

Broadcasting in Switzerland

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AARGAU.

Mme. E. Siegrist-Muller in Aarau has celebrated her 102nd birthday anniversary present.

VALAIS.

Thieves "blacked out" the town of Sion to cover their raid on a bank, but they were caught red-handed when the lights were repaired.

The thieves, two, men, had managed to smuggle themselves into the municipal power plant. Choosing a moment when all was clear, they slid from their hiding place and did enough damage to throw out the entire system and plunge the town into darkness.

Under this cover, they fled from the power station and ran for the bank.

Just as they had succeeded in breaking in, the town's lights, hastily repaired by engineers, lit up the streets and buildings again. The thieves were then seen and arrested.

ST. GALL.

Two lives were lost in a fire which broke out at the works of Théodore Scherrer at Stadtbühl, near Gossau. Mlle. Ottilia Scherrer, aged 50, daughter of the Proprietor, and Théodore Scherrer, aged 8 of Wettingen (Aarau) were suffocated. The material damage is estimated to exceed 30,000 frs.

* * *

M. Wirth, late Mayor of Goldigen, has left 10,000 frs. to various charitable institutions.

LUCERNE.

M. J. Vetter, since 1886, Professor at the "Kunst Gewerbeschule" in Lucerne, and a noted sculptor has died at the age of 76.

HERE AND THERE IN THE ALPS.
(Miniature Sketches).

Many are the roads of enchantment which radiate from the far famed lake of Lucerne region and one of the finest among them ascends from Stansstad, along the merrily babbling Aa, to Engelberg, the mount of Angels of the ancient. A little electric railway negotiates the 15 miles' climb from 1437-3356 feet a/s cheerfully in one hour, but travelers who are in quest of the unusual will enjoy their stop-over privileges.

Stans, starting point of the amazing Stanserhorn cable railway, and only 10 minutes distant, is the first point of interest. Geranium adorned, high gabled dwellings line the spotless thoroughfares of this tiny capital of the half-canton of Nidwalden. Strikingly handsome is its main square in which stand the cathedral-like 17th century parish church, the venerable Johannes fountain and the noble Arnold von Winkelried memorial. The glorious past of this little land is pictured in the town's Historical Museum, and the present, placid and picturesque, reveals itself here and higher up in the valley at every turn of the road.

Wolfenschiessen, a tiny summer playground, sends greetings farther on. It is reminiscent of passages in "William Tell" and of the family of this name that dwelt here long ago. Altsellen too, where the heroic Baumgarten lived, is tucked away in this vicinity. Distances between localities are short, and presto, there comes Grafenort, once, as its name suggests, a possession of counts — the Habsburgs. Its show places are an old mansion belonging to the Abbots of Engelberg, and used by them as a vacation retreat, also a medieval chapel and a friendly inn.

So steep now becomes the road that the railway saw itself forced to use the rack-and-pinion system for nearly a mile of the final stretch. Then suddenly comes Engelberg with its great Benedictine Abbey — now a well-known Lyceum for boys of 12-20 years of age — whose foundation in the 12th century is said to have been directly inspired by the song of angels resounding from the mountain since then known as the Engelberg. In fulfillment of these ancient traditions the entire landscape becomes invested in a mantle of glory.

Engelberg's location is superb, and truly majestic are its mountain sentinels, including besides the before mentioned Engelberg (sometimes also referred to as the Hahnen), the lofty Titlis, the serrated peaks of the Great and Little Spannort, and the Hutstock. To-day these mountains are the coveted goal of climbers and skiers, while pedestrians find new vigor and inspiration for life along the countless trails of alpine splendor which branch out from here, and of which the lovely Horbis valley with its imposing cliffs marking the so-called "End of the World" is but one.

Modern sports and pastimes have long ago asserted themselves at Engelberg. There are Tennis courts galore, as well as a monumental outdoor swimming pool which can be heated, and the Gerschialp cable railway, together with the Trübsee aerial line, will satisfy the yearnings of those who wish to climb heights "by the easiest way."

These 20th century innovations have, however, not deprived Engelberg of its old-world

charm, and same as at Stans and in the Iliputian communities along the railway, the natives in the big resort still cling to their time-honoured customs and costumes.

Thus one sees on a Sunday morning at church men clad in the traditional herdsman's blouse, made of black cloth and skillfully embroidered in front, on the shoulders and on the sleeves. And one encounters women, happily independent from fashion problems, and very attractive in their garb consisting of a full black skirt, beautiful silk band apron, tight fitting black velvet bodice over a stiffly starched, finely pleated white chemisette, and with as much silver filigree chains and brooches as the wearer can afford.

In the entire valley of Engelberg the women's coiffure plays a vital part. The hair is parted in the middle and arranged in a coil well above the nape of the neck. Single girls then display one large, spoon-shaped hairpin worked in filigree, and married women adorn the back of their heads with a heavy silver "double shield."

BROADCASTING IN SWITZERLAND.

In every country of the world, broadcasting has greatly developed during the past ten years and its progress seems far from coming to an end. If the broadcasting and reception conditions of 1926 are compared with those of to-day it is difficult to believe that only ten years separate us from this epoch.

At the end of 1934, England was at the head of all European countries for the number of its receiving sets which attained 6.8 millions. It is certain that during 1935 the figure of 7 millions has been passed. The density of receiving sets is 15.1% of the population of England; in Switzerland it is 10.6%. These figures are explained, not so much by a backwardness in the development of the radio in Switzerland, as by the special conditions existing in this country. One of these conditions is due to the diversity of culture and languages of the country; every part (German, French and Italian) possessing its own broadcasting station. These national stations have replaced the various local broadcasting stations which did service at the birth of the radio in this country. The Beromünster broadcasting station serves German Switzerland. The French speaking part of the country is served by the national station of Sottens, and the Italian part by the station of Monte Ceneri. There does not exist in Switzerland any big town sufficiently important to take the leading position. Such cities as Zurich, Berne, Bâle, Geneva, Lausanne and Lugano each constitutes a separate type of intellectual and artistic centre. This explains the reason why, in a small country like Switzerland, which numbers only 4 million inhabitants, there is no central broadcasting station, but six different studios. The transmitter of the group in German Switzerland, Beromünster, is supplied by the studios of Zurich, Berne and Bâle. In French Switzerland, the studios at Lausanne and Geneva work for the Sottens transmitter and in Italian Switzerland, it is the studio at Lugano which supplies the Monte Ceneri station.

Within each transmission group the programme is distributed among the different studios, which independently arrange and carry out the programme for which they are responsible.

The various studios, and the broadcasting societies grouped around them, are affiliated to the Swiss Broadcasting Society, "Schweizerische Rundspruch-Gesellschaft" whose headquarters are at Berne and which has the supreme supervision of the programmes. Technical progress has brought the studios in front of ever increasing tasks and has forced them to bring their installations constantly up-to-date. It is needless to say that Switzerland who, in matters of technic, may be placed among the most progressive countries of the world, has faithfully kept up her reputation by introducing installations responding to every exigence. Thus, the studios of Zurich and Lausanne are situated in specially built constructions considered to be models of their type. The programmes of the different groups of transmitters correspond to the diversity of languages and customs of the country, while at the same time endeavouring to bring out its national character. Switzerland has been, at all times, a point of contact of the various European civilisations, it is natural that the different studios should find place in their programmes for the best auditions from other studios as well as for certain transmissions from foreign countries.

In this respect, it is interesting to point out the transmissions from the Geneva studio dealing with the work of the League of Nations and the International Labour Bureau. It may thus be said, upon the whole, that the Swiss radio, with its limited possibilities, is endeavouring to fulfil its role towards a better international, political and economical understanding.

AU CONSEIL NATIONAL.

La session des Chambres fédérales s'est ouverte dans la grisaille d'une printemps mouillé et d'un ordre du jour dont nous avons dit récemment qu'il laissait peu de place à l'enthousiasme. Au long d'une interminable séance, mardi après-midi, les représentants du peuple ont feint d'écouter les deux juristes qui les entretenaient du code des obligations. La Chambre a cependant fait acte de sagesse en bifant l'article 672 bis qu'elle avait imprudemment introduit et qui a rencontré l'opposition irréductible du Conseil des Etats. Cet article obligeait les sociétés anonymes d'une certaine importance à constituer un fonds de crise, destiné à prévenir le licenciement d'employés ou à atténuer les effets de ce licenciement. On objectait, non sans raison, que cette disposition n'avait pas sa place dans un code. Le Conseil national, à une faible majorité, du reste, a suivi le Conseil fédéral, les Etats et la majorité de la commission, et l'article a été biffé.

La prolongation de l'aide aux producteurs de lait a occupé la fin de la séance d'ouverture, et la matinée de mercredi n'a pas suffi à la faire aboutir. C'est qu'à propos du lait, on a parlé du beurre et du fromage; et ce sont là des sujets qui passionnent un nombre important de députés.

D'un point de vue strictement rationnel, il est évidemment absurde que la Confédération soit obligée de verser de l'argent aux paysans pour que ceux-ci soient suffisamment rémunérés, c'est-à-dire en définitive pour que le lait soit plus cher qu'il ne le serait selon le libre jeu des forces économiques. Nous sommes en présence d'un des paradoxes modernes, et d'une des conséquences les plus onéreuses de la politique Schulthess-Laur. En réalité, ce qu'il faudrait, en lieu et place de cet expédient, ce serait une réduction générale des prix qui permit aux agriculteurs de se pourvoir à meilleur compte de tout ce qui est nécessaire et de vendre aussi à meilleur marché. Mais nous sommes encore loin, semble-t-il, de cette réadaptation, qui a pour elle la logique, l'intérêt général, l'opinion publique, l'approbation du Conseil fédéral, et qui cependant reste un vœu pie. Napoléon III, l'empereur-dictateur plébiscité, constatait avec mélancolie qu'il lui était impossible de faire nommer un substitut de deuxième classe. Il faut donc admettre aussi que sous le régime démocratique, tout le monde puisse souhaiter une réforme utile et même salvatrice, sans que celle-ci se fasse.

La situation étant telle, il en faut tirer parti. Evidemment, l'aide aux producteurs de lait doit être continuée, présentement, si l'on ne veut pas abandonner à la misère et provoquer à la révolte une classe qui forme le tiers de la population, et qui en fait vivre un autre tiers. On se demande même s'il était indispensable, en face d'une telle nécessité, de discuter si abondamment pour terminer par un vote inéluctable.

M. Maxime Quartenoud, de Fribourg, a fait d'excellents débuts parlementaires, en présentant un rapport concis, solidement documenté, très raisonnable, et où l'on reconnaissait l'homme initié à fond à la question qu'il traitait. Dans cette salle si peu propice à l'éloquence et où les paroles s'évaporent, à peine prononcées, et s'anéantissent, il a su se faire écouter. Il a montré — et voici qui rejoint nos commentaires de tout à l'heure — que "pour se passer de toute intervention de l'Etat, il faudrait non seulement supprimer les subventions, mais ramener toutes les conditions de la vie économique, y compris celles qui intéressent le monde de la finance, le taux de l'argent, etc., à des conditions véritablement normales."

La production indigène étant plus que suffisante pour la consommation, intérieure, nous sommes donc tributaires de l'exportation, et c'est ici qu'intervient le rôle essentiel du commerce des fromages. Sous un régime de liberté absolue, les marchands n'archèteraient que ce dont ils ont besoin, laissant le reste pour compte aux producteurs. Une rémunération normale n'est donc possible que moyennant l'intervention de l'Etat.

Le rapporteur a expliqué très clairement le mécanisme de l'action de secours et a souligné le fait que l'arrêté est suffisamment souple pour laisser à l'autorité une certaine latitude d'application. Il a prouvé aussi que la réorganisation de l'Union du commerce de fromage, objet de critiques souvent fondées, demeurerait indépendant de l'action en faveur des producteurs de lait.

Le socialiste Oprecht a dit un certain nombre de vérités aux "barons du fromage," et la longue riposte de M. Gnaegi — que cette question touche de très près — n'a point dissipé l'impression qu'il y a là, en effet, des privilèges un peu bien féodaux...

Un évêque disait un jour que même du plus médiocre sermon on pouvait tirer une leçon profitable (il est vrai que c'était un optimiste). Semblablement, du débat le plus aride, réussit, avec de la bonne volonté, à tirer quelques conclusions.

Léon Savary.
(Tribune de Genève).