

# Home news

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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The Council of States has decided to adopt the extension of the import limitations until the 30th of September, 1922, instead of the 31st March, 1923, as proposed by the Federal Council. The National Council adopted the same decision by 67 votes to 51.

\* \* \*

The National Council adopted by 104 votes to 58, with 12 abstentions, the provisional tariff with the recommendation to the Federal Council to study, when preparing a new general tariff, how best to reconcile the interests of the different economic groups. Forty-four councillors spoke on this item.

\* \* \*

The Federal Department of Police Justice has issued an appeal to the Swiss population neighbouring on Germany. The appeal exhorts the Swiss, if passing the frontier, to consider the situation of the German population and not to abuse unduly the advantages they enjoy owing to the high value of the Swiss franc. Should the grave abuses, which have been pointed out over and over again by the press, continue, measures will be taken to abolish entirely the so-called "small frontier traffic." A similar appeal has been issued by the St. Gall Government with a view to putting an end to such abuses in the Vorarlberg.

\* \* \*

A joint interview which several press representatives had recently with the Director of the Federal Labour Office, Mr. Pfister, revealed the great sums which the Confederation has hitherto spent to fight unemployment, viz., unemployment relief, 14 million francs; subsidies to the unemployment funds, 2,7 million francs; training courses for the unemployed, 22,800 francs; subsidies to Federal officials, 1½ million francs; subsidies to Swiss back from abroad, 2 millions; subsidies to Swiss abroad, 1 million; subsidies to members of learned professions, 1½ millions; subsidies for the housing scheme, 250,000 francs; subsidies to the Association of Industrial Agriculture and Interior Colonisation, 50,000 francs; relief work and the fostering of the private housing industry, 60 millions; mortgages, 12 million francs.

\* \* \*

The referendum on woman suffrage in the Canton of Geneva resulted in a large majority against this innovation, the figures being about 14,000 to 6,000. The controversy

was a very lively one, and the anti-suffragists found considerable support amongst the fair sex. Geneva is thus the fifth canton to refuse women the vote.

\* \* \*

In connection with the fifth "Swiss Week," which is to take place between the 15th and 29th of October, a Swiss entertainment will be given in the "Kaufleuten" at Zurich. Works of Swiss composers and poets will be played and read by Swiss musicians and reciters. Amongst the artists responsible for the programme are: Hans Huber, Hans Jelmoli, Lisa Haemig-Burgmeier, Dr. Robert Faesi, Hedwig Fassbaender, Dr. S. Steinberg, and Jakob Bürrer.

\* \* \*

The new Central Committee of the Association of the Swiss Press consists of Dr. Weber, Basle, President; Mr. Grellet, Berne, Vice-President; Dr. Steinmann, Berne, Treasurer; Dr. Mohr, Secretary. The Committee decided definitely to adhere to the Federation of Intellectual Workers. It was also decided to resume international relations with the foreign press, and that it should be endeavoured, with this end in view, to revive the Union Internationale.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Popular Library has published its first report on the years 1919 and 1920. It would appear from it that this institution, which was founded in 1919 with a view to centralise efficiently the efforts tending to the development of the Popular Libraries in Switzerland, has already been very busy. The bulk of the works in the Library consists of the former Swiss Soldiers' Library, which contained 30,000 volumes. The Swiss Popular Library is subsidised by the Confederation, Cantons and the Communes. One reckons on an annual income of 120,000 frs.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Congress for Women's Interests at Berne proved a big success. More than 1,400 congress tickets were issued. Amongst the various orators were: Miss Schaffner, Basle; Miss Dr. Fässler, St. Gall; Miss Dr. Ottiker, Zurich; Mrs. Steiger, Küssnacht; Miss Valli, Bellinzona; Mrs. Merz, Berne; Mrs. Staudinger, Zurich; Mrs. Bleuler-Waser, Zurich; Mrs. Dr. Olivier, Lausanne; Mrs. Fathio-Naville, Geneva; Mrs. Gerhardt, Basle; and Miss Gourde, Geneva.

\* \* \*

A resolution of the delegates of the Swiss Peasants' Union has caused some angry comments in the Swiss press. The resolution said that, should there be a revision of the custom duties in a manner unfavourable to the peasants' interests, the latter would "take measures which would mean the beginning of serious fights in our public and industrial life." As is revealed in an article by Dr. Laur, this means, in the first instance, that the Peasants' Party would counteract the extension of the Assurance scheme (Invalidity, Old Age, and Bereaved Assurance scheme).

\* \* \*

Dr. Laur, the Swiss Peasants' Union Secretary, defends

the position of the Swiss Peasants' Union, which is now being heavily attacked on all sides in two extensive articles in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, and endeavours to prove that the war profits of this class are not nearly so exorbitant as is believed in other quarters. He also tries to convince his readers that the protection which the peasants have gained by the new tariff is absolutely necessary for them. He shows that the Swiss peasants could not diminish their debts during the war more than by reducing them from 3,779 million to 3,541 million francs. This would mean a lowering of 6 per cent., which will strike many people who hitherto believed that nearly all their debts had been wiped out. Dr. Laur very cleverly also shows and proves by statistics that the average daily relief of the unemployed is higher than the average daily earning of a small farmer or farm servant. He says that the peasant earns, when working twelve hours daily and with food taken into consideration, 6 francs, and a farm servant 6 frs. 25, whereas, according to the communications of the Labour Office, the average unemployed relief is daily 6.50 to 7 francs.

\* \* \*

In 1921, 9,227 inhabitants of Switzerland left the home country to start a new life in another Continent. There was an exodus of 629 from Berne, 910 from Zurich, and 900 from St. Gall and the Tessin. The average number of emigrants before the war was from 5,000 to 6,000. 1893 was a record year with 13,000. It is interesting to note that of these 9,000 odd emigrants, 2,190 are agriculturists, and three-quarters of them are single. As in the past, the favourite destination of these emigrants is the United States, whither not less than 7,000 directed their steps. 750 went to the Argentine, 750 to Brazil, and 409 to Africa.

\* \* \*

The direction of the Swiss Red Cross has decided to make an appeal to the Swiss people and the Federal Council for providing means for a Relief Mission to Russia. They reckon not so much on sending food, but rather with dispatching a number of medical officers with the necessary staff and material. The Swiss Red Cross will collaborate with Dr. Nansen.

\* \* \*

The wine harvest in Thurgau has proved an exceedingly rich one. The wine connoisseurs are unanimously agreed that the 1921 wine will be comparable to the one of 1911 and the one of 1895, both of which are recorded as having been extraordinarily successful. This is good news for wine lovers both in Switzerland and England, and it will also considerably help the wine peasants of Thurgau, whose condition is none too favourable. In 1900 there were 1,400 hectares of vine planted in the Canton; to-day there are no more than 400.

\* \* \*

The Crematorium of Zurich has recently recorded the ten thousandth cremation. It was constructed in 1887 and started work in 1889. In the first year only 21 cremations took place. In 1920 there were 814. Whereas a special society managed it to begin with, it was taken over by the city in 1900. Now cremation is entirely gratuitous in Zurich, and the society which fostered the development of the idea therefore dissolved in 1913, having attained its aim.

\* \* \*

The famous musician, Friedrich Hegar, celebrated his eightieth birthday on October 11th. Hegar was brought up in a musical family of Basle. He was a conductor for 42 years. His many friends all over Switzerland congratulated the veteran-musician very heartily, and the poet,

Gustave Gamper, dedicated a poem to him in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. A special concert was arranged in his honour in the Tonhalle by the Teachers' Choral Society and the Tonhalle Association. The programme consisted exclusively of compositions by Hegar, i.e., the Overture, written for the inauguration of the new Tonhalle, a concerto for the violin, and the Festival Cantata written for the opening of the new University in 1914.

\* \* \*

The Bernese correspondent of the *Liberté*, Mr. Pie Philippona, celebrated his fiftieth professional anniversary. Although now seventy-six years of age, he is still active and enterprising. For thirty-four years he has provided the Fribourgois paper with the news of Berne.

\* \* \*

The Conservative paper *Vaterland* of Lucerne celebrated its fiftieth birthday on October 1st. It is striking that only eight editors were employed on the staff during all this time. This is the more remarkable, as extreme changes generally take place on Swiss newspaper staffs.

\* \* \*

Six French officers of high rank will attend the manoeuvres which are shortly to be held in the Kiental.

\* \* \*

The Radical Democratic Party of St. Gall provided last year for the creation of a committee to elaborate a scheme for reforming the Moving Picture Theatres. This committee has now reported on its activity and asks for a Federal law on Moving Pictures providing for a Federal censorship. These proposals will be forwarded to the Central Bureau of the Radical Democratic Party with a view to preparing the ground for a parliamentary campaign.

\* \* \*

OBITUARY.—Professor Dr. Abeljanz died at Zurich in his 73rd year. Originally an Armenian, he became Swiss in 1877 and was appointed ordinary professor of chemistry in 1890. He was the father-in-law of State Councillor Wettstein, of Zurich.

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Ex-National Councillor Louis de Diesbach died in his seventy-ninth year in Fribourg.

## NOTES & GLEANINGS.

All the English papers refer in gratifying terms to the gift of the Vevey Municipality which will allow of the bodies of 74 British prisoners and officials, who died during the war in different parts of Switzerland, to be exhumed and re-interred in the St. Martin Cemetery, where, on the shores of the Lake of Geneva in beautiful surroundings, they will find a final resting place. According to *The Times* (Oct. 14th) the success of this scheme, which was initiated as far back as July, 1919, is mainly due to the untiring efforts of Major de la Harpe, of the Swiss Army. As a member of the Swiss Medical Commission charged with the selection of wounded prisoners to be sent to Switzerland, Major de la Harpe is not unknown to the London Colony, when, during his official visits, he missed no opportunity of coming into contact with his countrymen.

\* \* \*

Amongst the articles referring to the change from "summer" to Greenwich time the "Sun Treatment" in Switzerland has come into prominence. Dr. C. W. Saleeby in *The Daily Chronicle* (Oct. 7th) apologizes for not having already twelve years ago laid stress on the work carried on by Dr. Rollier, of Leysin, who "for 18 years has been