

Notes and gleanings

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HOME NEWS

In the National Council one of the Socialist members (Sigg) asked the Federal Council whether in view of the apparently pacific spirit exhibited by the League of Nations delegates and the re-affirmation by the latter of the neutrality of Switzerland the moment was not opportune to proceed to a complete disarmament and abolishment of our conscript army. In its reply the Federal Council stated that the question raised an important problem which at a future date may become pressing but that present conditions did not justify its consideration.

The funded debt of the Confederation at the end of last year amounted to 2,068 million francs and that of the Federal Railways administration to 2,585 millions. Added to the indebtedness of the cantons (1,560) and of the larger municipalities (1,015) this brings the total to 7.2 milliards or about Frs. 2,000 per head of population.

As a result of the diplomatic representations made to the Italian Government in the Canevascini affair (when the Ticinese States Councillor of that name was not allowed to cross the frontier whilst acting as a member of an official delegation) it is now stated that this refusal was based on a misunderstanding and that the incident is now closed.

On the tractanda list for the coming winter session of the Swiss Parliament, which opens next Monday, is a motion to increase the salaries of Federal Councillors from Frs. 25,000 to Frs. 30,000.

A memorandum signed by Prof. Paul Robert, of Fribourg, on behalf of a group of Swiss resident in Russia before the revolution and received by the Federal Council contains vigorous and threatening protests against the Russian delegation to the Preparatory Disarmament Commission being allowed to sojourn on Swiss soil.

By a decision of the Federal Tribunal a Zurich lady practitioner has been mulcted in the sum of nearly Frs. 70,000 as damages to a patient for negligent application of X-rays.

New regulations for motor traffic in the canton Berne have been enacted by the Grosse Rat; during night-time the cantonal roads are closed to lorries and large cars (over eight seats).

In a recent issue of the "Adula" an amalgamation of the two cantons Ticino and Grisons was advocated; the capital of the "Reno-Ticino" would be Bellinzona. The suggestion has not been favourably received by the Romantsch.

On the occasion of their golden wedding Mr. and Mrs. Stachelin-Allgeier, of Basle, have handed another Frs. 100,000 (making in all Frs. 200,000) to the Society for Public Utility for a special fund benefitting young people.

The annual charity stamps "Pro Juventute" which are now on sale in Switzerland commemorate the life work of Heinrich Pestalozzi; three of the stamps have been designed by the Zurich artist Ernst Ruegg and the fourth by B. Bickel of Wallenstadt.

Former States Councillor Ad. Soldini died suddenly in Chiasso at the age of 70. He was a well-known personality in Ticinese politics but for some time had quitted public life; he will best be remembered as Sindaco of Chiasso, which distinction he held uninterruptedly for 20 years.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Education in Switzerland.

A very instructive article on this subject has appeared in the *Spectator* (Nov. 19th). It is somewhat one-sided as it ignores the educational facilities for foreigners in other parts of the country. We also doubt whether the writer is well-informed when he states that 15% of the students at the various universities and colleges are English. The fees payable in state schools and mentioned by him probably apply to very few districts as, speaking

generally, both primary and secondary education is absolutely free in Switzerland.

"Switzerland, the home of the League of Nations, the meeting-place of so many peace and other conferences, the playground of Europe, is fast becoming the class-room as well. A position in the heart of Europe at the fusion of the Latin and Germanic cultures, three official spoken languages—French, German and Italian—a tradition of neutrality and a certain sense of stability and security in the character of its people and government, give it important natural advantages, to which must be added the great and varied beauty of its scenery and the excellence of its climate.

On the foundation of these natural advantages, the various Cantonal governments have built up and endowed an elaborate system of State education, intended primarily for their own citizens, but also adapted to attract foreign students. The fact that a large percentage of the students attending lectures at the various Universities and schools are of foreign parentage shows how the educational facilities of the country have been realised and availed of. Thus, at the University of Fribourg there are 251 native students and 27 foreign; at Geneva, respectively 550 and 745; at Zurich University 1,457 and 521, and at the famous Polytechnic of Zurich 1,457 native students and 669 foreign. In all, foreign students form quite a third of the University rolls.

Though liberal studies are by no means neglected, and though the tone and tendency of University life varies considerably in the different intellectual centres, the trend of Swiss education in the main is towards the technical, commercial and scientific equipment of their young men and women.

To the English student, apart from the excellence of the education in itself, Switzerland appeals on account of the opportunities it gives for the acquiring of a thorough and intimate knowledge of French and German. It is hardly necessary to point out that a speaking and writing knowledge of modern languages is not only part of a liberal education, opening up, as it does, the whole new field of a nation's literature, but also an essential to most careers. In what is known as the "Suisse Romande" or French-speaking Switzerland, comprising the Cantons of Geneva, Vaud, Neuchâtel, Fribourg and parts of Valais, French is the language of the class-rooms, the playing-fields, and of the daily intercourse of life. In the remaining Cantons, with the exception of Tessin, where Italian is the spoken language, German prevails.

A slight survey of the educational facilities at an important educational and intellectual centre such as Lausanne, will show the wide scope and variety of opportunities available. Here at Lausanne primary, secondary, gymnasium, and University courses at the State institutions are open to children of foreign parents. The fees, almost nominal for native students, are very moderate for foreign pupils. The children of foreign parents who reside in the canton and pay the ordinary Swiss taxes are admitted on exactly the same terms as the Swiss. A Swiss boy or girl pays at any of the State secondary schools 80 francs (£3 4s.) per year during the first year for pupils of twelve to fourteen years, rising to 150 francs (£6) for the final courses for pupils of sixteen years and upwards. The fees for children of foreign nationality whose parents do not pay the full Swiss taxes have been fixed at 400 francs (£16) per year. It must be understood that State-endowed institutions in Switzerland, with a few exceptions in German Switzerland, do not take boarders, so that these fees are for the bare education.

The fees for a University degree vary according to the subject. Medicine or Science would cost more than, say, Law. Roughly speaking, a degree in Law would come to £60 in fees and a degree in Medicine £100.

But good as is the State system of education in Switzerland, the English student is by no means confined to it. Lausanne, for instance, has six private schools for boys, and no less than forty-five finishing schools for girls. The percentage of English-speaking boys and girls in these schools at Lausanne would be, say, 33 per cent. in boys and 35 to 40 per cent. in girls. Taking the whole of Switzerland one might estimate at 15 per cent. the number of English-speaking students taking courses at the various Universities and "Ecoles Supérieures."

The following are some of the better-known private schools at Lausanne and on the shores

ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

December 5th 1830.—Fighting for a new Constitution; 3,000 Peasants near Aarau.

December 6th, 1871.—Founding of the St. Gothard Railway Company.

December 7th, 1307.—Confederates taking the Oath on the Rütli.

December 9th, 1315.—Establishing the "Dreiländerbund" at Brunnen.

of Lake Lemane:—L'Ecole Vinet at Lausanne is a large and typical Swiss day school for girls, with 280 to 300 pupils, of whom about fifty are English or English-speaking. Children are taken from the earliest years and trained up to the higher secondary course at eighteen to nineteen years, when they are ready for the University. The fees range from £7 per year for the first courses for small children to £16 per year for the final classes. Lemania College at Lausanne is co-educational and prepares children from thirteen years of age up to entrance to the University. The Ecole Nouvelle, at Chailly, Lausanne, is also co-educational for 120 boys and girls, and takes day pupils and boarders from eight to nineteen years. Lycée Jaccard and La Villa at Ouchy are well-known boarding schools for boys. The Institut Carnal at Rolle, on the shores of the lake, usually known as Rosey School, is a first-class and well-known boarding school for boys, with a reputation for study and sport. La Casita, Le Grand Verger, Pensionnat Rosencrux, Les Allières, are among the better-known girls' finishing schools at Lausanne.

The fees at these schools vary. The average fees would be about 4,300 francs (£172) per year, and are certainly not more expensive than schools of the same class at home. But in addition to these private Swiss schools, there have sprung up recently in Switzerland several schools owned and controlled by British masters and mistresses, where boys and girls are prepared for entrance to the Public Schools and Universities of home in the company and atmosphere of the youth of their own country. Such schools are: Chillon College at Territet, Montreux; Captain Fox's School at Geneva; Captain Mocatta's Preparatory School at Glion, and Mr. Reeve's English Preparatory School at Chateau d'Oex, 3,200 feet in the Alps, established in 1911 and the oldest English school in the high Alps. These schools are for boys, while Châtelard School and St. George's School at Montreux take girls. The terminal fees at these schools vary, but are in or about £40 to £60.

At Lausanne, in addition to the five faculties of the University, Theology, Medicine, Law, Letters, and Science, there is, attached to the Faculty of Letters, a special course of Modern French for the benefit of foreign students; while attached to the Faculty of Law are special schools of Social, Political and Commercial Economics, with a valuable course of Consular and Diplomatic instruction, unique of its kind.

A special feature of Swiss education is the forty State-endowed "Ecoles supérieures de Commerce" which one finds at Lausanne and elsewhere throughout Switzerland. These schools take boys and girls from fourteen years of age and train them for any commercial career, as well as for most of the State services. At each there is a preparatory class called the "Classe de perfectionnement" for foreign students to enable them to follow the regular classes with advantage. St. Gall has a special Commercial School and University, as has Neuchâtel, while the Polytechnic at Zurich, universally known as the "Polly," has 2,500 students and is world-renowned.

Field sports and games of all sorts have so developed in Switzerland nowadays that British students can enjoy, with the exception of cricket, practically all the sports of home, with the addition of Winter Sports in the Alps. The English student in Switzerland comes in contact with the thought and culture of Europe. In French-speaking Switzerland he or she is in touch with France, in Eastern Switzerland with Germany. In both Switzerland the British student meets on a level, on the playing-fields and in the class-rooms, students of many nationalities, and undoubtedly this contact and intercourse is all to the good."

Teaching the Turk.

The following from the *Morning Post* (Nov 22nd) will supplement the information appearing in another column of this week's issue:—

"The case of Turkey might serve as a warning to the rash reformer. She was determined to put on the apparel of Western Civilisation, so she became a Republic, and not only passed a long list of most enlightened laws, but adopted the Swiss Civil Code. And now, according to our Constantinople Correspondent, the discovery is made that no one—not even the Bench—understands these wonderful laws. Of Judges there are apparently some 5,000, many of whom have never studied law, and there are no doubt besides an army of pleaders and solicitors at least equally innocent. Then, of course, there is the Turkish laity, who have probably never heard of Switzerland, to say nothing of the Swiss Civil Code. Little wonder if the Minister of Justice finds himself in some perplexity. He has, however, made a courageous beginning. He proposes to open classes in Angora where the Judges, public prosecutors, and other officials will be instructed in the laws which in the meantime they must administer. We take it that there will be a course for the lawyers later: as for the public they are likely to remain in blissful ignorance of the Swiss Civil Code until they find it, so to speak, laid across them. Let us hope that at least they enjoy their own criminal law, so that they may have the satisfaction of being bastinadoed on their own understandings.

We fear that the Turks will learn in due course that justice depends less on the letter of the law than on the spirit of its administration. The Swiss Civil Code may be all that its framers claim for it. But some texts of the Koran, honestly administered under a fig tree, would suit the Turk better than all the principles and applications of Western jurisprudence. Yet, after all, we cannot afford to pity the Turk. For is not our own statute book so laden with the burden laid on it by Parliament that our Judges themselves groan as they consider it?

Faked Passports.

How insignificant incidents can be turned into a sensational affair is shown by the following cutting taken from the *Daily Mail* (Nov. 23rd):—

"The arrest at Basle of two Italians while attempting to cross the frontier has revealed the existence in that town of a Communist organisation for the fabrication of false passports. The Italians, who had entered Switzerland by an unfrequented Alpine track, went to Basle, where they were provided with faked Swiss passports at the headquarters of a "Communist Aid" society.

Six Communists are incriminated. It is believed that for a considerable time this bureau has been producing spurious passports on a large scale.

Yesterday a man supposed to be a Communist attempted to cross the Swiss frontier near Les Brenets. When asked for his passport he drew a revolver and fired three shots at an official, seriously wounding him, and then made his escape. A close search is being conducted on both sides of the frontier."

The facts are that two Italian Communists, in order to facilitate their entry into France, were given or lent two passports held by Swiss sympathisers. As soon as they had crossed the frontier the deception was discovered. The complainant action of the two Basle Communists will probably be dealt with by the courts.

The incident at Les Brenets refers to a fugitive from justice who endeavoured to reach Swiss territory, he being sought by the French authorities for a crime committed at Strasbourg.

Mont Blanc Capitalized.

If the intrinsic value of our snow peaks and touring resorts is to be based on the computation applied by the *Daily Mail* (Nov. 21st) we would be the richest country in the world; no doubt, after this discovery, the Alps will be assessed for Swiss property tax!

"A report presented to the National Economic Council by M. Leon Auscher states that in 1913 (and there is no reason to suppose that the number has since diminished) 400,000 tourists visited the French slopes of Mont Blanc, 275,000 the Italian slopes, and 350,000 the Swiss slopes. Supposing that each tourist spends a sum of 50 gold francs in the district for transport, hotel accommodation, and purchase of souvenirs (and this is a very modest estimate), the conclusion is arrived at that in 1913 the "business turnover" of Mont Blanc was 52,000,000 gold francs (more than £2,000,000).

Few industrialists, M. Auscher points out, possess a capital capable of yielding such a turnover."

RECITAL DE Mlle. SOPHIE WYSS.

Notre compatriote, Mlle. Sophie Wyss, est une grande artiste, musicienne, sincère et très sympathique. Elle prend place, en bon rang, parmi les meilleures cantatrices suisses.

Le programme que Mlle. Wyss a composé pour son récital du 14 décembre est, comme son talent, plein des plus belles promesses; et le moins que l'on en puisse dire, c'est qu'elles seront tenues.

Une première partie, dans laquelle figurent les noms de Durante et de Jean-Sébastien Bach, est consacrée à la musique purement classique.

Vient ensuite la musique moderne d'inspiration allemande, avec Brahms et Hugo Wolf, puis ces charmantes mélodies des auteurs français modernes tels que Hüe, Ravel et Debussy.

Tout ceci a été choisi et groupé avec un goût parfait, mais la véritable originalité du programme de Mlle. Sophie Wyss consiste à y avoir intercalé l'élite des compositeurs suisses d'aujourd'hui: Othmar Schoeck, Gustave Doret, Arthur Honegger, E. Jaques-Dalcroze, Pierre Maurice. Tous ceux-là qui ont donné à l'art suisse, à l'art tout court, une expression pure et noble; ils ne sont pas, certes, sans avoir acquis une certaine notoriété, mais on est loin encore, à l'étranger, de connaître leur mérite.

C'est avec eux que Mlle. Sophie Wyss veut se présenter au public de la métropole britannique et affronter la critique.

On doit féliciter cette intelligente artiste de son entreprise, qu'encourageront par leur présence à Aeolian Hall ceux qui, leur journée finie, savent s'intéresser à autre chose qu'au dur "business."

PIERRE JACOT.

J. H.'S Weekly Letter to his Friends and Compatriots.

During the last few days we have received the news from Switzerland and from Paris that the negotiations between the two Governments with regard to the customs tariffs have been anything but successful. The Swiss Press has taken up a firm stand and so have the Chambers of Commerce. Should the negotiations not soon be conducted on a new basis and in a more friendly spirit, then, they say, the existing commercial treaty should be terminated by Switzerland.

It is unfortunate that in the year 1927, nine years after the "war to end war," so-called "customs wars" should again come into prominence. Quite apart from the question of the two countries mentioned, customs wars are going on or are in preparation almost over the whole globe.

True, we have had conferences with the object in view of making international commercial relations easier. But what will be the effect of strengthened protection if it is imposed in a way that precludes almost any fruitful commercial international relations? The answer is "War."

We have now again a conference for the reduction of armaments. I do not know whether or not I should discuss a matter like this in this place, but it appears to me that these matters should be discussed in any place. In addition I have another reason for mentioning these points in the journal of the Swiss Colony, the reason being that we Swiss are only too apt to lose sight of the wider issues while we revel in "Kantönlichkeit." This last is probably one of the reasons why so often our arguments are taken lightly by our adversaries.

One such instance was demonstrated last week when the meeting of the corporation for an international motor road was unable to elect its constitutional executive committee because there was a difference of opinion as to who should have one particular mandate out of 24 or 25. Instead of coming together and at least trying to solve the problem for the best advantage of the country as a whole, sectional interests, probably only supposed interests, proved a stumbling block. The result will be inevitable delay, even if all goes well otherwise. If agreement cannot be reached soon a great chance may be for ever lost.

A question which a few weeks ago was ventilated in the *Swiss Observer* regarding the payments for a Swiss Legation in the East, can be included in the same category of thought. The question had originally been raised in the *Republikanische Blätter*. It was contended that a payment of, I believe, Frs. 40,000, was an enormous salary for a Minister.

I know that people who never have been away from their homes and who have, probably, to reckon with £200 - £250 (Frs. 5,000 to Frs. 6,250) or even less, of yearly salary, must look upon Frs. 40,000 (£1,600) as a fortune. It is, however, not they who write to the papers but men who should know, if not from experience then from information, that in any Capital Frs. 40,000 is a contribution rather than a salary for the Representative of a country. Why, an advertisement in a certain London newspaper (full front page) costs almost as much, yet we expect our Swiss Representative to bring, year in year out, our name, and last but not least what we have to sell, to the notice of foreign governments and people and to entertain on the proper scale for a better-class bank clerk's salary!

We are the sons of a small but wonderful country. We are known and respected for our hard work, but our outlook has been restricted by the mountains. We have to ascend the mountains to gain a wider outlook.

Yours sincerely, JOHN HENRY.

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

BONDS.	Nov. 22			Nov. 29		
	Fr.	Sfr.	Fr.	Sfr.	Fr.	
Confederation 3% 1903	79.25		80.00			
5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln	101.35		101.50			
Federal Railways 3 1/2% A-K	85.12		85.40			
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	101.20		101.25			
SHARES.						
	Nom.	Nov. 22	Nov. 29		Nov. 22	Nov. 29
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	708	706			
Crédit Suisse	500	845	840			
Union de Banques Suisses	500	715	715			
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2675	2675			
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	4375	4362			
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	2812	2810			
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	559	557			
C. F. Bally	1000	1287	1278			
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	807	818			
Entreprises Suizer S.A.	1000	1144	1145			
Comp. de Navig. sur le Lac Léman	500	540	535			
Linolenn A.G. Gubiasco	100	152	152			
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	727	729			

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