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HOME NEWS

The Federal Government has made a large contract with Hungary for the delivery of corn; 7,000 truck loads are to be despatched at once. Ten per cent. of the purchase consideration is to be taken out in machinery and other Swiss products.

The fourth assembly of the League of Nations opened at Geneva on Monday morning (Sept. 3rd), when the provisional president, whilst expressing regret that some international problems had remained unsolved, gave a condensed report of the valuable work accomplished during the past year. Senor Cosma de la Torriente (Cuba) was elected president for the coming session by 24 votes against 19, which were cast in favour of M. Motta, who previously had declined acceptance of this office. One of the main objects of the present session will be the consideration of the Italian-Greek dispute, with the solution of which the prestige of the League seems so closely identified.

The electorate of the canton of Neuchâtel rejected last Sunday a proposed law, imposing a personal tax on direct inheritances.

To perpetuate the memory of their great poet, the Neuchâtel municipal council has changed the name of the Mont Blanc quay to "Phillipe Godet."

The oldest citizen of the town of Lucerne, Louis Ariger, formerly a clerk in the town-hall, died last week at the age of 96½.

An ugly scene in connection with the wood-workers' strike, which for over three months has been seriously interfering with the building trade in Basle, took place last week, when a master carpenter, Mr. Tschopp, who called at the office of the strike committee for the purpose of engaging a workman, was set upon and badly mauled, necessitating his removal to the hospital. The police have now arrested, along with another member, the president of the strike committee, Mr. J. Meyer-Hersperger.

Several references are appearing in the Swiss press, crediting the German magnate, Hugo Stinnes, with the intention of establishing a political paper in Switzerland or acquiring an existing publication.

Dr. Victor Demole, sub-director of the cantonal mental institution Bel Air (Geneva), has been summarily dismissed from his office for having, in an experimental and unofficial way, treated some of the patients with serum injections. It is said that he undertook these experiments against payment at the request of a firm manufacturing pharmaceutical products.

A fire, probably caused through a short-circuit, destroyed the machinery building of the "Grossmühle," belonging to Adolf Lanzrein in Thun.

Another accident, the second within a fortnight in the Bietschhorn range, happened on the Elwerück, leading to the Jäghorn, when Mr. Paul Dubied, in business at Winterthur, fell down a steep slope, being killed instantaneously.

Mr. Fr. Meyer-Balmer, of Lucerne, employed in the office of the Cunard Line, is supposed to have been drowned in the lake, as his canoe has been found floating in the water upside down.

Through trying to pass a cart, an automobile, driven by Mr. Burckhardt, a dentist in Winterthur, fell over the embankment on the road between Winterthur and Kempten. Whilst Mr. Burckhardt escaped with some slight cuts, one of the ladies, a Miss Hablützel, subsequently succumbed to her injuries.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Le tir des femmes. — Reprenant une tradition que la guerre, avait interrompue, les tireurs de Sumiswald, de Langnau et de Berthoud célébreront, les 2 et 3 septembre, à Berthoud, "le tir des femmes"

de l'Emmenthal qui, précédemment, avait lieu tous les trois ans. Cette appellation pittoresque vient du fait que chaque tireur doit se rendre au stand en compagnie de sa femme, de sa fiancée ou de "sa connaissance." L'article 1er du règlement de la fête dit ceci: "Chaque tireur est rigoureusement tenu, cas de force majeure excepté, d'assister à la fête accompagné d'une dame." Les créateurs de cette coutume estimaient avec raison qu'il n'y a de vrai plaisir que là où les femmes sont présentes. (La Tribune.)

La hallebarde. — L'histoire n'est pas d'hier. Deux Lausannois étaient en excursion dans le Valais. Un dimanche matin, dans un charmant petit village aux chalets brunis, ils assistent à la sortie de l'office. Tandis que les femmes, vieilles et jeunes, coiffées du coquet chapeau valaisan, se hâtent vers le logis où les attend le pot-au-feu, les hommes se rassemblent sur la place. Bientôt, sur le perron de la maison communale apparaît l'huissier municipal. C'est jour de mise publique.

Après avoir mis aux enchères deux ou trois parcelles de pré, une créance douteuse, quelques menus objets, l'huissier saisit une hallebarde, une hallebarde superbe, d'âge très respectable et qui est un vrai chef d'oeuvre. Un de nos Lausannois, grand amateur d'art et d'antiquités convoite ce joyau. Il le lui faut pour sa collection. Il s'avance dans le rang des miseurs.

L'huissier crie: "A 10 francs!... A 10 francs!... A 10 francs pour la première!... A..."

— 15 francs! crie à son tour le Lausannois.

A 15 francs!... A 15 francs!... A 15 francs pour la première!...

— 20 francs! clame un voix.

A 20 francs!... A 20 francs!... A 20 francs pour la première!...

Et la mise continue, le Lausannois surenchérisant toujours. On atteint la somme de 60 fr. Tout le monde se regarde. Les braves montagnards, ahuris, se demandent qui donc peut être cet étranger et le motif de son acharnement.

— A 60 francs!... reprend alors l'huissier dont la voix trahit l'émotion. A 60 francs!... A 60 francs pour la première! (moment de silence). A soixante francs, pour la seconde! (Nouveau silence, très impressionnant). A soixante francs pour la troisième!... Adjugé!

Le Lausannois, tout fier de son acquisition, a déjà sorti trois billets de 20 francs qu'il met dans la main de l'huissier.

Alors, le président de la commune s'approche et lui dit:

— Bonjour ce Monsieur. On vous félicite. A présent, on va aller dîner ensemble avec la Municipalité. Votre ami peut aussi venir. C'est la coutume. Et puis, c'est l'adjudicataire de la hallebarde qui paie le boire; le vin est déjà tout prêt et il y en a encore à la cave.

— C'est entendu, répond le Lausannois. Il faut toujours respecter la tradition.

On banquetta joyeusement; on trinqua fort et ferme. Puis l'heure du départ venue, l'heureux gagnant de la hallebarde s'en va vers l'huissier réclamer son bien qu'il veut emporter.

— Ah! non, Monsieur, ce n'est pas à emporter. Ce que nous avons misé c'est le droit de porter la hallebarde le jour de la Fête-Dieu!

Ça fait que voilà! (Le Conteur Vaudois.)

Voleur trahi par des poules. — On avait volé depuis quelques semaines une vingtaine de poules à une paysanne de Delémont. Un jour de marché, elle ne fut pas peu surprise de rencontrer toute sa basse-cour aux mains d'un individu qui cherchait à la vendre. Aussitôt elle appela ses "pipis" qui ne firent aucune difficulté pour la suivre jusqu'à la police. Celle-ci, mise au courant des faits et convaincue par l'attachement des gallinacées pour leur maîtresse, appréhenda le voleur et restitua les fidèles pondieuses à la fermière.

(Suisse Libérale.)

Die Ameisenschwärme. — Aus verschiedenen Gegenden der Schweiz, so aus dem Kanton Bern und dem Glarnerlande, wird berichtet, es seien dort grosse Schwärme fliegender Ameisen beobachtet worden. Die Schwärme seien so dicht gewesen, dass man hätte glauben können, es zögen duftige Wölkchen über die Gegend. An verschiedenen Orten senkten sich die Schwärme, und man fand auf den Feldwegen und Dorfstrassen ungezählte geflügelte Ameisen.

Auch in St. Gallen sind solche Schwärme beobachtet worden; so in der nächsten Umgebung der Hauptpost und des Bahnhofes. Die Schwärme



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folgten sich in Abständen von wenigen Metern; man zählte über zwanzig solcher Schwärme, die in ziemlicher Höhe über den Dächern dahinzogen. In den Ameisenwolken wurden auch grössere Insekten, vermutlich Bienen, gesehen.

Wir können hier noch eine eigene Beobachtung beifügen, die für die kleine Gesellschaft, die sie hinter sich hat, nicht besonders angenehm gewesen ist. Anlässlich eines Abendspazierganges auf dem Hirschberg wurden wir von einem Schwarm fliegender Ameisen förmlich überfallen. Plötzlich waren wir von tanzenden, in den Lüften Hochzeit feiernden Ameisen umschwärmt. Sie setzten sich an den Kleidern und Haaren fest. Sie verfolgten uns regelrecht und schwebten wie Schleier über den Fliehenden. Man hatte eine liebe Not, die Insekten los zu werden. Die Fluglinie richtete sich von Süden nach Norden und war ziemlich scharf abgegrenzt.

Jedenfalls hat das warme Wetter die Vermehrung der Ameisen sehr begünstigt. Für die Flug- und Hochzeitszeit herrschen die denkbar besten Verhältnisse: lauer, mild bewegter Föhn und trockene Luft.

(St. Galler Tagblatt.)

Eine Schreckensnacht in Einsiedeln. — In der Nacht vom 15.-16. August haben die Bewohner von Einsiedeln und die auf das Fest Maria Himmelfahrt zahlreich eingetroffenen Pilger unvergesslich bange Stunden durchlebt. Man schreibt darüber: Nach der drückenden Hitze der letzten Zeit ballten sich gegen Abend unheilverkündende schwarze Wolkenmassen zusammen. Bange Vorahnungen bedrückten die Gemüter der Waldstatt und Umgebung. Um die zehnte Nachtstunde gings mit aller Gewalt los, als ob das Ende der Welt angebrochen sei. Blitz auf Blitz zuckte in den schwarzen Wolken, die Nacht für Sekunden taghell erleuchtend; furchtbare rollte der Donner und peitschte der Regen hernieder. Plötzlich erhob sich, nach einem grellen Blitzstrahl, eine Feuersäule zum Himmel. In Hinterhorben stand die grosse Scheune des Herrn Meirad Zehnder in hellen Flammen und war bald nachher nur noch ein glühender, rauchender Trümmerhaufen. Trotz der sofort herbeigeeilten Hilfe mussten eine Kuh und fünf Stück Jungvieh ihrem Schicksal überlassen werden. Sie fanden den Feuertod. Nur ein Pferd konnte den Flammen entrissen werden. Ausser dem Viehstande sind auch fast der gesamte diesjährige Heuertrag und landwirtschaftliche Geräte zugrunde gegangen. Kaum hatte sich die geängstigte Bewohnerschaft wieder etwas beruhigt, zeigte sich nach einem furchtbaren Donnerschlage, vom ersten Brandobjekte etwa eine halbe Stunde entfernt, eine neue Brandröte. Der Blitz hatte in der Au bei Untersyen den Stall des Herrn Kuriger entzündet. Auch dieses Objekt war in kurzer Zeit ein Haufen Trümmer. An eine Rettung der Lebeware war nicht zu denken; fünf Stück Grossvieh mussten elendiglich verbrennen. Zu all dem ist alles Heu und Emd das Opfer des entfesselten Elementes geworden. Damit war jedoch das Mass des Unglücks nicht voll. Wieder zuckte ein greller Blitz durch das Dunkel der Nacht und fuhr hernieder zur Erde, den zum Glück viehleren

Stall des Herrn Fuchs, Oberegg, in einer Sekunde in ein Flammenmeer verwandelt. Es war eine harte Arbeit der Feuerwehr, das Wohnhaus des Herrn Fuchs der Zerstörungswut des Feuers zu entreissen. Aber des schrecklichen Unheils der Gewitternacht war immer noch nicht genug. Wieder zuckte der Wetterstrahl, und plötzlich schoss eine Feuersäule aus dem Wohnhaus der Geschwister Zehnder auf dem Armhübel, am Horbenberg. Das Objekt war rettungslos verloren, während die benachbarten Gebäude gerettet werden konnten. Das Mobilien ist grösstenteils ein Raub der Flammen geworden. (Allgemeiner Anzeiger.)

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Among these Notes of late the personal note has been pleasantly prominent; it may not, therefore, be considered out of place to mention that, in the absence of "Kyburg," on holiday bent, the Notes this week have been written by an honorary member of the staff who rejoices in the sonorous appellation (self-inflicted) of Temporary Acting Deputy-Assistant-Sub-Editor. Be it whispered, with bated breath, that he is *no Swiss!* He, however, pleads in extenuation that, if he were a Swiss, he would be a very good Swiss, that is to say, he would subscribe with unflinching regularity to *The Swiss Observer!* He has not even bent to Switzerland—yet! This deplorable remissness he hopes to rectify at the earliest opportunity. His visits to the Harz and Tirol have, in fact, been intended as stepping-stones to the greater things of Switzerland.

The Staff of Life.

Switzerland being, like England, unable to feed herself, the following short article from *The Times* of Aug. 25th, on "Switzerland as Grain Importer," is of interest:—

One of Switzerland's greatest problems has always been to ensure a sufficient supply of breadstuffs for the country's needs. At present there is considerable discussion on the question whether the State monopoly should be maintained or liberty to trade in breadstuffs be restored, subject to a simple measure of control by the authorities.

The matter is of no little interest to Great Britain. The adoption of the second solution would result in a radical change in the method of making purchases. Since the State monopoly started operations these have been effected to an increasing extent in Canada instead of the United States and the Argentine. It has been found also that the British merchant marine has offered the best facilities for transport. The importation of 600,000 tons to 700,000 tons of produce is involved. It is expected that a decision will be taken shortly.

Another problem has arisen in connection with fruit. It is linked with the proposed law dealing with alcohol. The position is that the Swiss orchards produce more fruit than can be consumed in the country. There is, in fact, an annual surplus of 25,000 truck loads, and the excess is likely to grow larger every year, as the growers no longer derive any advantage from the use of the fruit in making denatured alcohol. Further, in order that the Alcohol Régie may revive its sales, which fell from 60,000 hectolitres to 8,000 hectolitres last year, the Federal Council has decided to lower the price of alcohol derived from fruit and of imported fine alcohol.

Only second in importance to the question of Food Supplies is that of Trade and Industry, and though Statistics be dry and Drinks be dear, we may well give a few minutes' consideration to—

Swiss Trade with Great Britain,

as set forth in condensed fashion in the *Daily Telegraph* of 28th August:—

An article in the July issue of the 'Swiss Exporter' points out how important a factor in Swiss economic life is trade with Great Britain. In 1922 exports to Great Britain represented about one-fifth of total exports, and amounted to 348,000,000 frs., while imports from Great Britain figured at 174,000,000 frs. Both imports and exports were principally finished goods. Great Britain sending raw materials to the value of only 50,000,000 frs., while Switzerland's exports to us of foodstuffs, principally chocolate, condensed milk and cheese, amounted to 27,500,000 frs. The principal Swiss exports to Great Britain were silk goods, the value of which was 166,000,000 frs., representing about 60 per cent. of total silk exports. Cotton came next with 52,000,000 frs., chiefly embroideries. The best customer of the Swiss watch-making industry is the United States, but Great Britain comes next with imports of 18,500,000 frs. On the import side, Switzerland took 80,000,000 frs. worth of British cotton goods, nearly nine-tenths of the total Swiss imports of cotton yarns and about three-fourths of cotton piece goods being from this country. Switzerland also imported British woollen goods to a value of over 15,000,000 frs., and coal to a value of 25,250,000 frs., the latter representing one-sixth of the coal imports.

It seems noteworthy that the Swiss Exports to Great Britain should be precisely double the value of the Swiss Imports from Great Britain, and whatever the significance of these figures in their "true inwardness" may be, they certainly look healthy enough for Switzerland.

Spahlinger Treatment.

We seem to have happened this week on matters of supreme and vital importance. We have already touched upon the prime concerns of Food and Trade, and we now come up against that of Health. We have repeatedly had occasion to deal at less or greater length with the Spahlinger Treatment for Tuberculosis, and in our last week's issue we made known to our readers the dire straits to which our distinguished countryman has been reduced in

the pursuit of his researches. We make no apology for reverting to the subject again: Saul slew his thousands and David his tens of thousands, but the "White Scourge" slays its hundreds of thousands, and that not occasionally or at wide intervals of years, but every year with relentless and remorseless persistence, while the great mass of the people look on with dull and helpless resignation and an almost Eastern attitude of fatalistic apathy. All the greater reason, then, that the devoted scientist who can hold out a reasonable hope of relieving humanity from this dread disease should not lack the means to carry on his beneficent work. It is, therefore, a pleasure to us to record that efficient help is likely to be forthcoming, according to the *Daily Herald* of 29th August:—

The Co-operative Wholesale Society has decided on a notable step to further the work of Mr. Spahlinger to combat the scourge of tuberculosis.

Mr. Robert Smith, who is manager of the National Health Insurance Section of the C.W.S., ex-chairman of the Federation of Assurance, and member of the Lancashire and Manchester Insurance Committees, is going to Switzerland, on behalf of the C.W.S. Insurance Section, to make investigations.

He is hopeful that, with or without the sanction of the Ministry of Health, Lancashire will make a grant towards the £90,000 immediately needed. He is assured that the C.W.S. Committee will do the same if his report is satisfactory, and he hopes that Manchester and other insurance committees will follow the example.

The treatment of tuberculosis costs Lancashire £250,000 a year, and there are those in a position to judge who contend that the county gets practically no return for such an expenditure.

Considerations of this sort first awakened the interest which Lancashire takes in the wonderful curative properties of the specifics of Mr. Spahlinger, whose work in Switzerland, as the 'Daily Herald' has recently explained, is seriously jeopardised by lack of money. Lancashire wants to go to Mr. Spahlinger's aid, but the Health Ministry, while not bold enough to say that this would be illegal, hints that difficulties might arise.

Mr. Smith is himself persuaded by personal inquiry and observation of the absolute value of the Spahlinger method.

He says that there is ample confirmation from the most eminent medical opinion that 80 per cent. of cases are actual recoveries.

"It is incredible," he declared, "that so paltry a sum as £90,000 should not be forthcoming for so great and hopeful a work for suffering humanity."

German Insurance.

We have already in previous issues referred to the plight of those of our compatriots who had insured their lives with German Insurance Companies. The following paragraph has been widely published in the English press, and we reproduce it here, lest it may not have come under the notice of any of our readers who may be interested in it:

A meeting of Swiss citizens who have insured their lives with German insurance companies decided to urge the Federal Council to remedy the present state of affairs by accepting the offer of two British insurance companies to take over the German policies. These companies offer, amongst other advantages, a two-thirds participation in benefits.

Switzerland's Sensible Lead.

When we read this heading, we promptly sat up with the mental ejaculation: "Good Old Switzerland! What's she up to now?" It is nothing new to hear of Switzerland taking the lead, nor is there anything surprising in the fact that she should be "sensible" alike in the matter and the manner of her leading. This is what appeared under the above heading (*Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, 27th August):—

More willing to march with the times than ourselves, Switzerland has introduced a law which decrees that every girl within its borders who is subject to its jurisdiction must undergo a year of training in domestic science. There is no escape from this, however socially elevated, important or financially solid the parents of the girl may be. The only way in which exemption can be obtained is if the girl can prove at an examination that she has been sufficiently instructed in nursing, child welfare, catering, cooking, housewifery, and the rest.

Presumably such instruction may be given at home if the girl's mother is able and willing to do it or to have it done. The conscripted students may live in their homes, or at the public School of Housewifery, and the training is very thorough. Mrs. Flora Annie Steel, the novelist, had some such scheme in her mind when she wrote to the papers a short time ago. Her idea was that if all girls had to learn domestic science the status of the domestic servant would be raised; that domestic service would become more popular. Apparently the Swiss Government is out to see that servants can be done without at no cost to the home in the way of comfort.

Some solid sense in that! But it seems to us there is more in it than meets the eye. Switzerland being the "playground of Europe" (we mentioned it last week without any claim to originality—but let that pass), it follows that it is up to the indigenous inhabitants of the soil to provide for the comfort of their visitors in the intervals between falling over precipices, into crevasses, out of motor-cars, etc. To their credit be it said, the hoteliers, caterers *et hoc genus omne* are fully alive to their responsibilities and duties in this important connection and spare no efforts to fulfil them adequately; the training of every girl in domestic science is obviously one means to this end. So let any intending visitor to Switzerland who has any qualms on the subject take heart of grace in the full assurance that the sheets will be clean and well-aired and the bacon done to a turn!

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

Following upon the recent foundation of a Swiss-Roumanian Bank in Bucarest, which closed its first business year in December, 1922, it is now announced in the press that a new bank is being formed for the purpose of facilitating the sale of Swiss securities in Roumania and furthering Swiss-Roumanian commercial relations. It is being founded by a group of important exporting firms in Switzerland, in co-operation with leading firms and individuals in Roumania. The title of the new concern will be "Banca Elvetiana de Depozite din Romania" (Swiss Deposit Bank in Roumania). The capital is to be Lei 100,000,000, of which Lei 30,000,000 is paid up. The bank started its business on the 1st of September.

The Hungarian authorities have ratified an agreement for the sale to Switzerland of 70,000 tons of wheat. Eighty per cent. of the proceeds of this sale will be placed at the disposal of the Hungarian Foreign Exchange Institute (Devisencentrale).

According to official statistics, compiled with regard to the development of Swiss limited companies during 1922, it appears that there was a net reduction in the capital invested of Frs. 4,884,000. This was a negative development of an intensity not touched since the early years of the present century, when the nationalisation of the railways produced a similar result in the net capital invested. The explanation of the movement in the present case is to be found in the number of war or post-war concerns which went into liquidation and to losses through reorganisation schemes. Further, the number of newly-formed companies was greatly diminished, and there was a large reduction in the amount of capital increases.

At the recent meeting of Messrs. Brown-Boveri's shareholders, the chairman, Dr. Walter Boveri, characterised the industrial situation in Switzerland as being by no means improved. He pointed out that the cost of labour was one of the most serious features of the situation, and illustrated his point by stating that, reckoned in terms of gold, the worker in Switzerland was paid twice as much as the Italian, and 1.7 times as much as the Frenchman. This factor, working in conjunction with the 48-hour week, made it impossible for the Swiss manufacturer to compete in the world's markets, where Swiss prices were 40 per cent. higher than those of other countries.

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.		Aug. 28	Sept. 4	
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	...	75.50%	77.00%	
Swiss Confed. 9th Mob. Loan 5%	...	100.65%	100.65%	
Federal Railways A-K 3%	...	79.60%	79.62%	
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921	...	103.00%	103.25%	
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892	...	70.25%	72.00%	
SHARES.		Nom.	Aug. 28	Sept. 4
		Frs.	Frs.	Frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation	...	500	646	644
Crédit Suisse	...	500	677	674
Union de Banques Suisses	...	500	534	528
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3290	3215	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2280	2242	
C. F. Bally S.A.	1000	1002	1010	
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon	500	680	665	
Entreprises Sulzer	1000	630	632	
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	...	500	311	290
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	170	166	
Choc. Suisses Peter-Callier-Kohler	100	106	106	
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	482	492	

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