

Home news

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HOME NEWS

A very important amendment to our constitutional laws was submitted to the country on September 24th: the "Lex Häberlin." The proposed law would have invested the authorities with effective powers for combating revolutionary propaganda.

The results of the referendum have come through, and the new Bill has been rejected by a decisive majority of about 73,150 votes out of the 672,700 votes recorded. Basle-City has relatively the biggest majority against the Bill, 12 cantons also vetoing it, as will be seen from the table below, the figures given being still subject to final rectification:—

Canton.	Yes.	No.
Zurich	48397	64773
Berne	51698	59646
Lucerne	18864	12429
Uri	2049	1873
Schwyz	5143	4899
Obwalden	1409	1201
Nidwalden	1235	1141
Glarus	2105	4022
Zug	2403	3003
Fribourg	14827	6974
Solothurn	7341	18044
Basle-City	7015	19057
Basle-Land	4278	10848
Schaffhausen	4606	6010
Appenzell A.-Rh.	4886	6702
Appenzell I.-Rh.	1616	881
St. Gall	22908	34784
Graubünden	9893	9887
Aargau	18861	32277
Thurgau	15549	13770
Ticino	5600	10658
Waadt	28612	18379
Wallis	6995	5881
Neuchâtel	8560	10349
Geneva	5259	15632
Total	299929	373064

As was generally anticipated, Central Switzerland with Lucerne showed a majority in favour of the anti-revolutionary measure, the Catholic elements in these cantons largely predominating over the Socialists. On the other hand, Zug, with its strong peasant party, voted against it.

In the eastern industrial part of Switzerland, it will be noticed that Zurich and St. Gall both vetoed the measure

with sweeping majorities of about 16,000 and 12,000 votes respectively, being approximately three to two against.

Häberlin secured a small majority for the Bill in his own canton of Thurgau.

Waadt voted "yes" with a majority of about 10,000, whilst Geneva recorded an equal majority of "noes."

Ticino is also against the amendment by a majority of two to one.

At the thirteenth plenary sitting of the League of Nations Federal Councillor Motta made an important speech on the "Minority" question, and we reproduce the following report from the *Journal de Genève*:—

M. Motta estime que le traité des minorités qui fixe un nouveau point de vue légal international est une manifestation de la conscience de l'humanité. Il considère comme extrêmement heureux que l'Assemblée intervienne dans la question et que la S. d. N., en interprétant le pacte dans ses tendances généreuses, devienne en quelque sorte la gardienne des minorités dans tous les pays du monde. L'oppression exercée contre les croyances et les langues est la cause de maux sans nombre et toute injustice appelle l'injustice. La protection des minorités rentre désormais dans le cadre essentiel de la Société.

Je dois à la probité de la discussion, ajoute l'orateur, je dois à l'impartialité de nos délibérations de dire que le problème tel qu'il s'est présenté en Suisse était infiniment plus facile qu'il ne l'était ailleurs et que, par conséquent, les louanges qui vont à la Suisse, si elles éveillent chez tous les Suisses un sentiment de profonde reconnaissance, ne peuvent pas cependant être considérées comme valables pour tous les pays et pour tous les temps.

La Suisse a eu le bonheur presque unique dans le monde de voir se réunir et se rencontrer sur son sol trois des plus grandes civilisations de la terre: la civilisation italienne tout imprégnée de mesure, de grâce et d'humanité; la civilisation française claire, ardente, généreuse, portée à la discussion; la civilisation allemande, travailleuse, méthodique, aimant l'ordre, disciplinée. Il n'était point difficile d'obtenir que ces trois civilisations s'étant rencontrées sur ce sol pussent discuter amicalement entre elles et se trouver à l'aise. La forme fédérative de l'Etat facilitait encore la tâche; une évolution séculaire, nos cantons qui sont le produit de l'histoire facilitaient le règlement de ces rapports et, par conséquent, de tous ces contacts. Je dois donc en tirer cette conséquence que la Suisse ne peut pas prétendre à être considérée comme un modèle. Ce que nous pouvons admettre peut-être, c'est qu'on considère comme quelque chose de haut et de moralement beau notre aspiration générale à nous respecter et à nous aimer les uns les autres comme des frères et comme des amis.

La S. d. N. a inauguré là aussi, je l'espère, je le crois une ère nouvelle, un droit nouveau. J'espère que le temps des iniquités est terminé et clos peut-être pour toujours. J'espère que tous les hommes de tous les pays, de toutes les races et de toutes les langues ont enfin acquis la persuasion que les langues et les croyances ont en elles-mêmes une telle richesse spirituelle, un tel trésor de sentiment et, en un mot, une telle sainteté qu'elles méritent d'être défendues contre les tentations des révoltes et contre le joug des oppressions.

The Federal Council proposes to grant a further credit of five million francs to the watch industry.

In the canton of Berne a projected new law was rejected by the plebiscite which proposed to withdraw the right of vote from fraudulent bankrupts.

The fixing of a maximum 48-hour week was submitted to the electors of the canton of Zurich, who rejected the proposal. This is in accordance with the tendency shown in some parts of Switzerland to return to longer hours instead of reducing wages. Another law which the canton of Zurich put to the vote last Sunday was the imposition of an amusement tax. This was defeated by a large majority.

* * *

Lucerne has remodelled her naturalisation laws, and foreigners can now become citizens after five years' residence in the community. The fees to be paid vary up to a maximum of frs. 3,000 for foreigners not born in Switzerland, or of a Swiss mother.

* * *

With reference to the figures given in our last week's issue as to the results of the International Rifle Competition at Milan, it should be noted that the Swiss team was first in the Pistol Shooting Match. The points given on page 554 refer to this latter match only.

As regards the Rifle Competition, the results, given on our stop press slip, will have been read with some disappointment. The Swiss team was severely handicapped by the indisposition of Hartmann, who was suffering from serious gastric trouble, and though he put up a plucky fight, his results, particularly in the standing position, fell far below expectations; it was practically impossible for the other four competitors to make up for his short score, although Zimmermann and Lienhard shot exceptionally well. Lienhard was an excellent second to the American champion Stokes, his total score being 1065, against 1067, showing a difference of two points only.

* * *

With reference to the Federal Gymnastic Festival, recently held in St. Gall, the best results have been obtained by the team sent by the Swiss Gymnastic Society of Hudson County, in North America, who, with 145.5 points, made the highest score.

* * *

The Grimsel Pass has been closed to traffic on account of the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in one of the neighbouring villages.

* * *

The Swiss Ladies' League of Public Utility is inviting employers all over the country to send them particulars of long and faithful service by their female domestics.

Their devotion is to be rewarded by a sort of honorary degree, a diploma being granted to those who can show five years' service in one family, a badge of honour in the shape of a silver brooch or pendant for ten years' service, and a silver watch or set of table silver for fifteen years' continuous work in one family. The noble order of faithful service well deserves some tangible token of appreciation, if the problem of keeping servants is as acute in Switzerland as in the British Isles, but we venture to suggest that a pearl of varying size, according to the merits of these faithful "Abigails," would more fitly represent such sterling worth.

* * *

While attempting to climb the dangerous eastern slope of the Kreuzberg in Appenzell, Willi Stein, a young student from St. Gall, met with a fatal accident. A young cow herd witnessed the tragedy. It is said that this side of the peak has been ascended by only two climbers before.

* * *

A mason of Kriens, Johann Krütli, aged 51, fell into a barrel. Being unable to extricate himself alone, and nobody being near to assist him, he was suffocated.

NOTES & GLEANINGS.

A number of reviews of W. Oechsli's HISTORY OF SWITZERLAND (see S. O. No. 63) have appeared these last few days in the English press. All the writers agree that the book is excellently written and indispensable to the student of history, but it is both entertaining and instructive to record the parts that struck their fancy. The criticism of the *New Statesman* (Sept. 16th) is affected by the statement that "except for a few glorious moments "the history of Switzerland has been uninspiring," and it is therefore not surprising that this writer should single out the account given of the Swiss mercenaries, from which he extracts the following:—

"In the war between Louis XIV. and Holland, 29,000 Swiss on the French side were opposed by 9,000 on the Dutch. . . . There were also regiments in Spanish and Savoyard service. Consequently, during the Palatine war there were at least 40,000 Swiss in the field on the two sides. But this did not prevent the Powers from expressly recognising Swiss neutrality. The Swiss mercenaries, in fact, filled the Powers with a quite untrue notion of the military efficiency of Switzerland. In the war of the Spanish Succession there were engaged on the two sides more than 50,000 real or reputed Swiss, which marks the climax of the Swiss mercenary service. . . . At Ramillies and Oudenarde Swiss regiments fought with distinction on both sides, and at Malplaquet there was actually a bayonet struggle between two Bernese regiments. At the outbreak of the Revolution there were still 12,000 Swiss in the French army. The mercenaries returned to Paris on the heels of the Restoration and fought bravely for the last of the Bourbons. In 1824 6,000 Swiss soldiers were guaranteed to defend the kingdom of the two Sicilies. The coming of the July Monarchy practically marked the end of Swiss mercenary service, though a posse of Swiss halberdiers still guard the Vatican, dressed as they were in Raphael's time."

The *Westminster Gazette* (Sept. 16th) dwells on the author's exceptional difficulties, and the impartiality he displays, in co-ordinating the evolution of a nation where individual cantons and factions have often followed a political course of their own. The wish is expressed that it might have been possible to include the history of the last few years,—

"since, purely as a political model or a constitutional experimental ground, Switzerland has been of almost as great interest to Europe during the past fifteen or twenty years as during any previous period in her history. In social and educational legislation, for example, she has been ahead of this country, and several of our social enactments of before the war appear to owe as much to her inspiration as to Germany, their reputed pattern. Even had Professor Oechsli carried his history further, however, this side of his country's activities would, we feel, have secured hardly as much attention as it deserved. Not only the necessity for writing a balanced history of Switzerland for the general historical student—we will not say exactly the general reader—but in addition a decided bias of interest has here given by far the most prominent place to Swiss politics and foreign relations.

What we have, in short, is a Swiss political history with inter-chapters on social conditions and religious, artistic, and literary developments. As such the volume fulfils its purpose admirably, and certainly supplies a gap in English historical literature."

Another survey contained in *The Guardian* (Sept. 15th) enlarges on the relative position and influence of Calvin and Rousseau, and says—

"those who concern themselves with the history of religious thought may well ponder over the story of the faith which has affected so many countries in such different ways. Calvin was not a Swiss, but who shall measure the influence of Rousseau, who found political theory an amusement of the learned, and took it, as Maine says, into the street?"

We confess, however, that we feel greater interest in Calvin than in Rousseau. There are curious similarities between them, as well as obvious contrasts. Both were idealists, but, as Lord Acton has pointed out, Calvin's system had no roots in history; it was speculative, and therefore more consistent and inflexible than any other, the work of a man without a country.