Forthcoming events

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try to another was regulated by treaty btween the two countries, and, as there were no common ideas on the subject, every treaty differed from almost every other. How complicated international postal relations were in those days will be appreciated when it is pointed out that, before 1870, there were many more states than there are to-day. After the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire by Napoleon in 1806, what is now known as the German Reich constituted a multitude of principalities, and each principality had its own postal arrangements. Thus, right in the heart of Europe lay a veritable maze through which half the correspondence of the world had to pass. The conditions have been described by a writer as follows :—

> As time went on the postal treaties required for the establishment of a gradually expanding foreign service became more and more numerous. The effect on the public of their varying and complicated provisions can, in these days of simplicity, scarcely be imagined; but until well into the second-half of the nineteenth century they presented a bewildering complexity, which made it impossible for anyone but an expert to be certain that the rate of postage to a particular destination was correct, and that the postal regulations had been complied with.

The very difficulties of the situation in the German states naturally led to their postal administrations being more interested than the postal administration of other states in a radical solution of the problem. In fact, France and Great Britain had evolved such a relatively satisfactory arrangement between them under a treaty, which was signed in 1670, and, after a lapse owing to hostilities, was resumed in 1713, that the necessity for a universal solution did not appear to their postal administrations as of very pressing importance. They consequently showed little enthusiasm for the international postal system until after its incomparable superiority had been proved. In fact, France declined to be an original signatory of the convention.

Montgomery Bell.

The honour of being the originator of the movement belongs to a Postmaster-General of the United States of America, Montgomery Bell. On August 4th, 1862, he addressed a letter to all the governments with which the United States maintained diplomatic relations, suggesting the holding of a conference in Paris, at which the problem of international postal commuuications might be discussed. The conference was held on May 11th, 1863, and fifteen states were represented. Many of the delegates approached the subject with freely expressed suspicions, fears and doubts. Nevertheless, the conference resulted in the adoption of a statement of thirty-one articles. This historic document served the important purpose of clarifying the issues and of providing a body of principles, which individual postal administrations might apply in order to develop some measure of uniformity in international postal relations. The United States set the rest of the world an example in that direction by implementing the recommendations so far as they were practicable to a single state. Nothing was, however, done to introduce an international system during the ten years that followed. In fact, there was strong opposition to the idea, and even postal experts considered it Utopian.

Heinrich Stephan.

Even before the conference in Paris in 1863 the Austro-German Postal Union had been formed, and the number of German postal administrations had been reduced to sixteen. Heinrich Stephan, Superior Privy Councillor of Posts in Prussia at the time saw that a postal union to embrace all civilised nations was indispensable. In November, 1868, he composed a memorandum, in which he explained his scheme and advocated the calling of an international conference for examining the problem. He presented a memorandum to Bismarck. The " Iron Chancellor " approved of Stephan's proposals, and during the following year the Government of Napoleon III was sounded on the question of calling an international conference.

The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war interrupted progress, but immediately upon the conclusion of peace the project was revived by the new German Empire. The Government of the Swiss Confederation was induced by Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium to undertake the responsibility of calling a congress in Berne on September 1st, 1873. Owing to some objection raised by Russia, the holding of the conference was postponed until September 15th, 1874.

The sessions of the congress were held in the building in which the Swiss Diet used to meet. The accommodation in the hall was so limited that the Press could not be admitted, and the expedient of issuing a daily bulletin was, therefore, adopted. Twenty-two states were represented at the congress, but all the delegates were not empowered to sign a general postal convention; therefore, it was decided that all the delegates should be allowed to take part in the deliberations, the wish being expressed that the delegates, who did not possess the authority to sign a convention, would take the necessary steps to acquire it.

The congress, having agreed upon procedure, applied itself at once to examining the project presented by Germany. That was, of course, the work of Stephan, who represented his country at the conference. The first article of the draft cut the Gordian knot of the problem. It was as follows :—

> The states participating in the present convention shall be considered as forming a single territory in matters which concern the reciprocal exchanges of correspondence between their postal bureaux. They shall be designated under the common name — General Postal Union.

That is the basis of the present International Union. The practical application of the principle so laid down was embodied in Article X, which stated that " the right of transit is guaranteed throughout the entire territory of the Union." Under this article every signatory undertook to receive postal bags from any other signatory, and pass them on to any third signatory without any ado. For rendering that service it would receive corresponding reciprocal services from all other signatories. That solved the problem of international postal transit. But such services were not to be entirely free. A system of payment by weight of all the matter annually handled by one country for another was provided for. Each signatory was to keep in its own hands what is collected in postage on foreign postal matter. The convention was signed on October 9th, 1874, by the delegates of all the countries represented at the congress, except France. Of the countries outside Europe, the United States of America, Asiatic Russia, and Asiatic Turkey were signatories. Ten years later there were 86 countries in the Union. In 1900 there were 113. China was the last great country to enter the Union. She did so in 1914.

(To be continued.)

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu Mardi le 5 Septembre 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.	Démissions.
Admissions.	Divers.

Pour faciliter les arrangements, les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Monsieur P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Téléphone: Clerkenwell 2321/2).

Le Comité

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Monday, September 4th, at 7 p.m. — Swiss Y.M.C.A. — Committee Meeting — at Westgate House, Bedford Place, W.C.1.

Tuesday, September 5th — City Swiss Club — Monthly Meeting — (preceded by dinner at 7 p.m.) at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1.

Wednesday, September 6th at 7.30 p.m. — Société de Secours Mutuels — Monthly Meeting — at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

Thursday, September 7th, at 7 p.m. — Swiss Y.M.C.A. — Meeting — (introduction by Mr. B. Megall) at Westgate House, Bedford Place, W. C. 1. *All young Swiss invited.*

Wednesday, September 13th, at 8 p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society — Monthly Meeting — at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

Thursday, September 14th, at 7 p.m. — Swiss Y.M.C.A. — Meeting — (introduction by Pastor E. Bommeli) at Westgate House, Bedford Place, W.C.1. *All young Swiss invited.*

Friday, September 15th, at 6.30 p.m. (Supper 6.30 p.m.) — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Monthly Meeting — at Foyer Suisse, 15, Bedford Way, W. C. 1.

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Dimanche 3 septembre 1939 :

11h. Culte. M. M. Pradervand.

6h.30 Culte. M. M. Pradervand.

Pour tout ce qui concerne le ministère pastoral, prière de s'adresser à Monsieur le pasteur Marcel Pradervand, 65, Mount View Road, N.4 (Téléphone Mountview 5003). Heure de réception à l'église le mercredi de 11-12h.30.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

(Near General Post Office, St. Paul's and Aldersgate Street Tube Stations (Central London and Metropolitan).

Sonntag, den 3. September :

11 Uhr vormittags : Gottesdienst, Pfr. E. Bommeli.

7 Uhr abends : Gottesdienst, Pfr. E. Bommeli.

Thema in beiden Gottesdiensten : Krieg und Kriegsgeschrei. Evang. Marcus 13.7. Lieder : 346, 159, 162.

Mittwoch Nachmittag : Schwyzerchränzli von 3 Uhr an, im Foyer Suisse, 15, Bedford Way, W.C.1.

TRAUUNG.

Paul Diethelm von Hertenstein (Kt. Luzern) und Elisabeth, geb. Merzweiler von Luzern.

Anfragen wegen Religions — bezw. Konfirmanden Unterricht sind erbeten an Herrn Pfarrer E. Bommeli. Sprechstunden : Jeden Dienstag von 12-2 Uhr in der Kirche, Jeden Mittwoch von 5-6 Uhr im Foyer Suisse, 15, Bedford Way, W.C.1.

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