

Notes and gleanings

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HOME NEWS

The two houses of the Swiss parliament re-assembled last week for a three weeks' session.

In the States Council a suggestion that the Confederation should come to an agreement with all those countries maintaining foreign legions in order to prevent recruiting amongst Swiss citizens was declared to be impracticable of realisation. No less than three strongly supported interpolations were presented, severely criticising the Government for its accommodating attitude with regard to Russia. We publish in another column the full explanation of President Motta as officially communicated to the Press.

The municipality of Berne proposes to acquire at a cost of Frs. 182,000 the extensive estate known as "Hühnerhubel" and to construct thereon a large aerodrome.

"Nothing doing" is the result of the elections last week-end for members of the Lucerne municipal council, as none of the candidates has obtained the required absolute majority.

By inflicting short terms of imprisonment the Basle appeal court has practically reversed the judgment of the lower tribunal when the five policemen, who last October mistook a watchman for a burglar and fired at him with fatal results, were acquitted of the charge of having made unjustified use of their pistols.

During last year 190 destitute Russian nationals have been cared for in Switzerland through the medium of the Swiss Red Cross Society; about 40 of them are inmates of mental homes and a similar number of institutions for consumptives.

In the course of a festive procession in connection with the trade exhibition arranged in Zurich by Swiss hotel and innkeepers, one of the horses shied, with the result that the rider lost his seat and fell between a tramcar and a motor-lorry; he died soon after arrival at the local hospital. The victim is H. Egarter, the owner of the restaurant "Becken-Rain" in Zurich VI.

Misjudging the distance of an approaching tramcar, the farmer Joseph Meli, from Wyden-Benken (St. Gall) was knocked down from his ox-driven wagon and subsequently died from his injuries.

Owing to the overturning of their motor cycle during a night ride Hans Meier, age 24, from Lanzenneunforn (Thurgau) lost his life, whilst his companion, Albert Keller, from Dettighofen, suffered serious injuries.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Deutsches Theater in Südafrika—Mitte Juni wird in Kapstadt, unter der Direktion von Kurt Liessem vom Stadttheater Chur das erste deutsche Berufstheater eröffnet. Finanziert wird das Unternehmen von dem mehrere tausend Mitglieder zählenden Deutschen Verein in Kapstadt. Das Ganze ist als ein Versuch anzusehen, da bei ungenügender Rentabilität das Ensemble Ende des Jahres wieder zurückkehrt. Geschäftsleiter des Theaters ist ein Schweizer, Herr Grob aus Aarau. Auch im Ensemble selbst sind Schweizer Kräfte beschäftigt, so Therese Gerber (Thun) vom Stadttheater Winterthur und Eugen Webeck vom Städtebund-Theater Solothurn-Biel. Für den Anfang sind zur Aufführung vorgesehen: "Faust," "Käbale und Liebe," "Johannisfeuer," "Spiel im Schloss," "Grabmal des unbekannten Soldaten" und eine Anzahl ältere Operetten.

—*Neu Zürcher Zeitung.*

Von kriegsgeschädigten Schweizern—Vor einiger Zeit hat die schweizerisch-deutsche Hilfsgesellschaft ihre Tätigkeit eingestellt, und bei diesem Anlass haben sowohl der deutsche Gesandte in Bern als auch Reichspräsident von Hindenburg ihre Anerkennung für die von der Schweiz geleistete Hilfe ausgesprochen. Das Glasgemälde, das der Reichspräsident der Schweiz verehrt hat, wird für

uns stets ein wertvolles Zeugnis für die persönliche Vornehmheit des greisen Feldherrn sein, und die Herren, welche am Empfang beim deutschen Gesandten teilgenommen haben, werden jenen Abend als einen neuen Beweis unserer freundschaftlichen Beziehungen mit der deutschen Schwesterrepublik in guter Erinnerung halten.

Hingegen wird man es selbst der sprichwörtlich gewordenen schweizerischen Bescheidenheit nicht verargen können, wenn sie das heute neuerstarkte Deutsche Reich darauf hinweist, dass es auch Gelegenheit hätte, durch tatkräftiges Eingreifen der Not jener Schweizer zu steuern, die durch die deutsche Kriegführung Hab und Gut verloren haben. Noch immer sind die in Belgien gebrandschatzten Schweizer nicht entschädigt worden. Es sind ungefähr fünf Schweizerfamilien, deren Besitz 1914 eingeschert wurde. Heute müssen es diese Leute bitter beklagen, dass sie dem Schweizerland ihre Treue bewahrt haben. Hätten sie sich nämlich naturalisieren lassen, was ja in Belgien nicht schwierig ist, so wäre ihnen der erlittene Schaden infolge der Versailler Bestimmungen von den Deutschen vergütet worden. So aber erhielten sie bis heute nichts. Deutschland zahlte nicht, Belgien nicht, die Schweiz nicht. Ich traf in Löwen eine 75-jährige Zürcherin, die Witwe eines Ingenieurs, die durch den Brand von 1914 alles verloren hat und heute ihr Brot durch Krankenpflege verdienen muss. Und während diese wackere Frau, die einst Tage gesehen hat, wo sie wahrlich nicht gezwungen war, in fremden Solde zu arbeiten, sich Stück für Stück ihres Hausrates neu erwerben musste, hat eine schweizerische philanthropische Gesellschaft ungefähr 70 Häuser aufgebaut und sie belgischen Brandgeschädigten beinahe gratis überlassen. Unsere Landsleute wurden übergangen!

Ebenfalls in Löwen traf ich einen Konditor aus dem Kanton Neuenberg, der nach 30-jähriger Arbeit ein blühendes Geschäft sein eigen nannte, um es in den Augusttagen 1914 in Schutt und Asche sinken zu sehen. Vergebens hatte er sein Haus durch die Schweizerfarben zu schützen gesucht, als eines der ersten ging es in Flammen auf. Wohl steht heute Löwen wieder schöner da denn je. Deutschland hat gezahlt und Belgien hat nachgeholfen. Nur die Schweizer sind leer ausgegangen. Und wie in Löwen, ging es auch den andern kriegsgeschädigten Schweizern in Belgien. Seit 1914 hören unsere Landsleute auf alle ihre Bitten nur stets das ewige und so diplomatische "nous verrons." Die Akten dürften sich seither im Politischen Departement hoch aufgetürmt haben, Taten sind keine gefolgt. Und wir schreiben 1927!

—*Neu Zürcher Zeitung.*

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

The Babel of Languages at Geneva.

We have often wondered how the language problem of the League of Nations conferences can be solved to everybody's satisfaction. The majority of the delegates are apparently unable to express themselves freely in one of the two official tongues—French or English—and the prompt imparting of the content of their addresses is evidently vital in any general discussion. A new device to facilitate the interpretation of either English or French has been tried for some time and is likely to be adopted in the near future. It does not strike us, however, to be of much practical value as the delegates may be credited to be sufficiently conversant with these two official languages to follow with confidence what is being said in them. In the *Times* (June 6th) the following particulars of this new device are given:—

The past week has seen a step towards what appears to be a sound compromise between the need for restraint in the official recognition of languages and the need for making more comprehensible to delegates the discussions at the great international meetings. The process consists in providing "unofficially" for those who have the strongest claim for attention, a simultaneous interpretation from the original address made in English or in French. The problem is made less difficult by the progress that has recently been made in the electrical reception and transmission of sound. But an elementary test last year showed this method to be rich in small troubles. In the first place, though the great international conferences have demonstrated to what high degrees of efficiency the art of interpretation can be carried, it has been shown that, though a skilled interpreter finds no difficulty in making accurate notes while listening to an orator, he does experience very considerable difficulty in listening to the same orator and giving

ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

June 21st, 1339.—Battle of Laupen and victory of the Bernese against the landed aristocracy under the leadership of the Count of Nidau. Fribourg fought on the side of the aristocracy. The Forest Cantons assisted Bern. The town of Laupen was defended by Johann von Bubenberg. Although Bern could only muster 6,000 men, against 20,000 of their enemies, they gained a magnificent victory, and it became proverbial that God himself had become a citizen of Bern. In commemoration of their victory the Bernese formed an Everlasting League with the Waldstätten in 1353.

June 22nd, 1476.—Victory of the Confederates at Murten against Charles the Bold. Murten was defended by Adrian von Bubenberg. (We again should like to draw attention to the splendidly written book by P. E. de Vallière, "Murten." A German translation has been published by Spes, in Lausanne.)

June 24th, 1713.—The Forest Cantons renew the Rütli-Oath for the establishment of true unity. (Such unity, and especially the observance of it, is urgently needed to-day.)

June 25th, 1529.—Peace of Kappel. Revocation by the five Cantons of the Austrian Alliance.

a simultaneous verbal interpretation in another language. The interpreter's hearing seems to become "jammed" by his own voice. Secondly, it has been found that, however patient listeners to wireless programmes may be in the wearing of headphones, delegates to international congresses are not equally blessed with patience, and that the ordinary headphones, when used for the reception of a translation of a speech which is being given at the same time become uncomfortable to wear and, moreover, do not exclude the direct voice of the person whose address is being translated.

Experiments made last Monday seem to show that most of the earlier difficulties have been mastered—so much so that it appears highly probable that the International Labour Conference will have started a new and permanent practice. It is understood that the Conference Hall at Geneva is to be equipped at once with sufficient gear to enable 80 persons to listen to a simultaneous translation—perhaps two distinct simultaneous translations—of a speech given in an "official language."

The new process is briefly as follows:—Within hearing distance and within full sight of the orator sits a translator with a telephonic mouthpiece specially "damped" to make it insensible to sounds from a distance. The interpreter closely watches the speaker on the rostrum (the earlier experiments showed the isolation of the interpreter in a silence cabin to be a mistake), and makes his interpretation and any necessary commentary into the microphone, using a strength of voice which is little more than a whisper. These sounds are amplified electrically, carried by wires to the various tables at which the delegations are seated, and reproduced at considerable strength in a series of earpieces like those of stethoscopes placed before each delegate. These earpieces have three advantages—they completely fill the ear channels, and thereby cut out extraneous noises; they are light, and therefore not uncomfortable; and they permit, by means of a screw-valve on the rubber tubes which feed them, an easy control of the volume of sound. During Monday's experiments at Geneva the German delegates seated in the front row immediately beneath the orator, received the German interpretation absolutely free from the speech proper.

The apparatus prepared for the Secretariat of the International Labour Office for this purpose by Captain Gordon Finlay, who is attached to the Office to study this particular problem, has, among a number of minor refinements, one particularly novel feature. The amplifier, besides possessing its own rectifier for the conversion of the ordinary lighting current into working current—which avoids the necessity for high tension batteries—is controlled entirely by the plugging-in of the telephone jack attached to the interpreter's microphone. Further, if two jacks are plugged in, from two distinct

microphones, the amplifying circuit is automatically split in two and made to feed two distinct outputs, so that it becomes possible to make with the one set of apparatus two distinct and simultaneous translations of the original speech. There appears to be no reason why the same principal should not be applied eventually, if necessary, to a number of circuits.

The work which has been done at Geneva has been made possible largely by financial support received from the American philanthropist Mr. E. A. Filene, who has pursued into the realm of internationalism the quest for efficiency so characteristic of his nation. It is doubtful whether the development of the idea is yet sufficiently complete to make it equally applicable in all places. The difficulty which interpreters experience in listening and giving a simultaneous verbal interpretation for any length of time still remains. Captain Finlay sees a solution for this trouble in the use of an enlarged form of phonographic recorder with two independent actions, a constant recording device, and a reproducing gear which can be lifted, say by the action of the foot, from the cylinder at any desired moment and made to return to the point of interruption without in any way interfering with the work of recording. The interpreter will, with such an apparatus, be able to interpret sentence by sentence—an easy process—and there will remain at the end a permanent record of the original speech. In this way the presence of shorthand reporters in the conference hall may be dispensed with. There has not been time to develop the phonographic apparatus for the present Labour Conference, but it will undoubtedly be given a test at an early date.

The South African delegates at Geneva are so much struck by this new development that they propose on their return to advocate its application to the debates in the Union Parliament.

A Swiss Absurdity Threatened

is the title of the following short note in the *Motor* (May 31st): For four years past there has been an absurd and highly dangerous regulation in Switzerland by which all Government cars—that is, the postal diligences—should be allowed to keep to the inner edge on a mountain road. As other vehicles of the same type abound, the driver of a car does not know until at close quarters whether he is meeting a Federal char-à-bancs or a privately owned one, and, in any case, the probability of an accident at a blind corner is always imminent. At last, however, the postal authorities have been moved to propose a modification. They suggest that on very narrow roads the diligence should still have the right to the inner edge, but should halt to let another vehicle pass. On wider roads and where there is a clear view the Government cars, it is suggested, should overtake on the inner side, but must not cut in quickly after passing. This means, of course, that the driver of a slow car can never safely draw aside until he has looked round and ascertained whether the overtaking vehicle is a Government car or not! All the trouble would be avoided if no privileges were claimed for postal cars.

It seems indeed strange that Postal cars, whose drivers, thanks to their regular journeys, possess an intimate knowledge of the particular roads, should command such an advantage over the ordinary motorist, who presumably, in most instances, is an occasional tourist traversing and exploring country new to him.

The Russians at Geneva.

That the sojourn of the Russian delegation is a cause of constant anxiety for the Geneva police—which has been strengthened from the force of other cantons—is shown by the following paragraph from the June number of *Foreign Affairs*:

From the first the Geneva authorities did their best to make the Russians feel at home. With delicate attention, they sent them to live in the Hotel d'Angleterre. With even more attention, though perhaps less delicacy, they barricaded the sidewalk, set a guard outside, in the lobby, and in the halls, and organised a police service for the telephone. The Russians had complained of lack of protection on Swiss soil? They should be protected, then. Not even a poisonous whisper should reach them over the wires. The Swiss police, it seemed, were willing to absorb all such for them, and incidentally some information on their relations. Journalists calling the delegation were immediately switched on to the police, asked their name, newspaper, and business, then told either that the delegation could talk to no one at the moment or sometimes simply left without an answer until they rang off in helpless annoyance. Failing access of any kind, even to the secretary of the delegation, they supposed it was the Russians who were afraid to talk, until it became known that they had protested to Sir Eric Drummond against their state of "virtual imprisonment." Through his good offices the "service" was somewhat attenuated, the Russians

came to the Conference in one or two taxis instead of a fleet of eight full of policemen as prophesied in the papers, and the barricades were removed on Thursday afternoon before a curious crowd. Yet two days later a journalist invited to a rendezvous by one of the delegation was not allowed to go up or to communicate with him. Such interference, of course, did not come to all, but why should it come to any? The Swiss have said, what is quite true, that their responsibility for assuring the safety of the delegation is heavy. But there are ways and ways of protection; and the Swiss way this time was marked by a lack of tact that seemed to come more from fear of the Russians than for them. At the Conference their speeches have been listened to with interest and attention. While definitely rejecting any idea of an alteration of the Russian economic system, all the delegates indicated their belief that there was no reason why the two systems should not exist side by side and co-operate in economic reconstruction. The recent Arcos raid in London by the British Government is likely to cause Britain to be excluded from the benefits which will result from this inevitable co-operation.

A Violin with a History.

From the *Daily Express* (May 30th):—

Many historical musical instruments of all kinds are on view at the International Exhibition of Music at Geneva—the first of its kind to be held in Europe.

An old violin made by Andrea Guarnerius, in 1675, at Cremona is, perhaps, attracting the most attention, on account of the romance and tragedy attached to the instrument during the last 252 years.

This violin is now the cherished property of a wealthy Genevese amateur, M. Louis Prod'homme, who bought it at Leipzig in 1890, and who states he would not sell it for any amount of money.

It has travelled through the principal countries of Europe. The lowest price paid for it was "one hundred pieces of gold," 150 years ago, when a Bohemian sold it to a Neapolitan named Alberto Fortuni.

Then the instrument came successively into the hands of three Germans, who all died soon after they had bought the violin.

Finally an antiquary named Muirensky, of Leipzig, bought it and was preparing to take it to America when he died, and the Cremona came to Geneva.

DE MOSCOU, ENCORE! ET DE VEVEY.

N'en déplaise à quelques âmes chagrines, il nous faut, aujourd'hui encore, dire quelques mots de nos relations avec la Russie. Que ce soit en cette chambre vénérable du Conseil des Etats, où sous le lustre énorme les prudents députés paraissent des punaises attendant d'être écrasées par la masse qui, du plafond, va leur tomber d'un moment à l'autre sur la tête; que ce soit au Conseil National plus turbulent comme plus lumineux; partout s'élèvent des voix qui protestent contre l'accord conclu, qui demandent les explications les plus détaillées, qui réservent l'avenir et qui montrent une mauvaise humeur certaine.

Des députés de toutes les tendances politiques, de toutes les langues, enfin de toutes les parties du pays, se lèvent et font entendre la même voix, sous le silence approbateur du reste des Assemblées. Certes, notre remarquable Ministre des Affaires étrangères s'attendait bien à un questionnaire, il n'avait pas prévu cette levée de bouilliers, et il faut franchement reconnaître que ses explications quoique très précises n'ont pas donnée à tous entière satisfaction.

Monsieur Motta a, entre autres choses, relevé que la note échangée prévoyait des négociations futures afin d'obtenir le règlement des questions pendantes. Il reconnaît pas ailleurs que les Soviets tiennent beaucoup à être reconnus par notre pays; enfin il déclare plus loin: "Le règlement de ces questions, si jamais il devenait possible, ne pourrait se faire que grâce à une négociation très longue et très lourde, précédée par la reconnaissance de jure du gouvernement soviétique ou aboutissant finalement à ce résultat."

Voici les paroles telles qu'elles furent prononcées. On comprendra qu'une partie de l'opinion publique, en joignant certaines phrases éparses de ce remarquable discours, s'inquiète et non sans raison. Les services de police de Genève vous diraient de leur côté que ce ne serait pas une sinécure que surveiller à la fois un centre international de propagande communiste qui aurait son siège à Genève, tout comme les autres institutions internationales et qui ferait peut-être plus de travail qu'eux, et de veiller en même temps sur la personne de ses dirigeants qui jouiraient évidemment d'une immunité diplomatique quelconque. On a

constaté l'efficacité du travail accompli par la délégation russe lors de la dernière conférence, et l'on commence à se rendre compte que l'avantage escompté pourrait bien ne pas être celui sur lequel on avait tablé. Même dans ces milieux, il se dessine une forte réaction dont l'Angleterre a pris la tête; et non sans raison! On comprendra donc que certains suisses se refusent à offrir à ces Messieurs de Moscou l'asile qu'ils n'ont pas pu trouver ailleurs!

* * *

Et tandis que ces questions politiques agitent, peut-être trop bien des mentalités, il se prépare sur les bords du bleu Léman une des manifestations les plus propres de notre esprit national. Je veux parler de la Fête des Vignerons. Comme vous le savez elle n'a lieu que trois ou quatre fois par siècle et groupe tous les enfants du pays Vaudois en un même sentiment de reconnaissance envers notre mère la Terre qui est louée sous la forme de toutes ses saisons et de tous ses bienfaits. Avec une unanimité remarquable le peuple s'est levé pour reprendre la chère tradition et le moment est bientôt là où la Suisse toute entière prendra le chemin de la Place du Marché. Sur cette place depuis longtemps légendaire entourée d'antiques demeures, on a édifié une vaste arène de bois qui pourra contenir plus de treize mille personnes. Il y aura des places pour toutes les bourses puisque depuis 5 francs, elles s'élèveront jusqu'à 55! Et rassurez vous dès maintenant, c'est précisément ces sièges qui sont déjà tous loués. De Romanshorn l'on viendra en chemin de fer, de Genève on viendra en bateaux spéciaux, et comme le spectacle commence avant huit heures le matin, c'est une nuit sur le lac que se proposent bien des gens qui vivent autour de St. Pierre. Et ne sera-ce pas merveilleux cette traversée romantique sous le clair de lune qui servira de prélude à la fête elle-même!

Comme en 1905, la partie musicale a été confiée au Maître vénéré Gustave Doret qui a fixé depuis longtemps ses pénates à Paris, tandis que le texte est du poète genevois Girard, qui est tout de fraîcheur et de jeunesse. C'est donc la perfection; il ne demeure qu'une petite ombre au tableau que je me voudrais de ne pas noter bien franchement. Doret nous a déjà donné la Fête splendide de 1905, nous aurions eu un plaisir intense à entendre ce que Jacques-Dalcroze aurait trouvé sur le même thème, et il n'apparaissait que juste que la même personne n'accapare pas deux fois de suite le même rôle! Le destin et les contingences ne l'ont pas voulu ainsi! Nous irons malgré tout, le cœur débordant d'allégresse vers la Fête qui se prépare, et vous vous devez, amis suisses de Londres, d'y venir avec nous!

Un Citoyen.

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

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Confederation 3% 1903	...	80.50	80.35		
5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln	...	101.25	101.65		
Federal Railways 3½% A-K	...	84.37	84.25		
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	...	102.50	102.10		
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		Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	
Swiss Bank Corporation	...	500	767	765	
Crédit Suisse	...	500	815	812	
Union de Banques Suisses	...	500	705	700	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2415	2393		
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3813	3775		
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	...	1000	2895	2893	
S.A. Brown Boveri	...	350	567	569	
C. F. Bally	...	1000	1310	1318	
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	700	700		
Entreprises Sulzer S.A.	...	1000	1050	1025	
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	600	588		
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Hans.—Meet me Wednesday next, June 22nd, 7 p.m., Caxton Hall, Victoria Street, S.W. The 58th FÊTE SUISSE must not be missed.—Trudi.