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## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

## "La Suisse et les Soviets" and "Allons nous céder?"

"A Swiss" sends me two cuttings from the dear old *Gazette de Lausanne* containing the above two articles, and he writes above the second one: "This article may help you to understand the Swiss attitude towards Russia's recognition."

At the foot of the first article, written by a Mr. Th. Aubert, from Geneva, the Editor of the "G.d.L." writes:—

Bien loin de servir les intérêts de la Suisse, la reconnaissance des Soviets nous causerait un grave préjudice à tous les points de vue: au point de vue politique parce que partout où les Soviets ont été reconnus officiellement, la propagande communiste s'est aussitôt intensifiée, et parce que l'ambition des bolchévistes est de se servir de notre pays pour y fomentier la révolution et pour nuire à la Société des Nations, dont ils sont les pires ennemis; au point de vue moral parce que nous ne pouvons, sans déchoir, renouer avec un gouvernement qui a massacré et emprisonné un grand nombre de nos compatriotes, qui les a dépouillés de leurs biens, qui a pillé deux fois notre Légation, outrage notre ministre septuagénaire et qui ne nous a jamais présenté des excuses ni offert des indemnités pour ces crimes et ces sévices. Enfin, au point de vue économique, la reprise des relations n'est qu'un leurre, car tous ceux qui trafiquent avec la Russie des Soviets ont fait de fâcheuses expériences et n'en ont retiré que des désagréments et des humiliations. . . .

It is, of course, touching to find our dear compatriot sending me the above from Moseley, Birmingham, where, as I happen to know, quite a number of estimable and well-to-do people sleep and dream of actions which would make of proud Birmingham a less dilapidated-looking city than it is now, with the exception of some three streets. It is touching to find how our poor exiled brother finds solace and intellectual nourishment in reading political "truths" in the dear old *Gazette de Lausanne*, which won imperishable fame, and rightly so, by opening its columns once a month to the valiant defender of Capt. Dreyfus in the early years of the present century.

But otherwise I cannot accept the *Gazette de Lausanne* as purveyor of unbiased political news, no more than I could accept the teachings and writings of the *Morning Post* or the *Echo de Paris*, to name a couple of other newspapers of the same class.

My friend of Moseley underlines especially the ghastly passage dealing with the villainous murders, etc., committed by the Bolsheviks. Has he ever heard of similar atrocities perpetrated under the Czarist Governments? The other evening I attended a performance of Zangwill's "The Melting Pot." I had to take great pains to convince those with me that the unspeakable horrors mentioned in that interesting play as having been perpetrated by Russians against Russian Jews, took place before the advent of the bad Bolsheviks—yes, under the Czar. How very dreadful! And how well do I remember the protests entered against those pogroms by the Swiss and other Governments. How well I remember Switzerland being without diplomatic representation at the then St. Petersburg. And what shouts of disgust, what hot-blooded articles in our Swiss Press, what vitriolic outpourings of passionate "caveat" whenever our Swiss Government showed the least inclination to recognise the Russian Imperial Government! Yea, verily, I don't think.

No, my dear friend, while thanking you sincerely for sending me the above interesting and blood-curdling articles, while admitting that Swiss opinion on the whole is unfriendly, and quite justifiably and justly unfriendly, against the present rulers of Russia, I still hold my own personal opinion, namely, that the Conradi verdict was a miscarriage of justice and a ghastly political mistake, that the non-recognition of Russia is a piece of childish peevishness, a sort of attitude which prevents a man from admitting when he has been wrong and makes him take up an attitude of superior morality instead, and that, sooner or later, our Swiss Government will have to recognise the Soviets or whoever may be in power in Russia, and that, before such recognition is possible, it will cost us a good bit of money and loss of prestige. Wait and see!

## Kyburg's Error.

As another friendly reader takes the trouble of pointing out to me, my quotation last week "Es kann der Frömmste nicht im Frieden leben, etc." is not out of the "Glocke," but out of "William Tell," namely Walter Stauffer's famous words to his wife. Thanks, dear reader! And fancy me making such an error! No wonder some correspondents think that I am not well acquainted with Swiss matters!

## Where have they gone to?

According to *The Times* of 26th inst. some 50,000 gold pieces, each worth Frs. 100, were minted in December last by the Swiss Mint—and have all disappeared from circulation! "Kyburg"

herewith records his total innocence in the matter. Worse luck! But fancy, our people being able to put five million francs away in a month, and unproductively! Do they keep them with a view of giving them away when suitable occasions arise? In the old times, in our Canton of Zurich, when a man looked around for another to be a godfather for his child, it was the custom to give the father Frs. 5 if one had to decline the honour for some reason or other. I have known a case, a doctor relative of mine, who was asked so often that he was finally driven to accelerate the exit from his house of yet another seeker after an easily-won 5-franc piece. Perhaps, I am thinking, the "fee" has now become Frs. 100, so that the gold pieces in question may be hoarded for such purposes. Who knows?

## Boy Scouts from Forty Nations to meet at Kandersteg.

Delegates from some forty different nations will be present at the fourth International Boy Scout Congress, which will be held next August at Kandersteg, Switzerland. Switzerland has been chosen in response to the invitation of the Fédération des Eclaireurs Suisses, and Kandersteg was selected as the locale not only on account of its natural beauties, but also because the Scouts' Alpine Club and International Châlet are already established there. Simultaneously with the holding of the congress a great international reunion of scoutmasters will be held.

And may they have excellent weather! Further very interesting articles have appeared in technical papers recently. The *Tramway and Railway World* (January) has an illustrated article about the "Sihl Valley Electric Railway," the *Electrical Review* (Jan. 22nd) another one on "Swiss Electrification," also illustrated, the *Electrician* of 22nd Jan. an article on a new "Safety Device for Electric Locomotives," with diagram and illustrations. These articles will be kept by me for a week, in case one of our readers should wish to have one or other or all three.

## Italy to Tax Swiss Electricity.

*Electrical Review* (22nd Jan.):— A Swiss correspondent informs us that the rumour that Italy is going to tax imported electrical energy is causing a certain anxiety in Switzerland. For some years it has been a very important "article" of exportation from Switzerland, the power provided for Italy during last year being about 76,000 kW. Several power stations have been set up specially with a view to exporting electricity to Italy, and if the latter country taxes Swiss energy, the suppliers will be faced with unexpected difficulties. It is said that the proposed tax will be 30 per cent. of the wholesale price of the electricity, which is considered excessive in electrical circles, but as the Italians are determined, so far as lies in their power, to protect Italy, it is quite probable that the new duty will be as high as the figure mentioned.

Our Protectionist friends will probably say, "what a good thing for Switzerland now she can use all her electricity herself." On the other hand, the Italians will bless their Mussolini still more for "making the foreigner pay for their electric power." And the most interesting aspect of the whole case is that both will believe it!

## The Vatican Guards.

*Catholic Herald* (23rd Jan.):— The Swiss Guards of the Vatican are, contrary to popular belief, really natives of Switzerland, chosen in certain Cantons. The Noble Guard is composed of Roman patricians, while the Palatine Guard is drawn from middle-class citizens. There is also a Pontifical Gendarmerie, but the Guard of Honour remains the Swiss corps. A young Irishman named O'Gorman, bent on entering the Swiss Guards, went to reside in Switzerland in order to qualify for admission, and, as a Swiss subject, eventually obtained his desire.

As I know from personal enquiry among the Guardsmen themselves, years ago, when helping them to get rid of some "Castelli Romani" and Swiss sausages, etc., in their den under the shadow of the Vatican, their service is not very hard. They have plenty of leisure, anyhow, and talking things over with them at the time reminded me, as I still easily call to mind, the story which used to be told of a respected member of Winterthur's town administration staff who, earlier in his career, had been a policeman. He used to tell how he was asked, when presenting himself for the job of a policeman somewhere "im Züri-biet," whether he was fond of work. And how he had replied simply: "If I were fond of work, do you think I would apply for this job?" Well, well, as another friend of mine remarked one day when we were taking a constitutional along the lake towards the "Nase" at Vitznau, and met a gipsy and her family, "Our Lord has many and various lodgers!"

## Winter Sports

still absorb enormous space in the British Press. The following is from *The Field* (21st Jan.):—

How many of the visitors to Davos know the origin of the English skating rink? The story

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