

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1921)

Heft: 24

Rubrik: Notes & gleanings

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 12.01.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Because during the whole trip they had not a single drop of rain. The average day's speed was 75 kilometres done in seven hours.

* * *

OBITUARY.—Ex-Federal Councillor Ludwig Förrer died at Berne on September 28th. He was born in 1845 at Islikon, in the Canton of Thurgovie, and was the son of parents of modest means. He studied at Zurich University. Between 1870 and 1873 he acted as Attorney-General of the Canton of Zurich, after which he practised as a barrister until he became Director of the International Office of Railway Goods Traffic in 1902. All his life long he was intensely interested in politics. From 1870 until 1900 he was a member of the Zurich Cantonal Council (for some years co-operating with the then Staatsschreiber Gottfried Keller), from 1881 until 1900 a member of the Swiss National Council, and from 1903 until 1917 a member of the Swiss Government. Twice, in 1906 and 1912, he was President of the Confederation. In 1917 he resigned his strenuous post on the Swiss Federal Council owing to his great age, and subsequently he again filled the post of Director of the International Office of Railway Goods Traffic. He enjoyed a high reputation on account of his eminent knowledge in railway affairs. As head of the Railway Department of the Swiss Government for many years he was responsible for the much talked of Gotthard Convention which Switzerland passed with Germany and Italy in 1913.

NOTES & GLEANINGS.

Education and juvenile instruction in Switzerland has always been closely watched by English educational authorities. "The Teachers' Times" (Sept. 23rd) describes in detail the system in vogue at a State Primary School and selects for this purpose the 'Ecole Pestalozzi' at Yverdon. The article is highly complimentary and terminates with the following conclusions:—

"In Neuchâtel, for example, there seems to be a keen spirit abroad for education, for students' guides are available at the general enquiry office and displayed along with tourist and other guide books. All fees are particularly low, and the normal college is free. Foreign students are encouraged and special courses arranged for their benefit. Secondary schools for boys and girls are linked up with the university; in fact, one is conducted in the university building itself. There is a fine conservatoire of music and an excellent school of commerce, while we must not forget the professional school for hotel-keepers. This establishment trains pupils of both sexes in the art of cooking, serving, and organising of catering. The restaurant attached is open to the public, who can thus test from day to day the efficiency of the instruction. A boarding-house is also connected, so that the students obtain practical knowledge in all branches of hotelkeeping. No wonder the Swiss excel in the art.

It seems rather sad that stern necessity, owing to the strategic position of Switzerland, requires that military training should be so much in evidence, but perhaps with a happier era, should the League of Nations' ideal mature, this compulsory training begun at eight years of age will be rendered unnecessary and transformed into physical training for the arts of peace rather than the menace of war. Struggle has perhaps been the keynote of Swiss character, but the result is a very wise, strong, capable little country which justifies its existence if only to give weary holiday seekers a glimpse into its Elysian fields.

'L'union fait la force' has been proved up to the hilt by this brave little confederation of twenty-two cantons, whose peoples are drawn from three distinct stocks, and yet who can all agree on those points which make for the welding together of a stable community."

Writing on "Museums Abroad—Their Value in Education," contributors in "The Morning Post" (Sept. 28th and 29th) eulogize and enlarge on the utility of the Schweiz. Permanente Schulausstellung in Berne, the permanent scholastic exhibitions in Lausanne, Fribourg and Locarno, and the Pestalozzianum in Zurich.

* * *

The same paper publishes on October 1st a very fascinating article about "Treasures of Switzerland" by S. E. Winbolt. Studies in the Berne Historical Museum and the Swiss National Museum in Zurich have left a deep impression on Mr. Winbolt, but what captivated his mind more than anything else is the Brugg Museum and the camp and amphitheatre at Vindonissa (Windisch); he is filled with admiration for the way the exhibits are set out generally and pays a special tribute to the curator at Brugg, "who is head of the Brugg Untergymnasium and fills his purely honorary post most ably. With no assistant beyond the elderly concierge, he is spending his spare time in cataloguing the many thousands of objects under his charge. In his October holiday he excavates, setting his boys to work for a fee of 40 centimes per hour. Much remains to be done; the soil teems with specimens asking to be brought back to the light of day."

* * *

"The Times" (Sept. 29th) publishes a descriptive appreciation of the collection of pictures and sculptures in the Zürcher Kunsthau, to which not only Swiss and foreign museums, but also private collectors—even from England—have lent treasures of Swiss Art of the period from the beginning of the 15th century to the time of Hans Holbein and his school.

* * *

"The Electrification of the Swiss Federal Railways" is the title of a report appearing in "The Engineer" (Sept. 30th), giving an account of the reasons advocating the adoption of the single-phase system and the generation of current for railways at a frequency different from the standard for industrial power, etc.—recommendations quite contrary to expert opinions in Great Britain.

* * *

An article in the "Birmingham Post" (Sept. 28th) does justice to the awkward and delicate position in which our Government finds itself as the unwilling host of ex-Emperor Karl, whom we obviously cannot put across the frontier, as none of our neighbours, not even Austria, would consent to

SWISS CHORAL SOCIETY.

Conductor MR. L. PESTOU.

GRAND EVENING CONCERT

IN AID OF

LONDON HOSPITALS

Friday, October 28th, 1921, at 7.45 p.m.

IN

KING GEORGE'S HALL

(Tottenham Court Road, W. 1.)

Admission 2/- Reserved Seats 3/-, 5/-, 7/6.

Tickets to be obtained at Union Helvetia, 1, Gerrard Place W. 1, and Swiss Club, 74, Charlotte Street, W. 1.

receive him. We reprint the following extract as throwing some sidelights on the controversy:—

"The Swiss Government declares that he is liable to no taxation, neither federal, cantonal, communal, nor any other sort. The Socialist Press protests vigorously against this decision, saying, perfectly truly, that this means that no Swiss Government official or officer of justice can enter Karl's residence without the ex-Emperor's explicit consent, and, of course, that no action for debt or anything else can lie against him in Switzerland; and, finally, that the Swiss Government consequently cannot properly supervise Karl's movements.

Moreover, as pointed out even by the 'National-Zeitung,' of Basle, one of the leading German-Swiss organs, but not Socialist, according to international law the 'other personages' accompanying the head of a State abroad are also to be considered as ex-territorial, and consequently free from taxation and from liability to judicial proceedings. Already a Hohenzollern prince has left Switzerland in not very creditable circumstances—with a pile of debts amounting to several hundred thousand Swiss francs; and the unfortunate tradespeople, his creditors, are trying to recover their losses by diplomatic channels. It will be, to say the least, surprising if the members of Karl's suite do not claim such obvious advantages as those resulting from ex-territoriality, if only to avoid the very heavy taxation in Switzerland.

It is equally surprising that anyone even in moderate circumstances, and not alleging poverty, should contrive to inhabit and keep up a castle with 120 rooms, especially as every room is, I believe, occupied, and consequently must be furnished. The amount of provisions required to feed a suite of sixty or more and a family of eight Archdukes and Archduchesses, besides their father and mother, must be regimental; and the cost no less so—with the best cuts of meat at 6s. a lb., a chicken costing 14s., and other articles of food dear in proportion—even fruit this year. Yet Karl Hapsburg's former commander-in-chief, General Conrad von Hotzendorf, is living with his wife, not very far from the Swiss frontier, in the Tyrol, in two rooms, in a little inn. The couple have to make ends meet on 100 Swiss francs a month (less than £1 a week), which must entail much privation, even with the Countess turning to and doing her own cooking on a spirit stove. Not that no one takes pity on the old General, but any presents sent him in the shape of fruit, poultry, or even money he returns, saying that there are many Austrian war cripples who have to manage on less than he—which is true; and he asks that everything should be sent to them. Anonymous gifts he hands on to them. Now if Karl were capable of half the self-sacrifice of his former commander-in-chief, everyone would respect him, and the Socialists would have no occasion to protest. As it is, not only the Socialists but other political parties are so tired of Karl and consider his position so ambiguous, that the whole matter will probably have to come up before the Swiss Parliament during the autumn session. It is said that the ex-Emperor himself does not really wish to keep up his court on the Lake of Lucerne, but that the monarchists, who are still hoping for his restoration not only to Hungary, but also to Austria, think it policy for him to do so."

* * *

General Booth, who during his recent motor-car tour in Switzerland visited 58 places, addressing 88,000 people, thus records his impressions ("The Times," Oct. 4th):—

"Switzerland is a practical and pleasing example of the wisdom of what Lord Northcliffe has been saying in reference to Australia. In Switzerland you have peasant cultivators, contented and prosperous in a large degree. I find fault with them, as I found fault in Australia, and to some extent in New Zealand, in that they work their children too young, and there is no adequate provision for the children of the villages, who are the backbone of the future, after they leave school."

It may be interesting to recall that the State Council of Neuchâtel, whose president on this occasion specially welcomed the general, published about 40 years ago a decree prohibiting Salvation Army meetings, and that Mrs. Booth-Clibbon, the general's sister, and others were imprisoned for contravening this order.

We are compelled, owing to pressure on our space, to postpone until our next issue the first of a projected series of articles embodying views expressed in the English papers of recent visitors to Switzerland.

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL.

M. William Preiswerk, Honorary Attaché to the Swiss Legation, has returned from Berne.

* * *

Major Charles de Watteville, brother-in-law of our Minister, is at present attached to units of the British Army for the purpose of following a military course at Newmarket.

* * *

Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Goetz, of 14, St. John's Park, N.19, celebrated on October 5th their golden wedding. In years gone by Mr. Goetz has been a very active member of our colony, having been president of the City Swiss Club as far back as 1876. Their former residence at 19, Buckingham St., Strand, afforded a "rendezvous" where every week Swiss, young and old, used to congregate; Mrs. Goetz will long be remembered as a charming hostess. We are sure all the "Swiss Observer" readers are with us in offering the happy couple, who both originate from Basle, our hearty congratulations.

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The Latin Mint Union and the Repatriation of Silver.

The final repatriation of the large amounts of silver five-franc pieces of mintage other than Swiss will be the principal question coming up at the monetary conference which is to be held in Paris at an early date. This conference was originally promised for the first half of 1921, but was subsequently postponed until an indefinite date in November. Now, however, it is announced that it will take place early in October. The total amount of silver five-franc coins at present held by the Swiss National Bank is 225½ million francs. Of this, 130,200,000 francs are of French mintage, 55,500,000 frs. come from Italy, 28,900,000 from Belgium, and 900,000 frs. from Greece. The smaller coins of Belgian origin, which were also withdrawn from circulation, amount to a value of 6,500,000 frs.

The redemption of these coins by the various states concerned will doubtless not be accomplished without prolonged negotiations since the amounts which will have to be paid at the existing rates of exchange will be considerable. The Swiss authorities are resolved, however, to defend their position to the utmost. The Federal Council intend to reinforce the existing commission of delegates by the addition of a representative of the National Bank and of a further representative of banking circles.

The Federal Railways Budget.

The budget drawn up by the Federal Railways authorities for the year 1922 reckons on a deficit of about 30,500,000 frs. Owing to the general economic crisis there will be a deficit of about 80 million francs for the present year, while the accrued deficit at the end of 1920 was 92,700,000 frs. The expected total deficit at the end of 1922 is, therefore, about 203,000,000 francs.

The new budget foresees a considerable increase in the goods traffics and also extensive economies in the general working expenses. The total expenditure for 1922 is put down as 334,942,800 frs. or 44,500,000 frs. less than the 1921 budget figures. There should then be an excess of revenue amounting to 77,693,800 frs., i.e., 21,800,000 frs. more than the 1921 budget allowed for. Interest on fixed loans and floating debt will require 99,400,000 frs. as against 87,400,000 frs. this year. On the profit and loss account there will then, according to the budget reckoning, be a deficit of 30,355,000 francs.

The programme of new constructions requires an expenditure of 112,735,800 frs. for 1922, which is an increase of three millions on the corresponding figures for the present year. The electrification which was started under the programme drawn up and approved in 1918 will be continued, but beyond this the work to be undertaken will be restricted to what is either urgently necessary on technical grounds or to the completion of work already in hand. The work of electrification alone is estimated to cost about 56 million francs, to which may be added a further 20 million francs spent in new rolling stock required for use with the electric service.

In order to cover the floating debt incurred in 1921 and to meet the capital requirements which will come in 1923, the Federal Railways are proposing to issue a loan up to the amount of 250 million francs.