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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

During the discussion in the National Council of the official report on the 1927 session of the League of Nations, the Federal Council was asked to suggest that all international treaties providing for war eventualities should be declared void.

For the second time the Federal Tribunal in Lausanne has confirmed a judgment of a cantonal court to the effect that women in Switzerland are not entitled to vote under the present Constitution. The contention that under the latter every citizen of 20 years possesses the vote and that the word citizen includes women as well as man is met by the assertion that history and tradition showed that the suffrage was exercised by men only and that a different interpretation, though based on modern conceptions, was inadmissible. In this instance a group of Genevese men and women had presented a petition to the local States Council which was rejected, hence the appeal to the supreme tribunal. About five years ago similar proceedings had been started by two Bernese ladies. The whole question is likely to come before the next Parliament.

The existing formalities regulating the crossing of the local Italo-Swiss frontier have suddenly been abrogated by the Italian authorities and strict passport rules substituted. The ordinary tickets on the Centovalli railway, which were issued to holders of tourist cards for the direct journey from Locarno to Brigue are no longer available.

The new "Goetheanum" which has been erected in the place of the one destroyed by fire on New Year's Eve, 1922, was inaugurated last Saturday at Dornach (Solothurn) in the presence of about 3000 members of anthroposophical societies from 23 different countries.

The Ticinese Socialist daily *Libera Stanza* is publishing the names contained in a supposed "black" list and compiled by Fascist agents; it singles out, of course, all Socialist members of cantonal councils.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**La Monnaie Suisse.**—La quantité de monnaie mise à la disposition du public, la forme sous laquelle elle circule, son poids, sa durée, son prix de revient, voilà tout autant de questions qui, sans qu'il s'en doute, intéressent chaque citoyen, peu ou prou, ainsi que l'Etat émetteur de cette monnaie.

Pour clarifier le problème, tel qu'il est actuellement posé, disons, tout de suite, que la monnaie d'argent (écu de 5 fr., pièces de 1, 2 fr. et 50 centimes) a cours, à sa valeur légale dans le commerce journalier, bénéficiant d'une valeur fictive, ceci grâce à la situation économique et financière de l'Etat qui les émet. Car, en fait, l'écu de 5 fr. ne vaut plus guère, à l'heure actuelle, que 2 fr. 20 en suite de l'avilissement du métal argent. Comme on le sait, c'est à cet avilissement qu'est due la ruine du bimétallisme, le rapport entre l'or et l'argent ayant perdu sa fixité primitive, ce pourquoi la plupart des pays s'acheminent au monométallisme or.

Pratiquement, dans le négoce journalier, l'écu de 5 fr.—malgré sa valeur effective de 2 fr. 20—fonctionne en plein à la valeur que le pays lui attribue, ce que s'explique par la confiance que donne à cet instrument d'échange l'Etat (la Suisse dans le cas particulier) qui l'a émis. Cette confiance dans la valeur économique de l'Etat venant à diminuer, nous assisterions inévitablement à une dégringolade de la valeur commerciale de notre écu d'argent.

C'est cette donnée (la confiance reposant sur la valeur économique de l'Etat) que ne doit pas perdre de vue celui qui veut se rendre un compte exact de l'oeuvre entreprise par le Conseil fédéral dans le domaine monétaire suisse.

Notre monnaie argent (indépendamment de ce qui vient d'être dit) donna lieu à des plaintes que justifient les dimensions et le poids de nos pièces de 1, 2 et 5 fr., trop encombrantes et trop lourdes pour l'usage journalier. De là la popularité du billet, surtout des petites coupures (5 fr., 10 fr., disparues aujourd'hui, et 20 fr.), et leur naissance au cours de la guerre, alors qu'avant cell-ci le billet

de banque de 50 fr. était au bas de l'échelle. Le billet de 5 francs, n'a cependant pas que des avantages; plié en deux ou même en quatre, circulant beaucoup, il se déchire, se chiffonne même, d'où la nécessité de son remplacement fréquent entraînant une dépense annuelle de 300,000 fr.! Malgré ces déficiences la petite coupure rebouffe l'écu de 5 fr. qui, trop lourd, finira, si l'on n'y porte remède, par rentrer dans les caveaux du Palais fédéral, inutilisé, occasionnant une perte sèche annuelle (le capital étant de 80 millions) de 4 millions (au 5 %). La vente de ces écus comme métal pour l'orfèvrerie nous vaudra une recette qui sera loin d'équilibrer la somme qu'ils représentent.

Pour remédier à cette situation on a envisagé la réduction de l'écu, dont le poids passerait de 25 à 12 grammes. On oublierait ainsi aux plaintes concernant le poids excessif de l'écu mais, simultanément, on aggraverait celles qui se font jour sur sa valeur réelle qui ne serait guère supérieure à 1 fr. 25 comme pièce d'argent circulant néanmoins avec l'effigie de 5 fr.! Cette disproportion entre la valeur réelle et la valeur nominale, qui est aujourd'hui, deviendra, avec la pièce minimisée future, réellement choquante, pour ne pas dire monstrueuse! La pièce ainsi réalisée n'est plus autre chose qu'un *certificat métallique*, tout comme la petite coupure de 5 fr. est, elle, un *certificat de papier*.

On conçoit dès lors—et l'on admet sans peine, car cette conclusion est logique—la suggestion faite par M. Musy, tendant à substituer à l'argent, coûteux et peu durable vu sa mollesse, ce qui nous vaut de fréquentes et coûteuses émissions, un métal plus dur, durable et meilleur marché, le nickel. Le *certificat métallique nickel* aura la même valeur fiduciaire que le *certificat métallique argent*. Il serait d'ailleurs mis au bénéfice d'une couverture de 100% mais couperait cours aux critiques faites à l'écu actuel et permettrait (grâce à son moindre volume) de supprimer le billet de 5 fr. et, par là même, nous vaudra une économie annuelle de 300,000 fr.!

L'achat du nickel vaudrait de plus au service de la Monnaie fédérale une économie de 55 millions auxquels s'ajouteraient la libre disposition d'un dépôt de 25 millions devenu disponible ensuite de la liquidation de l'Union bimétallique latine, ce qui donne au total la somme de 80 millions. L'intérêt de cette somme, devenue disponible sans qu'il en coûte rien à la Confédération, pourrait, dans l'idée du Conseil fédéral, être mis à disposition des banques hypothécaires en vue de l'abaissement du taux de certains prêts hypothécaires agricoles. Je ne crois pas, pour l'heure, devoir insister sur ce côté de la question, si important soit-il, et je reviens à la question monétaire. L'opération esquissée ci-dessus paraît faisable, rien ne s'y oppose et les avantages financiers qui en résulteraient sont indiscutables. Mais... car il y a un mais... aura-t-on assez de courage ou de sagesse pour concevoir et admettre qu'un *certificat métallique* dépourvu de métal précieux (l'argent!) puisse fonctionner commercialement? Voilà le point délicat du problème auquel optimistes ou pessimistes répondent de différente façon.

Les premiers disent avec raison, me semble-t-il, que la confiance donnée à la petite coupure—le billet chiffon de 5 fr.—autorise l'espoir de voir cette confiance se reporter sur l'écu nickel et ses divisions de 2 et 1 fr., et cela d'autant plus aisément que ces certificats métalliques bénéficieraient d'une couverture du 100%.

Les pessimistes estiment que la confiance ne sera pas accordée aux pièces de nickel comme aux pièces d'argent (même de valeur fictive): le peuple n'admettra pas pareille opération!

Qui a raison? C'est pour se renseigner que M. Musy avait convoqué, à une séance consultative une cinquantaine de personnes appartenant à différents milieux. Les conclusions adoptées sont favorables à la suppression du billet de 5 fr., favorables également à l'émission de pièces de 1 et 2 fr. en nickel, défavorables, par contre, à l'écu de nickel, minimisé.

Cette dernière conclusion, illogique au premier chef, me paraît difficilement explicable; ce qui vaut pour les pièces de 1 et 2 fr. devant valoir pour l'écu de 5 fr. —*La Revue Lausannoise*.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### The Case of Cesare Rossi.

There is little in this week's gleanings calling for comment. The *Manchester Guardian* (Sept. 28th) has the following belated reference to the latest Italo-Swiss frontier incident:—

"The interest taken in the fate of Cesare Rossi, an alleged accomplice in the Matteotti

murder, accused of Signor Mussolini, a voluntary exile, and now in an Italian prison, is naturally enough far greater than any taken in the technical violation of Swiss sovereignty involved in his arrest. But it is the latter which interests the Bernese Government, which was already exasperated by several frontier incidents and by the existence of a far-reaching espionage system on Swiss territory. Two of the system's leading figures have already been expelled, much to the indignation of the Fascist Press, whose comments have been so offensive as to lead to the temporary suppression of at least one of them, and a strong Note of protest has been addressed to Rome on the circumstances attending Rossi's arrest. Rossi, who had found temporary asylum on Swiss soil, was decoyed to the Italian enclave of Campione, where he was promptly arrested and was then conducted across Swiss territory to Italy. There were thus two offences. The first is the activity of the Fascist agents who got him to Campione—an indirect violation of the right of a State to give asylum to political refugees. The second consists in the violation of Swiss territory by his conveyance through Swiss territory as a prisoner by presumably armed Fascist agents. International law is explicit on the point. "A State," says Oppenheim, "is not allowed to send its police forces into or through foreign territory or to exercise an act of administration or jurisdiction on foreign territory without permission." The arrest itself took place in Italian territory, and no demand is therefore made for his return. But the Fascist Government is in an awkward dilemma. It may admit the wrong and make reparation, or it may disavow its agents and let them stand their trial on a criminal charge in a Swiss court."

### The New Home of the League.

The fundamental question of the site has been settled quicker than was anticipated; it comes to this, that Geneva has granted the League of Nations an indefinite lease of Ariana Park, the latter with all the buildings to be erected thereon to revert to the City should that august body ever be dissolved.

The Assembly of the League gave its final approval this afternoon to the choice of the Ariana Park in Geneva as the site for the new buildings of the League, which are to include a new Assembly Hall, the offices of the Secretariat, and an international library. These buildings are to cost altogether about 23,500,000 Swiss francs (£940,000), and the park in which they are to have their setting is of such dimensions as to provide adequate space for all extensions likely to be necessary in the future. In presenting the report this afternoon, Professor Rappard, who is himself a Genevese, proudly referred to the almost miraculous manner in which the democratic city, always jealous of its independence and respectful of the will of its benefactors, had in 15 days agreed to accept the offer of an exchange.

The exchange of sites between the League and the Cantonal authorities does really appear to give mutual satisfaction. During the week-end thousands of people, citizens and foreigners alike, have visited respectively the old lakeside properties, which are now certain to become a public park of undisputed beauty, and the Ariana Park, where within five years will arise what one hopes will prove to be the most impressive group of buildings in the world devoted to international service. Many who a few days ago misconstrued, as direct hostility to the League, Mrs. Barton's unwillingness to give up her lakeside residence to meet the League's greater need, now regard her as an indirect benefactor.

It cannot be maintained, however, that with to-day's decision to approve the new site and to instruct the Secretary-General to sign all necessary legal documents concerning the exchange of properties and fixing the relations of the architects to the League, satisfaction has been given to those architects and associations of architects who protested against the manner in which the award had been made. There are understood to be many, some British architects included, who appreciate the attitude taken by the Norwegian delegate last Saturday night, in asking for full details upon these protests."

### The Jungfrau Meteorological Station.

From the *Birmingham Evening Despatch* (Sept. 25th):—

"A unique meteorological station where scientists from all over the world will conduct important investigations is to be built by the Swiss Society of Scientific Research high on the icy Jungfrau, the famous mountain in the Swiss Alps whose summit towers three miles above sea level.

Usually the study of the higher air strata is conducted by sending up balloons and kites fitted with recording instruments, but no systematic registration is possible with this method. The new station, however, is to be inhabited all the year round, and regular classified meteorological statistics will be compiled.

Arrangements are to be made by which scientists from any country may rent rooms in the Institute for research work and experiments. Astronomers and students of Alpine flora and glaciology will carry out important research work as well as scientists who are studying solar therapy and electro-magnetic waves.

The conditions, it is claimed, will be practically ideal for such observations to be made, as the pure Swiss air is very thin and clear at such tremendous altitudes."

#### The 'Saffa.'

The publicity campaign in connection with this exhibition has been pursued with marvellous insistence. The following is typical of the articles which appear in the English Press and is taken from the *Sunday Mercury* (Sept. 23rd). The modern mother will learn therefrom how to manage fractious infants.

"All over Switzerland during the past month visitors have been intrigued by the Saffa posters. Saffa is not a word. It represents the initials of Schweizer Ausstellung für Frauen Arbeit, which means Swiss Exhibition of Women's Work.

It is a novelty, an exhibition designed, organised and carried out entirely by women. And it has lured to Berne vast crowds of enthusiastic Swiss people and has invited dalliance in the most delightful of European cities of thousands of tourists.

Mere man, of course, has his place in the affair. He does the menial work of clearing the tables in the biggest refreshment hall, and he acts as doorkeeper, marshal, and even as attendant at some of the stalls, albeit somewhat sheepishly.

The exhibits demonstrate the needs as well as the activities of women. There are all the appurtenances of the house and the school, with the latest ideas in domestic science and educational methods, with displays of cookery, washing and teaching.

Women's work in medicine and surgery, in art and architecture, in agriculture and gardening, in the professions, literature, music, are all demonstrated.

A crèche in full blast, with lusty, squalling babies, is entertaining as well as instructive. The work of the nurses excite the admiration of the mothers, but it is surprising to note the manner in which a fractious infant is left to yell itself tired.

A kindergarten was less noisy, whilst cocks and hens and pigs added their special notes to the symphony of sound.

There is censure as well as humour in the huge cartoon depicting a snail to show the progress of the women's suffrage movement in the country."

#### The 'Make' of the Mountains.

Under this title the *Evening Standard* (Sept. 22nd) publishes some impressions about the "world's most expensive place"—St. Moritz. We can forgive the writer his gibes on the business acumen of the Swiss hoteliers and shopkeepers; similar conditions prevail all the world over wherever the tastes of the wealthy are catered for.

"The other day I met a friend in the street in Pontresina. "What a wonderful people the Swiss are," he observed. "I think that they are the best business people in the world. Yesterday the shoemaker charged me twopence for knocking a nail out of my shoe. To-day I am again her customer, for the nail has reappeared."

The Engadine is beautiful. The Engadine has a fine climate. And in the Engadine there has evolved through education and the survival of the fittest a race of shopkeepers who can look you in the face and demand twice the value of an article, and get it. Such a combination of assets should make for a country's prosperity, and from all appearances it certainly does, for the hotels this summer have been full and they talk of an extended season.

Nowhere in Europe can a stranger assortment of people be found than in this valley 6000 feet above the sea. The Germans outnumber all the other nationalities put together. Their figures suggest that they had been preparing for a six months' siege.

The German men have shaved heads and the women wear ill-fitting clothes which we associate with pre-war English fashions. I am informed that these people are not typical of post-war Germany, but are mainly Berlin profiteers.

The other visitors consist of English, Americans, Italians and a few Swiss. The German and the English in the Engadine do not mix well. One ingenious hotel proprietor who realises this has two hotels, and by carefully co-ordinated staff work receives Germans at one and other nationalities at the other, thus discreetly maintaining a balance of power.

The impression gained of the activities of the visitors is roughly that the Swiss, English

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and Americans spend their time in climbing and walking, the Italians in motoring, and the Germans in eating, with a stroll afterwards in order to earn their next meal.

The English-speaking climbers are of three kinds. All of them obviously take climbing seriously.

Here is a group of young men and women (indistinguishable by their clothes) immaculately clad in plus-fours and gorgeous pull-overs. With ropes coiled on their shoulders, axe in hand and objects like grappling irons hanging from bulky rucksacks, they present a truly impressive spectacle.

You might think that these were super-climbers, almost too good for the Engadine. But you would be wrong. They are the Tartarins of 1928, and though they may march into the hotel in the evening begrimed with dust and carrying Edelweiss in their mouths, nobody will pay much attention to them.

In another group are some men who look rather like tramps. They are wearing old trousers and flannel shirts and carry steel-pointed sticks. One of them probably has a rope hidden away in his rucksack. You might pass these people by in the street without noticing them. They are the genuine climbers.

The older men who can now only undertake the easier climbs and walks compose the remaining class of climber. But what they lack in present achievement is fully compensated for by their splendid power of narrative.

Sometimes by some process of mental gymnastics these memories are transferred to what are now, at any rate, easy climbs or walks, with consequent disillusionment to the tenderfoot.

The two other great pursuits of visitors to this district are eating and motoring. The gastronomic temple of the Engadine is a certain tea-shop in St. Moritz. Worship begins at 3.30 every afternoon and continues until the cakes run out. Anyone harbouring the belief that appetites are not good at 6000 feet should look in here and reassure himself.

Motor vehicles have only recently been allowed in St. Moritz and already the narrow streets, totally unsuitable for any but horse traffic, are crowded with flashy, high-powered cars, the magnificence of which completely eclipses their owners. At this rate of increase there will be chaos in a few years' time.

St. Moritz, so a barber informs me, enjoys the distinction of being the most expensive place in the world. A woman friend of mine was offered a woollen pull-over at £6 and a pair of woollen over-socks at 10s. Small consolation to be told, "But Madame, it is the same price at Bâle and at Geneva."

There are three denizens of the resorts of Normandy and Brittany that I have been lucky enough to miss in the Engadine. They are the amateur mannequin, the professional gambler and the gigolot or lounge lizard with his wasp waist and pointed, patent-leather shoes. Perhaps they only thrive at sea level."

#### Fritz Platten.

The following reference in the *Times* (Sept. 27th) does not concern the former member of the National Council but his father: the once prominent Fritz Platten is said to be still busy somewhere in Russia.

"The Communal authorities of Tablat, in the Canton of Saint-Gallen, have officially presumed the death of Fritz Platten, a native of that village, who had not been heard of for nearly four years. Platten was a Socialist Deputy in the Swiss National Council. He was in close touch with Bolshevik leaders in Switzerland and accompanied Lenin to Russia in the famous sealed railway coach in 1917. According to some reports he died in Russia in 1925."

#### 2LO and a Swiss Programme.

The following report about what has been advertised by the B.B.C. as a Swiss National Programme appeared in the *Radio Times* (Sept. 28th):

"A notable virtue of the recent Swiss National Programme was the excellence of the background of voices. The scene, you will remember, was a café in Switzerland. A chatter of voices speaking three or four languages provided local colour of a very convincing nature. Such effects are not lightly achieved. In this instance the

voices were those of a score of teachers from a famous school of languages who in the cause of art were content to come to Savoy Hill and talk loudly to each other in several foreign tongues across a studio, while somewhere above them the producer, seated at his 'control panel,' faded them in and out of his programme. And the yodelling was provided by a choral society of genuine Swiss waiters from Soho."

We are glad to gather that this critic has discovered some virtue in that fantastic production which to Swiss listeners must have been more like a burlesque. We appreciate that the organiser of the B.B.C. has sometimes a difficult task to perform, but we suggest that when he treads on unknown ground he might call in the assistance of people who can tell what a Swiss National Programme should be and how to make it up. There is plenty of talent in our Colony for this purpose. The solo artists who, in the above report, are stated to have been supplied by a school of languages, were anything but Swiss; the accordion players came perhaps nearest to that description. The yodlers who masqueraded under the cloak of genuine Swiss waiters from Soho were practically all members of the staff of a well-known City bank.

#### QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

BONDS.	Sept. 25		Sept. 29	
	Fr.	Sfr.	Fr.	Sfr.
Confederation 3% 1903	81.60	81.10		
" 5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln.	102.00	101.90		
Federal Railways 3½% A-K	87.00	87.25		
" 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	101.20	101.10		
SHARES.				
	Nom.	Sept. 25	Sept. 29	
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	Fr. 838	Fr. 838	
Crédit Suisse	500	Fr. 944	Fr. 945	
Union de Banques Suisses	500	Fr. 748	Fr. 760	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	Fr. 3322	Fr. 3410	
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	Fr. 5165	Fr. 5300	
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	Fr. 4145	Fr. 4240	
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	Fr. 598	Fr. 598	
C. F. Bally	1000	Fr. 1540	Fr. 1540	
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	Fr. 952	Fr. 972	
Entreprises Suisses S.A.	1000	Fr. 1240	Fr. 1250	
Comp. de Navie n. sur le Lac Léman	500	Fr. 530	Fr. 520	
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco	100	Fr. 344	Fr. 347	
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	Fr. 895	Fr. 892	

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