss airman, completed his long flight from Switzerland to the Cape at 5.40 on Monday evening, when he made a perfect landing in Table Bay. He was welcomed by the Mayor of Cape Town, the Administrator, the Swiss Consul, and by a fleet of small sailing craft loaded with cheering enthusiasts.

Lieut. Mittelholzer does not intend to undertake the return journey by air. His machine will be dismantled in Cape Town and sent home by ship.

In the course of a short interview Lieut. Mittelholzer said that the trip from East London to Cape Town had occupied 6½ hours, and had been a very smooth run. The total flying time of the trip from Zurich to Cape Town had been a little under 100½ hours. The seaplane, the 'Switzerland,' had behaved well throughout. Mittelholzer's flying times for the trip were:

	h. m.
Zurich to Jinja .....	52.00
Jinja to Kisumu .....	1.30
Kisumu to Mwanza .....	3.00
Mwanza to Uvira .....	3.00
Uvira to Kivu .....	3.30
Kivu to Kasenga .....	4.20
Kasenga to Karonga .....	2.20
Karonga to Ft. Johnston .....	4.00
Ft. Johnston to Beira .....	5.05
Total flying time Zurich to Beira	78.05

From Beira to Cape Town via Lourenço Marques, Durban, East London, and Port Elizabeth, 21 hours 58 mins.

The seaplane is made entirely of steel and aluminium alloy, including the wing surfaces.

Its length is 40ft., span 60ft., and its normal load is 2,200lb., which it will carry at a speed of 114 m.p.h. It is the first example of the German thick wing section plane seen in Africa.

When a trans-African air service is established, Lieut. Mittelholzer, the Swiss airman, thinks it likely that it will be run with seaplanes. Lieut. Mittelholzer is to-day (Wednesday) dismantling and packing the seaplane in which he concluded the flight from Lake Zurich to Cape Town. The flight was arranged and carried through with only a fraction of the time and expense which was required for the ground organisation for Sir Alan Cobham's flight to the Cape. For previous flights to the Cape hundreds of Central African natives had to be employed to clear aerodromes. The ground organisation was more expensive than the actual flights.

"I have found all my landing grounds ready made," said Lieut. Mittelholzer. "There is water within sight of an airman right through the jungle areas of Africa."

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"When you come to have an air service between Cape Town and Durban, I do believe it would be best to use seaplanes," said the Swiss airman. "I found landing places in the estuaries of rivers every hundred miles between Durban and Cape Town. There are more good places to be found by an airman with a seaplane than by a man 'on wheels' should a forced landing be necessary."

For some years past Lieut. Mittelholzer has piloted a daily air service between the big towns of Switzerland during the summer. In winter he makes long flights to other lands. He holds six aviation records, and has published four books on aeronautics as applied to geographical survey and photography. He has also published books on his North Polar and Persian expeditions. He is the director of the Ad Astra Aero Company. Two members of his expedition whom the Swiss airman, Mittelholzer, left behind, namely, Dr. Arnold Heim, Professor of Geology in the University of Zurich, and M. Rene Gouzy, a Geneva journalist, and an authority on aeronautics, will go to Johannesburg and Pretoria, where they hope to meet Dr. Arnold Theiler and to visit gold and platinum mines as well as the Zoological Gardens. They will then go to Cape Town, where they will join Lieut. Mittelholzer and Mr. Hartmann. The whole party will return to Europe by steamer.

They hope to recoup the cost of the expedition from the sale of a book which Dr. Heim

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