

Sur un excès de la démocratie

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23rd GORDON-BENNETT BALLOON RACE. Warsaw, September 15th, 1935.

Those of our readers who minutely scanned the English Daily Press for news about the International Gordon-Bennett Race, which took place last Sunday at Warsaw, must have met with great disappointment. The large London Daily papers have almost *in toto* ignored this great International Sporting event, which on the Continent and in America is followed with the greatest interest. True enough, England has not, — and if we are rightly informed, — has never competed, but we would have thought, that a sporting event of such magnitude would have been of sufficient interest to the British Public, to devote at least half a column to it, considering that often news of trifling importance from abroad receive an unwarranted publicity. England has always been known, and rightly so, as a Nation of Sportsmen, and it is the least said, regrettable, that the otherwise well-informed English Press has not found it necessary to send their reporters to a Meeting which ranks as one of the most important ones in the sporting world; we loath to think that the reason for such an omission is due to the fact, that no British entrants could be found to participate in this race, it would be contrary to the sporting instinct and spirit of this great Empire. Curiously enough some of the smaller provincial papers have deemed it important enough to devote a small column to it, whilst London papers, as mentioned above, have either ignored it entirely or given it a few lines only.

The following details might interest our readers:

Twenty-seven years ago, the startling victory of Colonel Schäck, President of the Swiss Aero Club, as he then was, caused a great stir throughout Switzerland. The start was made from Berlin, where altogether 23 balloons took off. The distance flown by the gallant colonel and his companion amounted to 1200km. and they were all in all 73 hours in the air. The Americans came in second, covering a distance of 428 km. This event was unfortunately marred by some regrettable incidents; a few minutes after starting, an American balloon, burst at the height of 500m.; fortunately the cover acted as a parachute, and both pilot and passenger had a narrow escape, landing without being even hurt. The day following the net of one of the Spanish competitors snapped during the voyage but luckily enough no loss of life occurred. The Swiss balloon "Cognac" piloted by Victor de Beaulclair landed near the north sea coast, others risked the trip over the open sea, with the result that four balloons were fished out of the water, somewhere near Heligoland, when two German pilots lost their lives, through having been drowned.

Luck favoured the Swiss, after many hours of anxious waiting, the welcome news came over the wire, that the balloon "Helvetia" which was piloted by Colonel Schäck, had landed safely on the Norwegian coast after having been altogether 73 hours in the air. Switzerland thus not only won the race, but had also beaten the world record of a duration flight. For the first time therefore our country was entrusted with the arrangements for the next competition, which was held at Zurich, at the beginning of October 1909. Switzerland was then represented with three balloons: "Azura" (Captain E. Messmer, the companion of colonel Schäck in 1908); "Helvetia" (Colonel Schäck) and "Cognac" (Victor de Beaulclair) and took 3rd, 4th and 5th place. The winner of this race was the American Mix, with balloon "America II," and second the Frenchman Alf. Leblanc with balloon "He de France." A strong west-wind blew the balloons over Austria, Teheco-Slovakia and as far as the Russian Frontier.

Eleven years later (1921), victory again came to Switzerland. M. P. Armbruster from Berne, started from Brussels, where 14 balloons were entered, having been blown towards the open sea, he risked the journey over the water, and landed safely on the island of Lambey, near the Irish coast, 766km. away from the starting point, and

once again the beautiful Gordon-Bennett cup, which is valued at 10,000 Swiss francs, was entrusted into the safe-custody of Switzerland.

In 1922 the race was held at Geneva, where 19 balloons competed, amongst them three under the Swiss flag. The winner of this race, was the Belgian Demuyter, who also won the next two races and consequently the cup became the perpetual property of the Aero-Club of Belgium. Gordon-Bennett, the proprietor of the New York Herald, then offered a new cup, an exact replica of the first one, this new cup was won again by a Belgian. Then W. T. Orman, an American appeared on the field, and in 1928, after three consecutive wins, the trophy was won outright by the Americans.

After Henry Ford had provided a new cup, the Gordon Bennett race continued in 1929 at St. Louis (U.S.A.) and 1931 (1930 no race took place) in Cleveland (U.S.A.); in 1933 America won the cup outright. The American Aero Club offered a new cup, which was won in 1933 and 1934 by Poland.

At the time of writing, no definitive results are available, the Swiss Balloon "Zurich III" is reported to have landed at Neuenmühle near Riga after a flight of 28 hours, the German Balloon "Deutschland" has also landed near Riga. So far it is doubtful that Switzerland will be in the front rank.

(We intend to publish in one of our next issue's a complete list, giving the landing place and exact distance flown by each competitor.)

LATEST NEWS.

Subject to official verification, the first three placings in the Gordon-Bennett balloon race, which started from Warsaw on Sunday, are:

1. "Warszawa" (Polish), with Capt. Anthony Janusz, which covered 970 miles;
2. "Belgica" (Belgium), with M. Ernest Demuyter, which covered 870 miles;
3. "Kosciusko" (Polish), with Capt. Frank Hynek, the winner in 1933 and 1934, which covered 806 miles.

They all landed in Russia, south of Moscow. If these placings are confirmed Poland, by winning three times in succession, will be entitled to permanent possession of the present trophy.

HOME FOR AGED SWISS.

Owing to some unexpected developments, it will be possible to proceed with the organisation of the Home at a much earlier date than was anticipated.

Unless the work of making indispensable repairs should prove very lengthy, it is now hoped to have some of our aged and needy compatriots housed in the Home before the end of the year.

The Committee is most anxious to enlist the support of the Swiss Colony in making the Home all what its name implies and begs to remind its members who may have surplus furniture or household goods that such will be gratefully received by the

Swiss Benevolent Society,

34, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

If desired, the Committee will gladly make arrangements for having goods collected at the house of the donor.

FROM THE LIVERPOOL COLONY. The late Mrs. Rosa HOCH †.

I must recall the years around 1910. We had then a member of the Swiss Club Liverpool, Mr. A. Hoch, senior to most active members of those years, but who nevertheless enjoyed our company so well, that he sometimes after a Banquet, would invite the whole company to another Banquet next day at his own expense.

One day Mr. Hoch, much to our surprise married and we wondered what his lady from Didsbury would be like. We found her a charming woman, quiet and dignified, and whom we soon could like.

After a few years of married life, a motor tragedy left her a widow and we at once decided to make her an honorary member of the Club, an action which was a consolation to her at the time and an honour which she appreciated.

She filled her time by acting as a poor law guardian and then became a City Councillor, work which proved of absorbing interest to her. She remained attached to our Club, gave constant support to the Swiss Relief Committee and thus we feel a personal loss now that she has also passed away. There must be many former members of our Club scattered over the world, who will retain of her, a kindly memory and who will feel it right, that we should have paid her the respect of an affectionate farewell.

On behalf of the Consulate, the Swiss Relief Committee and, of course, the Swiss Club, a deputation was sent to her funeral who deposited a wreath on behalf of us all.

If spending your life in service for others means happiness, hers was indeed a happy life.
E. M.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

After a short respite during the summer months the Society resumed its Monthly Meetings on Wednesday, September 11th. A goodly number of members were present when Mr. A. Steinmann, President, opened the proceedings. The main item on the Agenda was the Lecture Programme and Social Fixtures for the coming season. The Committee had spared no efforts in making the programme as varied and attractive as possible. The hope was expressed that the members would give it their wholehearted support and further particulars in the form of a leaflet will be sent out in due course. The Chairman informed the Meeting that the Evening Classes will re-open on September 30th and exhorted the members to make full use of the facilities offered them. The Chairman also referred to a circular letter received by the Swiss Legation giving particulars of an extensive broadcasting programme "For Swiss Abroad" transmitted by the Swiss Broadcasting Society. Mr. W. Meier, Chairman of the Education Committee, reported on the recent activities of the College, mentioning in particular the very successful excursions to Portsmouth during Navy Week, the Ford Motor Works at Dagenham and the Port of London. Mr. J. J. Boos, Chairman of the House Committee, reported on the activities of his Committee and recent re-decorations effected at Swiss House.

The Meeting was followed by a lecture on "Industrial Co-partnership," by E. W. Mundy, Esq., B.A. (Oxon), late Secretary of the Industrial Co-partnership Association. The students of the College were invited to this lecture.

The lecturer who is an authority on the subject gave a number of illustrative plans of co-partnership in industry. His arguments were ensued by an interesting debate. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the speaker for his very interesting lecture.

OBITUARY. From Hausen a/Albis comes the sad news of the decease on August 26th of Dr. Phil. h.c. Alfred Reinhart of Alexandria (Egypt). In him the Society loses one of its staunchest supporters. He was a donor to the Educational Fund ever since the foundation of the College in 1922.

WB.

SUR UN EXCES DE LA DEMOCRATIE.

La Constitution vient donc d'échapper à l'issue fatale et soudaine et elle n'est plus menacée que d'une longue agonie.

Ainsi en a décrété le peuple, qui, s'il n'a pas voulu qu'on brisât d'un coup ses tables de la loi, n'en entend pas moins qu'on poursuive sans relâche et article après article la réforme constitutionnelle.

Cependant, peuple, c'est trop vite dit, et, au vrai, les citoyens ne s'entendent guère sur la longue suite de révisions partielles qui appellent notre verdict; les uns réclament des changements qu'à aucun prix ne veulent les autres, proposant ailleurs, et tout un chacun bientôt avance sa petite opinion inconciliable avec celle du voisin.

Les révisions fragmentaires trouvent ainsi d'acharnés adversaires, aussi bien qu'elles font lever des partisans résolus, et, comme il faut relativement peu de signatures pour faire aboutir une initiative, les partisans sont assurés de contraindre les adversaires à l'épreuve du scrutin.

La démocratie s'en trouve satisfaite d'avantage que la raison et l'on n'arrête plus guère de voter chez nous.

Neuf initiatives, sauf erreur, attendent encore que le peuple se prononce et le sort de plusieurs d'entre elles est réglée d'avance. Ce n'est pas pourtant qu'il soit inutile de voter lorsque le succès est acquis, car la confirmation populaire ajoute évidemment à la force d'une décision.

Mais, dans le cas de la défaite promise, on peut par contre se demander si c'est la peine vraiment de sonner le rassemblement des électeurs, de faire, en pléines années maigres, les gros frais d'une consultation, de déclencher les passions et de permettre en conséquences aux citoyens d' "un libre peuple de frères" de s'aimer toujours un peu moins les uns les autres.

Poser la question, comme dit l'autre, c'est la résoudre, en théorie du moins, et, en fait, on n'entreprend rien contre l'un des plus flagrants abus de la démocratie; car c'est un abus sans conteste que 50,000 citoyens puissent à eux seuls mobiliser tout le corps électoral, et ce chiffre, s'il correspondait à celui de la population suisse au milieu du siècle dernier, n'est plus du tout en rapport avec la population actuelle.

Pour retrouver ce rapport et pour rendre à l'initiative et au referendum leur premier sens et quelque vertu, il faudrait exiger beaucoup plus de 50,000 signatures.

On s'étonne même de l'imprévoyance de nos pères sur ce point et que les vénéralisés artisans de la Constitution si fortement critique aujourd'hui

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d'hui n'aient pas songé à fixer une proportion, un pourcentage de signatures pour valider initiative et referendum, plutôt que d'arrêter une fois pour toutes un chiffre qu'inévitablement et rapidement les ans devaient rendre périmés.

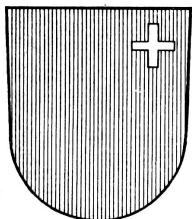
Quoi qu'il en soit, l'inflation de "revisionnettes," comme on s'est mis à dire, prouve bien qu'il est trop facile de faire aboutir, fût-ce inutilement, l'initiative ou le referendum, et que le chiffre légal de 50,000 est devenu trop faible.

A ce jeu-là, le peuple ne tardera plus à se lasser de voter, et de trop fréquents et vains scrutins le détourneront fatalement de l'exercice d'un droit qu'on tient pour la pierre de touche de la démocratie.

Ne vaudrait-il pas la peine dès lors de travailler sans plus de retard à écarter ce péril et à rétablir quelque mesure dans la politique et la chose électorale?

Rodo Mahert.
(Tribune de Genève).

ARMS OF SCHWYZ.



Gules, in the sinister chief point a crosslet argent.

Red was the characteristic colour of the first inhabitants of Switzerland and of the three primitive cantons in particular.

The red banner of Schwyz, like those of other cantons, was charged with the military sign of all Confederates, the white cross.

The cantonal arms, plain red and exempt of all charge for centuries, adopted the white cross of the banner in the middle of the XVIIIth century. This crosslet argent was placed in one of the cantons of the shield, and in the absence of any decree fixing its exact position, we see the crosslet born on either the dexter or sinister side of the chief. It was only in the last century that the custom of placing the crosslet in the canton sinister — and this contrary to heraldic principles — became general.

The arms of Schwyz symbolize the memorable oath of the three leagued cantons "each for all, all for each" which still remains the motto of Switzerland. Out of this defensive alliance sprang the pact which constituted the germ of the present Swiss Confederation.

Schwyz has the double honour of having given its arms and name to Switzerland.

P.S.

EDITOR'S POSTBAG.

Redaktion

Swiss Observer,
London, E.C.2.

Es nimmt mi eigentlich gar nid Wunder, dass der Herr "ch" e chli schmält über die hütti Gleichgültigkeit vo de Lüte; gar b'sunders viel Frau, si, sit em Chrieg, grüsi nachlässig worde, i Hushaltigsache u meine, si sigi nume uf der Wält als Ornemänt, verbrüchet Platz u schnufet Luft u wei nüt schaffe für das grosse Privileg; chöi, wie der Herr "ch" seit, wägen nid a mol guete Interässe zäme rafte, uns e Tasseli guete The z'braue, i meine Thee, mit däm b'sundere sanfte Aroma, wo em scho bim erste Schluck d'Wält rosiger macht a'zuege. Aber meistes chochets d's Wasser scho a Stund vorhär, dass es ling wärdi, u we me öppe der Mueter ihre türe Suschong vernuschet het, wird eifach em Vater si Tuback brucht um z'Wasser z'färbe, u d'z Trurigste derbi isch, dass die wenigste Differenz merke.

Fründliche Grüesse

H.E.

PAGINE DI STORIA TICINESE.

By E. EUSEBIO.

(Continued).

Appena Napoleone Bonaparte venne nominato Console nel 1803 già decideva di dare anche alla Svizzera una nuova Costituzione. A questo scopo fece venire circa 60 Rappresentanti delle Regioni e distretti amministrativi della Repubblica Elvetica; assemblea che fu chiamata Consulta. Dalle deliberazioni della medesima uscì il celebre Atto di Mediazione il quale, al posto dello Stato unitario, ripristinava in Svizzera la vecchia Confederazione, con la differenza che i così detti Baliaggi e territori dipendenti vennero incorporati in sei nuovi Cantoni Sovrani ed aggiunti ai 13 precedentemente esistenti. Il Ticino era fra i nuovi Cantoni, entrando nella Confederazione com "Stato e Repubblica del Cantone del

Ticino." Si assunse nella sua bandiera i colori della città di Parigi, probabilmente in omaggio a Napoleone. Il 18 maggio 1803 la commissione provvisoria per l'attuazione della Costituzione incominciava le sue sedute, mentre il 20 maggio si convocava nella residenza Beneditina il primo Gran Consiglio della Repubblica ticinese, e lo stesso eleggeva poi il primo Piccolo Consiglio, presidente del quale fu l'abilissimo abate Vincenzo d'Alberti di Olivone.

LA RIVOLUZIONE DI GIUBIASCO.

Anni di convulsioni, di difficile sistemazione furono quelli che costituirono la prima decade del secolo diciannovesimo per il nostro Paese. La caduta di Napoleone I. aveva rinsaldato i vincoli fra le grandi Potenze d'Europa. La Dieta Svizzera prendeva il "la" dalla Santa Alleanza che voleva imporre al Ticino uno Statuto aristocratico sullo stampo di quelli del vecchio regime. Ma il popolo che aveva raggiunto la pienezza dei suoi diritti aspirava ad avere una riforma costituzionale improntata a principi democratici. Il nostro Cantone in quella difficile contingenza resistette tenacemente all'ingerenza straniera, dando prova di dignità e maturanza politica. Capeggiavano la resistenza a tali imposizioni uomini d'ingegno e saldi propositi: primo fra gli altri l'avv. Angelo Maria De Stoppani di Ponte Tresa che pagherà poi colla vita l'amore alla libertà del Paese. Respinti dalla Dieta Federale due successivi progetti di costituzione perchè ritenuti troppo arditati in fatto di diritti popolari il Gran Consiglio elaborò un terzo disegno costituzionale che se piacque ai delegati delle potenze estere sollevò la viva opposizione del popolo ticinese. Scoppia la rivolta in diversi punti del Cantone e a Giubiasco si raduna il 26 agosto 1814 un imponente Comizio popolare che assume la qualifica di Congresso Cantonale ed emana un proclama ai cittadini stilizzato dallo Stoppani. Il 30 agosto il Congresso nomina una Reggenza Provvisoria. Ma il progetto costituzionale, redatto pure dallo Stoppani, benchè sancito dal popolo il 4 settembre non fu accettato dalla Dieta, la quale mandò nel Ticino un Commissario federale. Seguirono le dimissioni della Reggenza e il 12 settembre l'arresto dei Capi. Ma il popolo insorse e marciò per Giubiasco su Bellinzona, il Piccolo Consiglio fuggì a Rovereto, in Mesolcina, mentre il popolo, imprigionato il Commissario, Colonello de Sonnenberg, lo costringeva a liberare i prigionieri che vennero portati in trionfo. A questo punto gli avvenimenti precipitavano. Il Piccolo Consiglio veniva reinstaurato al suo posto e a Capo della giunta governativa eletto G. B. Quadri dei Visconti di Magliaso. I rivoluzionari venivano deferiti ad una Corte speciale formata tutta da elementi d'oltr'Alpe e condannati a varie pene. Lo Stoppani trovava misteriosa morte in carcere il 14 gennaio 1815 a Lugano.

(To be continued).

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu le 5 Octobre au Restaurant PAGANI, 42, Great Portland Street, W.1. et sera précédée d'un souper à 7h 15 précises (prix 5/-).

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.	Rapport du Comité
Admissions.	au sujet des membres
Démotions.	à l'Etranger et des
Banquet Annuel.	Assemblée de Juillet
Divers.	et Août.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Tuesday, October 1st — City Swiss Club — Monthly Meeting — preceded by dinner (7.15 Sharp), at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.

Wednesday, October 2nd, at 7.30 p.m. — Société de Secours Mutuels — Monthly Meeting — at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

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Dimanche 22 Sept. 11h. — "Que dit l'Esprit aux Eglises?" Apoc. 2 v. 7 — M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme.

6h.30 — Prédication, M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme.

29 Septembre, 11h. — Reprise de l'Ecole du Dimanche. — Amenez nous vos enfants de 4 à 15 ans — No. 83, Endell Street.

BAPTEME.

James David Hellis, né le 11.7.35 — fils d'Albert John Hellis, de Stratford et de Marie Emma, née Jeanrichard, du Locle (Neuchâtel).

MARIAGES.

Ernst Geiger de Wigoldingen (Thurgovie) and Klara Klaus, née Schellenberg, de Verkheim (Argovie) Franz Dehm, de Bucholt, (Wurttemberg) and Iya Maria Kriegsbaum de Warkhaus (Finlande)

SERVICE FUNEBRE.

Hermann Frédéric Roost de Triboldingen (Thurgovie) âgé de 63 ans — le 14.9.1935.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

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Sonntag, den 22. September 1935.

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7 Uhr abend Gottesdienst.

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