

Notes and gleanings

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schweiz, namentlich den Bahnhof Zürich, in unge-rechter Weise bevorzugt. Auch sei es keinem ein-zigen Mitglied der parlamentarischen Behörden ein-gefallen, zu verlangen, in den Bundesbeschluss über die Erhöhung der Subvention an die inter-nationales Alpenstrassen auch die Strassen des Jura aufzunehmen. Zusammenfassend wird die Forde-rung aufgestellt, dass alles getan werden müsse, um den offenkundigsten Bedürfnissen der militärischen Sicherheit der Schweiz im Jura und denjenigen eines rationellen Betriebes des Bundesbahnnetzes in diesem Landesteil gerecht zu werden. Der ein-zige Weg, den begangenen Fehler wieder gutzu-machen, bestehe darin, diese Gegend sofort und entschlossen an die erste Stelle derjenigen zu stel-len, welche künftig als anspruchsberechtigt gelten können auf die ratenweisen Kredite der drei nächst-beteiligten Bundesdepartemente, des Militärdeparte-ments, Eisenbahndepartements und des Departe-ments des Innern.

Tagblatt für das Birseck Birsig

Der Ritt eines Schweizer.—Hellmuth Tschiffely ist im April 1925 mit zwei Pferden argentinischer Rasse von Buenos Aires aufgebrochen, um im Sattel New York zu erreichen. Er hat den ungeheuren Ritt unternommen nicht nur aus Sport- und Aben-teuerlust, sondern um die hervorragenden Eigen-schaften dieser Pferderasse darzutun. Im Zeitraum von 2½ Jahren hat er Argentinien, Bolivien, Peru, Ecuador, Columbia und Zentralamerika durchritten und ist am 3. November 1927 in Mexiko angelangt. Wie Tschiffely selbst erklärt, war die harteste Arbeit in Zentralamerika zu leisten, wo er mit der fast undurchdringlichen Wildnis der gewaltigen Urwälder fertig werden musste. Doch geht aus den vielen Berichten und Schilderungen, die seit seinem Aufbruch von Buenos Aires in der "Nacion" er-schienen sind, hervor, dass er auch in Südamerika grosse Hindernisse zu überwinden hatte. Wasser-läufe (er hat nicht weniger als 32 Ströme durchschwommen), Sumpffegenden, wasserarme Sand- und Steinwüsten, das Hochgebirge der Anden. In ständigem Kampf gegen die Unbilden der Witte-rung, gegen Durst und Tropenkrankheiten hat er Stück um Stück seines Weges erzwingen müssen.

In Mexiko, wie in allen Städten, die er auf seinem Ritt berührt hat, ist Tschiffely ein enthu-siastischer Empfang bereitet worden, sowohl von der Bevölkerung als von den Behörden. Nach einer zweiwöchigen Ruhepause ist er von Mexiko wieder aufgebrochen und hofft, in einigen Monaten New York zu erreichen, wo sein "Raïd" mit dem Einzug in Broadway seinen ruhmreichen Abschluss finden wird.

Neue Zürcher Zeitung.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Winter Sports Season.

According to indications all records are likely to be broken this season, St. Moritz, Engelberg and Adelboden being in the focus of attraction. It is stated that about 30,000 visitors from England alone are expected, the majority of them belonging to the fair sex. Some papers have mooted the possi-bility of the Prince of Wales making his first acquaintance with a winter sports centre, probably St. Moritz. Of the many tempting articles we select the introduction to one in the *Sunday Times* (Dec. 18th) because it reminds us of the origin of this great industry:—

"Little more than half a century ago nearly all of the now famous Swiss winter sport centres of the High Alps were either tiny villages or wooden chalets, hidden away from the world in a lofty wilderness of rock and snow, or else barren plateaux inhabited only by the chamois, the ibex, the marmot and the eagle.

By one of those queer coincidences which have so often made history there came to a small village in the lofty valley of the Engadine, in the year 1853, a political refugee, one Alexandre Spengler. This out-of-the-way collection of crude wooden chalets was called Davos, but it was not then marked on any ordinary map.

Here, about a mile above sea level, Spengler, who was a medical man by profession, made the discovery that pulmonary complaints—so preva-lent on the damp lowlands from which he had come—were almost unknown. He emerged from his retirement to start a campaign in distant lands, advocating the sending of invalids to Davos, so that they might benefit from a climate which caused residents to be almost immune from any form of lung trouble.

Although at first he was ridiculed and at-tacked, Spengler persevered, and within a few years hundreds of sufferers had regained health amid the Alpine snows. Friends of those under-going treatment ventured out, and discovered that the Alpine winter was a season of frosty sunshine and invigorating air in a world of glittering snow and ice.

Among these early pioneers was an English-man of letters, John Addington Symonds, who at once recognised the possibilities of winter sports. At Klosters he collected a party of enthusiasts, organised the first Swiss toboggan races, and through his writings, made known the beauties of the Alpine winter and the thrills of winter sports. Side by side with Davos and

Klosters there came into being the great cosmo-politan centre of St. Moritz, which, for the first time in history, had more visitors in winter than in summer during the year 1873. Five years later Grindelwald developed.

Every plateau and valley between 3,000 and 6,000 feet in altitude has now been searched for possible hotel sites, ski-fields, and funicular rail-way extensions. There has been no looking back from the early eighties to the present day. Un-like the pioneers who ventured into these moun-tains when there were only four or five small resorts, with very indifferent hotels, the winter sport enthusiast has now over 40 big centres to choose from, all differing in one or more essen-tial, and over 132 hotels in which he may stay, according to the depth of his purse.

At most of the large centres there are two seasons—the British and the cosmopolitan. The former lasts from December until early Febru-ary, and the latter from early February to the end of March.

At all the best-known resorts the predomi-nance of British people during the Christmas and New Year festivities is usually so great that even the Swiss themselves seem to be overwhelmed. It is during this period, or shortly afterwards, that a sojourn at any of the winter sport centres becomes one of the most delightful experiences of life.

The fascination of this Alpine wonderland lies not only in the thrill of ski-ing over virgin snows, skating on the sunlit lake of ice, and of lüging through a haze of frost-dust down a steep mountain side amid the whitened pines, but in the evenings spent in the ballrooms of the chalet-like hotels, and more than all else in the *joie de vivre* created by the frosty-sunshine and clean air of great altitudes.

The Franco-Swiss Tariff War.

As a set-off against this expected boom in the hotel industry the new year is likely to bring serious disturbances to many other trades which may not be so easily adjusted. The *Times* correspondent in the Engineering Supplement (Dec. 17th) suggests that the quarrel between Switzerland and France may be England's chance and advantage, and we cannot but wish that his anticipation may be realised.

"Certain decisions which may be of great importance to Anglo-Swiss trade are likely to be taken shortly. It seems probable that the ne-gotiations for a commercial treaty between Swit-zerland and France will be broken off. At in-tervals during the past six months they have been carried on partly in Paris and partly in Berne and still the proposals made by the French are far from what Switzerland expects. Meanwhile Germany is preparing to profit by any disappear-ance, partial or complete, of French competition. It is evident that Great Britain, a large number of whose products are capable of competing with French goods, would find little difficulty in bene-fiting equally from any such change in the situa-tion.

The position at present is this. France by the signing of the recent commercial treaty with Germany has granted the latter her minimum tariff. At the same time certain of her rates have been raised, and by this action France has offen-ded those countries whose goods were subject to the old schedule. A few, among them the United States, have already protested. Switzerland has been injured more than most. It is true there has been no change in the duties on Swiss foodstuffs, e.g., milk, butter, cheese, and chocolate, nor on her embroidery or small watches, but, on the other hand, the increase in the French tariff has very seriously affected Swiss chemical products, hosiery, machinery and electrical apparatus. One consequence of this new development is that the Swiss manufacturers who desire to export these classes of goods are obliged to make great efforts in order to place their surplus in other countries. The countries to which attention is being directed include Great Britain and the Em-pire. A tariff war with France might mean a loss of approximately 100,000,000f. to Swit-zerland, and to recover this she would certainly find it necessary to seek outlets elsewhere, even at substantial sacrifices.

At the same time France would suffer a very considerable loss if her sales in the Swiss markets were interrupted. In that event the Swiss mer-chants and consumers who have long known and appreciated the British product would be pre-pared to give it preference provided that it did not differ too widely in price from the German article.

There would be, in fact, most varied oppor-tunities of increasing the sales of British goods in Switzerland in the event of any rupture of commercial relations with France. For example, investigation was recently made of the countries supplying steam boilers to Switzerland, and it was found that 70 per cent. came from Germany, 12 per cent. from France, and only 11 per cent. from Great Britain.

It may be noted in addition that Switzerland recently ordered five military aeroplanes from

France. In view of the recent performances of British machines in world travel, there should be an excellent prospect for Great Britain to obtain such business. It is well known that the Swiss military machines at present in use are, for the most part, out of date, and the authorities have been ordering one or two aeroplanes in France and in Holland for the purpose of test and in-vestigation with a view to re-equipping the ser-vice. The price of the French aeroplane is said to be between 70,000 and 80,000 Swiss francs or 100,000 Swiss francs (£4,000), including com-plete equipment. The Swiss Army specification covers either metal or wooden construction with either an air-cooled or a water-cooled engine.

The Basle Mission.

The last issue of *West Africa* (Dec. 24th) publishes a strong appeal to the British authorities and prints a verbatim transcript of the official order by which France has reinstated the properties and rights wrongly confiscated.

"It is earnestly hoped that there will not be much longer delay in wiping up the "mess" of the Gold Coast Basle Mission war-time seizure. The Swiss principals in the matter have acted with exemplary courtesy and forbearance, and the least Great Britain can do is to show appreciation of these qualities. "Truth" of December 17th, it is noted, publishes an article in which is advocated the drastic course of direct action by the Colonial Office, overriding, if need be, the decision of the directors. In this connection one may perhaps ask, Who is the person responsible for the original error? Sir H. Clifford was Governor, but, of course, he acted on legal ad-vice. Whose? That of the then Gold Coast Law Officers? Or did they refer the case to the Colonial Office legal side? If the latter, the fact has an interesting bearing on current dis-cussion as to legal reform in West Africa.

It will be recalled that when the case was recently discussed in the Commons reference was made to the French official report in the case, on the Cameroon part of the property. I have been able to secure a copy of the official order of the French Government, and append a translation. It will be observed that the French took action *six years ago*:—

'Having regard to the following facts:

That the German Cameroons have been made over by the British to the French, together with all goods, etc.

That the French Administration has been substituted for British Administration.

That it is indisputable that particularly on May 12th, 1927, December 3rd, 1919, two official orders were issued conferring on the Sequestration Administrator the custody of numerous buildings, etc., the property of the Basle Mission.

That it is acknowledged by the claimants themselves and also established by documents, that many members of the Basle Cameroon Mis-sion were Germans at the time of the declaration of War;

That it is evident, by the declaration of M. Allegret, claimant, and from the documents de-posed, that under the general name of Basle Mission, two distinct enterprises existed in the Cameroon: (1) The Basle Commercial Mission, (2) The Basle Evangelical Mission. The object of the first being that of trading for import and export, that of the second being the evangelisa-tion of the Natives;

That it is advisable to recall the following fact that on September 3rd and 18th, 1920, two applications for the raising of the Sequester on the goods of the Basle Mission were followed by prolonged examinations by the Public Ministry, resulting in two decrees issued by the President of the Tribunal by the terms of which it was de-cided to suspend *pro tem.* a decision;

That an essential point to decide is that of ascertaining precisely the nationality of the two Societies;

That a certificate delivered by public notary of Basle dated December 17th, 1919, and a cer-tificate under date of December 17th, 1919, and a certificate under date of December 4th, 1919, by the same notary, affirms that both Societies are Swiss Societies;

That from all documents delivered it ap-pears that the two Societies have always been of Swiss origin and have had and still have actually their seats in Basle;

That no possible doubt exists on the two points examined, (1) the Swiss nationality of the two Societies put under Sequester, one com-mercial, the other evangelical; (2), the appoint-ment of Mr. A. to act in their name and interests in the Cameroons;

That so far as the Société Commerciale is concerned, there exists no trace whatever in their record collected of the existence of German in-terests of a national character, and which could accordingly be placed under Sequester;

That in virtue of the principle of law "to give up and withhold cannot run," the question of imposing conditions on the raising of the Sequester desired does not arise.

An Ideal Present - - - A PESTALOZZI KALENDER

For all the foregoing, hereby is revoked, all effect of the general edict of November 24th, 1916, and of the edicts of May 12th, 1917, and December 3rd, 1919, in so far as they put under Sequester the goods and properties of the Basle Evangelical Mission and of the Basle Commercial Mission.

Decreases further that all expenses claimed by the Administration and pertaining to the liquidation of the goods of the above-mentioned Basle concerns from the date of their seizure to the date of their return to M.A., shall be borne by these goods and properties.

Swiss Currency.

Considerable publicity has been given in the English Press to suggestions for the technical reform of our currency contained in the last bulletin issued from the Basle office of the Swiss Bank Corporation. Here is the reference in the *Daily Telegraph* (Dec. 19th):—

"The question of a return to the gold standard, or alternatively to a gold exchange standard, by Switzerland is receiving attention, and the current number of the Swiss Bank Corporation's monthly bulletin deals fully with the subject. The conclusion is arrived at by the writer that Switzerland should not wait any longer before effecting a reform of her monetary system. At the moment that country is still tied to a system of "limping bi-metallism." With the currency law unaltered, Swiss gold coins are legal tender without restriction, the total which may be coined being unrestricted. Swiss silver five-franc pieces are legal tender to any amount, but the total which may be coined is limited to 80,000,000fr. The divisional coins are only legal tender to a limited degree, and the extent of the coinage is restricted. Further, the notes of the Swiss National Bank still remain inconvertible, as they have been since July, 1914. With other countries moving back to pre-war conditions, it is time Switzerland made a change, and the various objections raised are brushed aside by the writer as being of no great weight. It is a question which course Switzerland should adopt. The Swiss people, it is pointed out, have lost the habit of using gold coins and have absolute confidence in the notes of the National Bank. Gold is chiefly used for settling balances of foreign payments, and even so the debtor in most cases prefers to ask the National Bank for foreign exchange."

A Factory Without Workers.

A remarkable state of affairs as far as the London Labour Market is concerned is disclosed in the following report published in the *Manchester Evening News* (Dec. 17th). The undertaking in question constitutes an interesting experiment, and these initial troubles do not augur well for its future. We believe the official ceremony of opening the new factory was originally intended to be performed by the Swiss Minister, but at the last moment he found himself prevented from being present.

"At a time of record unemployment a London firm has been advertising for three weeks for 50 girl workers and has succeeded in getting only two.

"We want to employ 50 girls immediately at good rates of pay and under splendid conditions of employment, but although we have tried our hardest we cannot get those workers. It is the most extraordinary position I have ever known. Can anybody account for it?"

This remark was made to me to-day by Mr. Leo Hirschfeld, managing director of Bernheimer Gut and Co., Ltd., manufacturers of artificial silk, at Somers Place, Brixton Hill.

Mr. Hirschfeld was formerly a member of the Camberwell Borough Council, and he had an astonishing story to tell.

"We weave here as well as manufacture," he said, "but our store rooms, commodious as they are, are piled high because we simply cannot get the labour required to deal with the material.

"Long rows of machines are covered and idle, we are turning away orders, and are in despair. If conditions do not alter within the next two or three weeks, there will be no alternative but for us to apply to the Home Office to let us import workers from the Continent to do jobs that could easily be undertaken by girls in our own country. The thing is tragic.

This firm emanates from Zurich, Switzerland. It was established here as a result of the Safeguarding of Industries Act, and a completely new factory has been erected on which we have spent £30,000. I can honestly say that it is the best of its kind in London.

The new factory was opened three weeks ago by Sir Walter Greaves Lord, M.P. There was general satisfaction locally at that time at facilities for new employment that had been opened up.

To our dismay, however, we find it absolutely impossible to get the girls we require.

We went to the Brixton Labour Exchange, and they advertised our needs nationally.

We went to the Borough Polytechnic and to the L.C.C. Technical Institute, Shoreditch, to the Barrett Training School, to elementary schools—in fact, to any organisation we thought might be able to help.

We issued displayed advertisements, but the net result of it all is that this week-end we had exactly two applicants.

The girls would receive not less than £2 per week, and can easily earn, if they are good workers, £3 to £3 10s. per week. We have tried to be as kind and considerate as we possibly can to all our workers."

At various training schools dressmakers are being instructed, but in each case, I am informed, as far as London is concerned, at any rate, that it is not their practice to allow any of their students to apply for employment until they have finished a contract of two years with the school. None will be available until next March.

Therefore, if I am to rely for help from that quarter I must think of closing down until they are ready or adopt the alternative of getting girls from the Continent.

The trouble of manufacturers to-day are serious enough, one would imagine, without their being added to by any serious inconvenience of this particular kind for no apparent reason.

It is really distressing at a time when there is so much unemployment that we should be unable to get girls and that we should find our trade gravely hampered, as is the case."

Reading about key industries reminds us of

A Key Incident.

There is a clergyman somewhere in London who does not possess a key to his own church, and cannot gain admission when certain exigencies demand it. If it had not been for a singular coincidence his flock would have had to forego the essential part of the Christmas celebration. There seems to be a call for a special collection!

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The Bauxit Trust A.G. in Zurich, which is a holding company with wide international interests in the aluminium industry, is increasing its capital from 8,150,000frs. to 11,000,000frs. The company's participations include a valuable holding of shares of the Vereinigte Aluminiumwerke A.G. and of the Otavi A.G., while it is also interested in the Ungarische Kreditbank and the Aluminiumerz-Bergbau.

The report of the S. A. Adolphe Saurer, in Arbon, for the year ended 30th of June, 1927, shows an increase in the turnover as compared with the previous year, and there is a net profit of about 66,000frs. as compared with 49,000frs. for the previous year. Sales of motor lorries and omnibuses by the company are reported to have been satisfactory, in spite of the competition which had to be met from makers in other countries more favoured in the international market by the trend of economic conditions. The company's export trade has, however, been able to expand only slightly, owing to the tariff walls which have been erected in many countries which would otherwise have been Switzerland's good customers for this type of manufacture. A temporary revival in the demand for embroidery machinery was a valuable feature for the company, but on the whole the output of machinery of this and similar type has been very small. The Saurer concern has now the exclusive rights for Switzerland for the manufacture and sale of "Bristol-Jupiter" motors, which have been adopted as the most suitable for military and civilian flying in a number of different countries.

The extent to which the various Cantons of Switzerland retain their fiscal independence often comes as a surprise to the foreigner who interests himself in the country and who finds it hard to realise that taxation matters are largely in the hands of the cantonal governments and that each canton has its own fixed legislation, however small its area and unimportant its population. It thus comes almost as a shock to many to read that the canton of St. Gall has, with the approval of the Federal Political Department, come to an agreement with

the Government of Austria in the matter of double taxation. The convention in question is valid solely as between the Republic of Austria and the canton of St. Gall, but it is expected that other Swiss cantons may subsequently associate themselves with St. Gall in this very necessary and useful action.

The Auer Company of Zurich, which is the Swiss branch of the well-known heating and lighting concern, has increased its capital from 2,750,000 frs. to 4,500,000 frs. The new shares are 20% paid up. For the year 1926-27 this concern paid a dividend of 12% on its ordinary shares of both classes.

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

BONDS.	Dec. 19	Dec. 23
Confederation 3% 1903	80.25	81.00
5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln	100.37	101.37
Federal Railways 3½% A-K	85.15	85.00
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	101.30	101.30

SHARES.	Nom	Dec. 19	Dec. 23
Swiss Bank Corporation	Frs. 500	Frs. 805	Frs. 805
Crédit Suisse	500	872	870
Union de Banques Suisses	500	726	727
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2837	2845
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	4425	4440
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	2902	2937
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	588	589
C. F. Bally	1000	1340	1347
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	848	841
Entreprises Sulzer S.A.	1000	1175	1167
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	545	545
Cinolemm A.G. Giubiasco	100	172	172
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	737	735

ZUM TOD DES GENERALSTABSCHIEFS OBERST VON SPRECHER.

Wie schon erwähnt haben weder der Nationalrats- noch der Ständeratspräsident es für nötig erachtet dem grossen Eidgenossen die Ehrung durch das Parlament zuteil werden zu lassen. Das Parlament soll aber doch das Volk darstellen; wir haben aber eher den Eindruck als seien in diesem Falle Volk und Parlament ganz verschiedene Persönlichkeiten. Einzig Herr Dr. Miescher, der Vertreter von Baselstadt hat des verdienstvollen Mannes gedacht, indem er bei der Beratung über den Vorschlag für 1928 bei der Verhandlung des Militärdepartementes diese traurige Tatsache erwähnte: "Generalstabschef von Sprecher, der letzten Samstag unter Anteilnahme eines grossen Teiles des Schweizervolkes (nicht des Parlaments) begraben wurde..." Der Christliche Volksbote aus Basel bemerkt dazu was folgt: "Halten wir hier auch die betäubende Tatsache fest, dass Herrn von Sprecher kein Nachruf in der Bundesversammlung gewidmet worden ist, weder im Nationalrat noch im Ständerat. Herr Minger, Präsident des Nationalrates war, wie berichtet wird, bereit, diese selbstverständliche Ehrung des toten Generalstabschefs zu erfüllen, aber Herr Savoy, der Präsident des Ständerates, wollte nicht. Wenn auch keine Verpflichtung vorlag, ein Gedenkwort zu sprechen, so wäre vermutlich kein "Graben" entstanden, wenn Herr Minger ohne Rücksicht auf Herrn Savoy dem Toten diese Ehrung bezeugt hätte. Es sind schon Eidgenossen im Nationalrat Gedächtnisreden gehalten worden, die es weniger verdienten als Generalstabschef von Sprecher." Wir haben alle Achtung vor sachlicher Behandlung der Traktanden im Parlament, sind aber der Meinung, dass ein Parlament, das das Andenken seiner besten Volksgenossen nicht ehrt, es nicht wert ist, dass ihm im Falle der nationalen Not Männer wie Oberst von Sprecher so uneigennützig und unerbittert ihre ganze Kraft zur Verfügung stellen. Vielleicht hat auch der Verstorbenen es gut gewusst, dass das Volk ausserhalb des Parlamentes zu finden ist. Er wäre sicherlich der Letzte gewesen, der eine Ehrung für sich verlangt haben würde. Aber dieser Undank sei an dieser Stelle unterstrichen. Wir haben aus der Zeit der Grenzbesetzung noch vor uns das Bild dieses Menschen von Sprecher mit seinen asketischen Gesichtszügen und seiner ächt schweizerischen Art; als andere Herren sich daraus ein Vergnügen machten ausländische Offiziersmützen aufzusetzen, bewahrte er Disciplin und trug die alte Mütze. Ehre sei diesem grossen Mann! Möchte der neue Ständeratspräsident sich nur einen Teil der Verdienste um die Heimat erwerben, die Oberst Sprecher ihr erwiesen hat. C.T.H.

SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

The above Society have received from the London representative of Messrs. Singer, Basle, 408 packets of Bretzels, to be distributed at Christmas among our poor compatriotes. We congratulate this firm on their generous initiative, which will no doubt be very much appreciated by the recipients.

Which family would be willing to take one or two Swiss ladies, 70 years old, as paying guests at 20/- per week, all found. Replies to "Swiss Benevolent Society, Swiss House, 35, Fitzroy Sq., London, W.1.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

CINDERELLA DANCE

at NEW PRINCE'S RESTAURANT, PICCADILLY, on SATURDAY, JANUARY 21st, at 6.30.

Tickets, Gents 12/6, Ladies 10/6 (incl. Supper), may be obtained from Members of the Committee.