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HOME NEWS

The rumours about an impending redistribution of the portfolios in the Federal Council are now officially denied; in the press it is, however, generally asserted that a change-over will take place before long. By the present system of ministers holding the same office for a number of years a certain prominence and superiority has been created to the prejudice of their colleagues.

A new Bill regulating the pay and pensions of Civil Servants and State employees, who for this purpose are divided into 26 classes, has been drafted by the Federal Council and will be submitted to the two houses for discussion and approval. Under it, striking or inciting to strike is an offence, and whilst State employees may belong to syndicates or trade unions, any rules or orders issued by the latter encouraging or enforcing strikes are nullified.

According to the final official figures no less than 46,700 entries have been received at Aarau for the Eidg. Schützenfest: in all, 50,000 to 60,000 riflemen are expected. This constitutes a record and practically doubles the number of participants in the last festival which took place in 1910 in Berne. The first number of the "Festszeitung" of the Eidg. Schützenfest (Tir Féderal) has been issued and contains, apart from the necessary information and plans, literary and descriptive articles, an appeal from the pen of the Federal President; from the latter we reproduce the following passage:—

"Pour fêter solennellement la centième anniversaire de sa fondation, la Société suisse des carabiniers vous convie à accourir dans la cité où elle a pris naissance et où fut célébré le premier de nos tirs fédéraux.

"Toute la Suisse a applaudi à cette heureuse idée. Dans tous les cantons, les pensées vont à Aarau, la ville active et entreprenante qui n'a pas hésité à assumer la lourde responsabilité de réaliser le vœu des carabiniers. Nous avons la certitude qu'elle s'en tirera à son honneur et que le Tir Féderal du centenaire, qui renoue une tradition interrompue depuis quatorze ans, sera digne de ceux qui l'ont précédé, qu'il leur sera même supérieur en importance et en fréquentation. Aarau et le canton d'Argovie ont droit à la reconnaissance de toute la Suisse pour le dévouement avec lequel ils ont accepté une tâche difficile. Et chacun souhaïterait avec nous qu'un succès complet, moral et matériel, soit la récompense de leur travail.

"Les tirs fédéraux font partie de notre vie nationale. Ils ont joué depuis un siècle un rôle actif et parfois considérable, qui leur a donné une place dans notre histoire. Celui que préparèrent nos chers confédérés argoviens revêt une signification particulière. Il sera, surtout pour les jeunes, qui assisteront pour la première fois à cette fête suisse par excellence, une école de civisme et de patriotisme."

The electors of the canton of Solothurn approved last Sunday, by a majority of about 8 to 1, a new hospital bill under which the State will contribute up to Frs. 800,000 for the extension of the cantonal hospital in Olten, Frs. 600,000 for an annex to the Bürgerspital in Solothurn, and Frs. 200,000 for the erection of a district infirmary in Thierstein.

Betting and lotteries are to be permitted and legalised in the canton of Thurgau, especially when the latter benefit philanthropic or charitable institutions. On the occasion of great sporting events concessions for totalisators may even be granted. The Regierungsrat proposes to substitute for the old law, dating from 1832, a new one on more modern lines.

The members of the St. Gall Town Council are in future to be entitled to a State pension on reaching the age of 45 and after having held their office for 12 years.

The municipal gas works of the town of Berne closed their accounts for 1923 with a surplus of Frs. 810,375, chiefly due to the sale of bye-products.

The electricity works recorded a profit of Frs. 2,307,030.

The two official postcards commemorating this year's 1st of August celebrations have been designed by Aug. Herzog (Ermatingen) and Eugen Zeller (Hinwil). The cards are sold with a surcharge of 20 cents, and the net proceeds are to be devoted exclusively for the benefit of necessitous Swiss living abroad.

The ceremony of re-naming the Quai du Léman in Geneva after Woodrow Wilson was performed last Friday (July 4th) in the presence of cantonal bodies and officials from the League of Nations secretariat. In his speech Sir Eric Drummond (the secretary of the League) mentioned that President Wilson had always most energetically insisted upon Geneva becoming the seat of the League; that his choice was a very wise one had been amply proved ever since its establishment.

The administration of the Swiss Carnegie Fund has held its annual meeting in Berne under the presidency of Federal President Chuard. Sixty-nine life-saving deeds came under consideration, most of which were acknowledged as having exposed the claimant to serious danger of life; the following awards were decreed: 15 bronze and 4 silver medals, 13 watches and cash payments to the total of Frs. 3,160.

Prof. Borel had been, two years ago, appointed by the Federal Council as counsel for the Confederation in a law suit, instituted against the Swiss Government by a French shipbroker for the alleged breach of a contract of freight in 1918-19. The sum claimed as damages amounted to upwards of thirty million gold francs, and the case was as difficult as it was important. Prof. Borel led the case throughout the written proceedings, and ran over last week from London to Lausanne for the pleadings at the final hearing, which took place before the Federal Tribunal on July 8th. He was completely successful, since by a unanimous vote the Tribunal has dismissed the claim as being totally unjustified.

The "Tribune de Genève" was sued for Frs. 25,000 damages by the notorious Dr. Alois Demole, who was selling in Switzerland doctors' diplomas of a spurious American university. The Federal Tribunal has now rejected his plea, stating that it was the duty of a newspaper to expose these fraudulent practices.

Whilst engaged on experiments in the electro-technical laboratory of the Zurich Polytechnic, a student named Walter Schmid, of Zeihen (Aargau), came in contact with the electric current and was killed on the spot.

During a heavy thunderstorm the church of Nieder-Erlinsbach (Aargau) was struck by lightning, part of the roof and the electric installation being destroyed.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Not by "KYBURG."

Not having heard from our friend "Kyburg," we suspect him of being still in the land of dreams, but must decline to follow his advice to leave this column blank. Unless we misjudge our readers, they would soon remind us of the realities of life. However, we have our doubts about the "glorious views of the Surrey Downs" being alone responsible for his present poetic state of mind; something more tangible is generally credited with producing these reveries!

The Horse Show.

Very little appeared in the English papers about the Swiss competitors. It is, of course, their first appearance, and nobody could expect them to be in the front rank. The fact that both officers and horses were shipped across only a day or two before they had to go into the ring would, it appears, prevent them from being in the pink of condition; the Americans, for instance, had a few weeks' training in this country. In making comparisons, it seemed to me that the Swiss riders were not always sure of their mounts: I remember well a dark-brown gelding ("Clicquot," entered privately by a Zurich stable) which on the opening day, Thursday, cleared all the obstacles splendidly and with plenty to spare in the first round, but steadfastly refused to take the course again. The jockey could not move him an inch, but when the time bell rang he bolted for the gates as if he

had been waiting for that moment. I believe comparatively few of our London Swiss residents troubled to go to Olympia; the fact that the officers remained practically under military orders and were not at liberty to accept invitations, was possibly responsible for the little interest exhibited.

I reproduce extracts from a very interesting article in *Country Life*, written before the chief events took place by an authority on the art of horsemanship, Lieut.-Col. M. F. McTaggart, D.S.O. I will quote first his points, which will enable us to judge why one rider is best, and what it is that makes the style of one country preferable to that of another:—

There are two very distinctive ways of approaching a fence: the "diminuendo" and the "crescendo." In the "diminuendo" way, the moment at which the horse is going his fastest pace is about 30ft. away from the jump. From that moment his pace decreases, as he keeps changing his legs in his endeavour to get a good "take off." In this method there is less skill required by the rider than by his horse. It is the "leave-it-to-the-horse" school of thought, and it is the horse that has to do the thinking.

We can see the thoughts that are passing through his brain by the way he changes his legs and puts in short strides, just like an athlete taking the jump. Under such a system, it is largely a matter of luck where the horse takes off, but, provided he does not get too close, it is wonderful how often he can manage to "screw his legs about so as to avoid hitting the timber of the fence. But it is a bad style. Instead of having a sufficient momentum to carry himself and his rider well on the other side, clear of any unexpected obstacle there might be, it often results in 'scratching' over somehow. This is quite unsound from a practical point of view, and if our training is not practical, it had much better be left alone.

The results of this form of "approach" are patent for all to see. It is seldom a "faultless" round is made. Four, five or even six fences may be cleared without touching, but disaster is impending. It is only a question of time.

The "crescendo" approach is the converse. In this case the horse's slowest pace is about 30ft. from the obstacle, which he approaches by three lengthening strides, and takes off about 6ft. from the fence and lands an easy 10ft. beyond it. When properly "put" by the rider, he jumps off his hocks and lands collected and ready to undertake any other task that may be presented to him, however unexpected it may be. This is sometimes known as the "one-two-three style."

The next point to consider is that of contact. This refers to the contact maintained by the rider on the horse's mouth throughout the parabola of the leap. What we should look for is control up to the moment of the "take off," freedom during the leap, and control on the "land." But this freedom should not necessitate loss of contact.

With high-class riders it is seldom that "freedom" is not given, but with those who are less highly skilled it is of common occurrence to touch the horse's mouth at the wrong moment. In observing this point, it is well to remember that a horse jumps normally with his mouth closed, so that any breach of this rule can be easily noticed by those who know what to look for. Temporary slackness of the rein is much more common, but in high-class horsemanship it is an undoubted fault, and the habit should be corrected.

In discussing the point of seat, there are again two methods of riding, and it bears on the question of how a horse shall carry his rider's weight. Although no school now permits any weight on the horse's loins when actually jumping, some do consider it right to have it there during the approach, and when reference is made to the "seat," it will be to this particular point.

Even skilled riders often do not know how they move the lower portion of their legs when jumping. But there is a variety of faults which can be committed in this particular. One is that of carrying the foot too far back. In one instance which I observed the foot actually went as high as the top of the horse's back. People who criticise the forward seat as being dangerous if the horse pecks have every justification when riders adopt this attitude. They have none, if the stirrup leather is kept vertical, and it is to this point the critic should give attention. Another fault that is often committed is that of depressing the toe. This is usually the result of riding with the stirrup leathers a little too long, and the same reason causes another fault, that of pushing the foot too far forward.

Reins.—Here, again, are two very distinct lines of thought. There is the "long-rein" school and the "short-rein" school, and we see nearly every variation of their principles among the different competitors. This is a study almost in itself, and to explain it in full will require a separate article. With it is bound up the poise of the body, contact and control.

In criticising on the above lines, he gives first place to the French, who have their horses under excellent control and who gallop right away the whole round, although the latter style very often is their downfall. Of the Swiss, who come third in his estimation, he states the following:—

This is the first time we have had the pleasure of seeing the Swiss, and a great treat it has been. They do not differ very much from either the Italians or the French, their style might well be described as half-way between the two. Sometimes, I noticed, they were inclined to carry their hands a little too high, and, generally speaking, do not make any effort at collecting their horses, or of "putting" them at their fences. The galloping style seems to be spreading. The only one of their team I noticed who attempted collected jumping was Captain Bühler, and he, in consequence, made a particularly good round. He also rides with his stirrup on the ball of his foot, which is to be recommended.