

Notes and gleanings

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dations regarding military assistance when the Council shall have decided to make such recommendations; and one or two cognate points. This is a matter which has, therefore, been taken out of the hands of the Preparatory Committee and put into the hands of the Council, the idea being to provide, if possible, for the more expeditious execution of Council decisions. It is, all the same, a ticklish affair, and may very likely lead to the raising of complicated issues.

Apart from this reference to the Council, the Preparatory Committee has defined more precisely the terms of the questionnaire submitted to it, and has referred these questions to two sub-committees—one a committee of military, naval and air experts, and the other a mixed committee of economic financial, transit and other representatives. These committees are asked for technical replies, and when these replies have been furnished the Preparatory Committee will meet again later in the year to consider them and to see how far they form a basis for a programme. One substantial decision of the Committee is that it would not be practical at the present time to limit the ultimate war strength of a country, but that it is possible to limit the forces permanently maintained or capable of immediate use without preliminary mobilisation measures. A study is to be made of the possibility of limiting mobilisable forces available on outbreak of hostilities. A study is also to be made of the kind of things to which limitation should be applied, such as peace-time forces, munitions, expenditure on national defence, etc., how strengths between different countries may be compared, how far armaments in general are affected by geographical situation, vulnerability of frontiers, length and character of communications, etc.

Some important references were made to the possibility of regional disarmament. This was a matter raised by various delegations, including the American, which held that circumstances differed so much in different quarters of the world that it might be easier to make progress in one part than in another. A study is to be made on this point, including considerations of what regions could be taken separately and what factors the term "region" should connote. This is an essential consideration; regional schemes must not be uni-lateral.

A declaration was made by the German delegation that while not contesting the necessity of determining the methods to put rapidly into force assistance which a State attacked might receive, they contended that before this was done the limitation and reduction of armaments should be so effected that no State should be strong enough to prevail against the League. If States were to be able to bring effective help to a State attacked by another Power of preponderant superiority, it was evident that their joint armaments would have to be superior to those of any eventual aggressor. Curiously enough, this is exactly the proposal which was originally put forward by the French, and though both parties suggest the same thing there is an ironic difference in the angle of approach.

On the whole, though there is an enormous field of discussion still left open, some little advance has been made, and it must be recognised that there is no wisdom whatever in trying to force the pace. To risk failure through impatience, and to go to a general conference before the time is ripe, and before the Committee has even thoroughly investigated whether a general conference is, after all, the most appropriate way, would be fatal.

University for Invalids.

The progress of Wireless Telephony has been made use of in Switzerland to help along ailing students who otherwise would have been losing much valuable time while recuperating.

Yorkshire Observer (25th May):—

The broadcasting of University lectures to invalid students is a remarkable new use which has been found for wireless by the Swiss.

At a sanatorium in Leysin, in the Canton of Vaud, built for the treatment and care of students whose education has been arrested by illness, University lectures are brought actually to the bedside of invalids by means of a special radio installation. The lectures are delivered by visiting professors to all students who are fit to attend them in the special room appointed for the purpose, and they are thence broadcast to the other patients in bed.

The patients are enabled by means of these daily lectures, and by intercourse with people of similar intellectual interests, to keep in touch with their interrupted work. Every effort is made to preserve the academic atmosphere rather than that of the hospital. A fine library containing more than a thousand volumes is available for the students' use.

Forty students from universities all over the world are accommodated in this invalids' college, which is called the University Sanatorium of Leysin.

A Fascist Climb-down—Farinacci's 400-ft. Flagstaff.

Daily Herald (27th May):—

The anniversary of Italy's entry into the Great War was to have been the occasion of an unprecedented Fascist demonstration on the Italo-Swiss frontier. Ponte-Chiasso, an Italian village of about 200 houses, was the place chosen for the demonstration.

Its houses were placarded the other day with large posters, which displayed the thrilling news that Farinacci was to come "at the head of the Fascist squads of the Como province." A steel mast, 400 feet high, was erected in the most conspicuous part of Ponte-Chiasso—the centre of the square facing the frontier line.

An enormous Italian flag was to be hoisted to the top of this mast. The size of the mast and of the flag were calculated to enable, according to the Ponte-Chiasso posters, "foreigners on the other side of the frontier to take note of and observe the Italian colours."

There was, however, no Farinacci and no hoisting of Italian flags. And the steel mast is to be removed. It appears that those who caused it to be erected had overlooked the fact that an international convention forbids the hoisting of flags within 250 metres of border lines. The Swiss authorities, it appears, pointed out to Rome the political inconvenience of the intended demonstration, and this caused Farinacci to call off his project.

Now that "Il Duce" has his own flag, has his own picture on Italian stamps—thereby assuming a rôle hitherto reserved for Sovereigns—it must be expected that his publicity agent is looking around for fresh fields of activity.

Great Music Festival at Zurich.

The Times (31st May):—

Particulars of music festivals to be held at Zurich in June and at Salzburg in August have now been made public. The International Society for Contemporary Music holds its fourth festival at Zurich from June 18 to 23. The first concert is choral and will consist of Kodaly's *Psalmus Hungaricus* and Honegger's *oratorio King David*, of which an account by Mr Fuller-Maitland was recently published in "The Times." On the second day a memorial to Busoni will be unveiled and a chamber concert given of works by Geiser, Schönberg and Jacobi. On Sunday there will be a performance at the Swiss Marionette Theatre of de Falla's "Master Pedro's Puppet Show." At an orchestral concert works by W. T. Walton, Hindewith, Casella and others will be performed. Sacred music by Chaplet and Petrek occupies one concert, while the last concert will be devoted to miscellaneous chamber music, including a piano sonata by Mjaskowsky, a work for chamber orchestra by Krasa, a concerto for wind instruments by Weill, and a septuor by Houré. The performing artists are mainly Swiss, but there are conductors from Paris, Prague and Vienna, singers from Paris, Munich and Holland, and among the pianists is Herr Walter Gieseking from Hanover. There are no British performers except Miss Alma Moodie, who, though Scotch, is accredited to Berlin, and the only British composition is W. T. Walton's overture "Portsmouth Point."

Blindness Cured.

It was only the other day I bought a tiny red flower, the proceeds to be for the blind of this country. How often one comes across blind people or hears of effort made to help them to overcome their terrible handicap and to bring some interest or joy into their darkened lives. And who does not realise that to become blind is probably the most appalling misfortune that can befall a living creature (moles, etc., excepted)? The *Daily News* (1st June) publishes the following remarkable report which seems to give hope to at least the sufferers of one form of blindness:—

A Geneva oculist, Dr. Pierre Bolle, has recently communicated to the French Academy of Medicine details of a method by which he has achieved complete success in curing cases of blindness due to the detachment of the retina.

Cases of this kind are by no means uncommon, and are generally precipitated by physical shock or overstrain, though probably due to pre-disposing causes not yet fully understood. When the retina becomes detached a pocket of serous fluid forms between it and the wall of the eye, preventing re-attachment.

Dr. Bolle states that in case of a lesion of this kind the patient should take immediate and complete rest, lying flat on his back.

Injections of common salt have long been used in such cases, but Dr. Bolle's discovery lies in the setting up of what is called osmotic action by simultaneous injections on both sides of the eye. The fluid in the pocket being deficient in sodium chloride content as compared with that in the centre of the eyeball, Dr. Bolle, by graded injections, induces an action through the detached membrane which brings the fluid on each side to the same degree of salinity.

The patient being kept on his back, the retina, so to speak, sinks in the fluid and becomes re-attached to the wall of the eye. Indeed, the

doctor affirms that, by reason of a kind of glue which is formed, it adheres more firmly than before.

During the past five years he has treated 20 cases, and he reports complete success in every case. Sight has been completely restored and has remained unimpaired.

Since his paper was read before the French Academy, Dr. Bolle has had numerous letters asking for treatment. He asks me to make it clear that immediate treatment is necessary. Once a membrane is dead nothing can be done. Thus a case of three years' standing mentioned in a letter from Liverpool is quite hopeless.

New Electricity Undertakings in Switzerland.

British tourists visiting Switzerland often remark upon the universality of electric power and light in our country. Compared with England, Switzerland does make more use of electricity, but an enormous increase in the consumption of electric power, with consequential increases in the manifold applications of electrical accessories, is still possible. That the power can be got is clear from the following in the *Electrical Review* (28th May):—

According to a report lately issued by the Swiss Water Economy Department, the total available water power in the country is equal to four million h.p. for an average of 15 hours per day. Of this only one million h.p. is so far being utilised. At the beginning of the present year work was in hand on the establishment of several new hydro-electric stations, among them being the Ober-Ems, with a capacity of 11,000 h.p., the Vernayaz (108,000 h.p.), the Handeck—the first of three on the Upper Hasli—(100,000 h.p.), and the third extension of the station on the Lungern Lake, which will increase its capacity from 20,000 to 22,000 h.p.

Church in Fetters.

Leicester Daily Mercury (29th May):—

Crowds of early summer tourists in Switzerland are being drawn to the village of Safian, in the Grisons, by the spectacle of a church that is held back only by immense cables from disappearing into a deep ravine. The church is perched on the summit of an enormous rock at the meeting of two streams, and the swirl of the waters has so undermined the base of the rock that it has slipped bodily forward and threatens at any moment to topple over, carrying the church with it. Alarmed parishioners, awakening one morning recently to find their church slipping to destruction, obtained great cables, bound them round the fabric, and made them fast in the solid ground on the side farthest from the danger.

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KLEINE SCHWEIZERFAMILIE in London sucht auf anfangs September treues, sauberes MAEDCHEN, das kochen und sämtliche Hausarbeiten verrichten kann. Lohn nach Uebereinkunft.—Anmeldungen, wenn möglich mit Photographie und Zeugnissen, unter Chiffre "S. A." an "Swiss Observer," 23, Leonard Street, London, E.C.2.