

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1921)

Heft: 8

Rubrik: Notes & gleanings

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 01.02.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

hausethd by its war activity, appeals for help. The war is over, but dangers remain. The struggle against epidemic diseases also absorbs the funds of the Red Cross. Many Swiss, we are sure, will respond to that appeal and prove that they entertain towards the Red Cross the same affection they are accustomed to show for the 'white one.'

P. L.

Lieutenant PILLICHODY.

We beg to draw the attention of our readers to the Lecture on "Flying Above the Swiss Alps," which is arranged to take place on Wednesday, March 9th, at King George's Hall. (See special announcement on front page.)

A few biographical notes on the lecturer will serve as advance acquaintance with the personality of one of our foremost native airmen, with whom we shall shortly have the pleasure of "spending a few hours in the air" to witness a unique and magnificent survey of some of the most beautiful parts of our country.

Lieut. Henri Pillichody, born in 1893 at Yverdon, studied at the University of Lausanne, then, after gaining practical experience in the building of steam-turbines, joined the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule. During mobilisation in 1914 he entered the Flying Corps, received the Pilot certificate while under the tutelage of his redoubtable comrade Bider. In 1917 Pillichody was promoted Lieutenant of the Flying Corps, acting as Aerial Instructor with Bider.

His prowess and proficiency in the air have earned for him appreciation and recognition as an airman far beyond the borders of Switzerland. Lieut. Pillichody was the first pilot to cross the Alps by flying boat which he piloted from Varese (Italy) to Zurich, and he was again the first to pilot a hydroplane, carrying passengers, over the Mont Blanc. Quite recently he conveyed passengers the same day from Geneva to Zurich and back, in record time.

Lieut. Pillichody has attained the rank of an expert air pilot and technologist, which attainments are most favourably reflected by the ease and ability with which he handles lectures on Aeronautics.

NOTES & GLEANINGS.

TESTING SWISS CONCEPTION OF NEUTRALITY?

Seeing that more direct routes are available for the troop contingents of Britain, Belgium and Spain, destined for Lithuania, than a passage through Switzerland could offer, one may reasonably ask the question whether the ultimate object of the French Ambassador's Note was not for the purpose of putting to a practical test the interpretation of Switzerland's obligations under the League of Nations covenants by the Federal Council.

It is obvious that the conception of neutrality as practised hitherto by the Swiss will have to undergo fundamental changes, if collisions with the League of Nations Council have to be averted.

The position created is certainly a difficult one, the more so, as opinion on the subject at home is also divided; it may, however, be safely left to our Government to deal with the problem at issue in a just and correct manner.

What especially concerns us Swiss abroad and at home, however, is the danger that lies in those reports appearing in the English Press from Special Correspondents, which do not deal with the question from an unbiassed point of view, but rather with the purpose of furthering and serving

the movement which is still active, to deprive Geneva of its honour to be the seat of the League of Nations.

Under the circumstances it is gratifying to find, even though it be only in isolated cases, that some writers are doing justice to the attitude adopted by our Federal Council in this particular issue, as will be gathered from the following articles:—

Glasgow Herald (Feb. 14): "Some of the more ardent spirits who rushed to the defence of the League of Nations against the Swiss Federal Council—which, of course, does not represent a Great Allied Power—must be repenting of having elevated 'teacup storm into a European tempest.' The announcement that Switzerland had refused to permit the passage of Allied troops to superintend the Lithuanian plebiscite, caused a storm of indignation and a threat in certain very anti-League quarters that the Council in due season would refuse to meet at Geneva, but would hold its next session in Paris. That the Council ever seriously entertained so thoroughly inept an idea is, one hopes, completely unfounded, but the ascription of such an idea to it is very significant of those people who would permit the Great Powers to violate every provision of the Covenant, but would go any lengths, legal or otherwise, to avenge a fancied slight from an unfortunate minor State. In addition, these earnest champions did not trouble to read the report of M. Motta's declaration to the Swiss Federal Council, an elementary precaution which would have saved them from being ridiculous. The Swiss Government received on December 23 a Note from the French Government stating that it had been authorised to arrange for the despatch of troops to Vilna, and that it had laid down for the Belgian, British and Spanish troops a route via Switzerland and Czecho-Slovakia. It may occur to one at once on a glance at the map that this for the British and Belgians at least was a remarkably circuitous route, and one may wonder why it was ever suggested. The object of such a passage of troops was, of course, obviously pacific, but at the time of M. Motta's statement, which amounted to a refusal of an eventual demand, Lithuania had not accepted the policing of the plebiscite by League troops, and therefore to have permitted such a passage would have been virtually a breach, to the disfavour of Lithuania, of that neutrality to which Switzerland has invariably clung with almost fanatic tenacity. That was M. Motta's position, and it was as eminently sound as it was far from being final. Lithuania has now accepted the presence of League police-troops, and the whole question from the Swiss standpoint has radically changed. Consequently, whenever formal demand is made, the Swiss Government will approach the question from a new angle, and will decide, as we have no reason to doubt, as a loyal member of the League of Nations."

Daily News (Feb. 12): "The expected decision to hold the forthcoming meeting of the Council of the League of Nations at Paris instead of Geneva is now definitely announced. The suggestion that this is due to the refusal of the Swiss Federal Council to grant the contingents of the League Plebiscite Force (for Vilna) passage through Switzerland is entirely groundless. In point of fact, the change of venue to Paris was provisionally decided on ten days or more before the Swiss Government sent its communication to the League. The reason for the change is the inability of M. Léon Bourgeois, for reasons of health, to attend the Council if it is held at Geneva. In view of the importance of the subjects to be discussed, notably disarmaments and mandates, it was considered by

the Secretariat that the presence of M. Bourgeois, who is familiar with all that has so far been done in these fields, was indispensable. I understand that the British representative, Mr. Balfour, was also anxious to meet at some centre within telephone call of London, so that he could communicate rapidly with his Government if need arose. Senhor da Cunha, who is to preside at the Council meeting, and Viscount Ishii, the Japanese representative, are in Paris in any case. The Marquis Imperiali, till lately Ambassador in London, will represent Italy; Senor Quinones da Leon, Spain; M. Paul Hymans, Belgium; and Mr. Wellington Koo, now Minister in London, China. China, it may be pointed out, now sits on the Council for the first time, having been appointed in place of Greece at the Assembly at Geneva. The Council may conclude its business in a week, but is more likely to sit for ten days."

The Times report that Switzerland, in accepting the invitation to send representatives to discuss the question of allowing troops for Vilna to pass through Switzerland at the next session of the Council of the League, has nominated Dr. Dunant, Swiss Minister in Paris, and Prof. Max Huber. The invitation was sent at the instance of the Sub-Committee of the League dealing with Polish-Lithuanian relations, which consists of Senhor da Cunha, Brazilian Ambassador in Paris and President of the Council of the League, M. Leon Bourgeois, and the Japanese Ambassador in Paris.

The topic concerning the abnormally warm winter experienced this year in Switzerland continues to occupy space in the Press, some of the writers seemingly finding pleasure in gloating over the misfortune which has befallen some well-known *Swiss Wintersports Resorts*, where English enthusiasts have mustered in almost as large numbers as in pre-war days.

It may prove small comfort to those who have travelled to the Engadine or the Bernese Oberland, in quest of healthy and exhilarating pastimes, to learn that this has been the warmest winter season since 1834, but it is to be hoped that it will again be 87 years before similar disappointment has to be faced.

That there must be far more in Winter Sports than the eye of some people, for one reason or another, care to see, will be obvious from the following article which appeared in *Truth*:—

"There are many things no man can explain, and the fascination of the snow is one of them. Many people will deny that there can be any quality in the cold mantle of winter which can rightly be described as fascinating, but there are always the children and the winter sportsmen to give them the lie. Those who take train for the Riviera to escape the indeterminate climate of the average British winter shrink with appropriate shudders from the prospect of existence in the snow and ice-bound villages of the Swiss Alps. The very thought awakens rheumatism in their bones. Yet those who have once found their way there have only amused contempt for their fellows who are content with the softer pleasures of the Mediterranean seaboard. Existence there is to them like a luke-warm cocktail with the gin left out. There is no bite in it. On the other hand, set them in an hotel high up on the mountain-side, with snow all around and about them, not inches but feet deep, and there is not a worry or a trouble left for them in the whole wide world. Politics then become of absurdly trivial importance compared with the height of the mercury in the thermometer, economics are counted the occupation of dull persons who grope in the

twilight of the lower levels; the only unemployment problem worth a moment's consideration is what to do in the vacant hours between tea and dinner.

"But there must be snow and plenty of it to produce the exhilaration which makes each day sufficient unto itself, and all Switzerland has not been favoured equally this year in this respect. Even Mürren had at Christmas-time an unfortunate interlude; and on one day in January rain—real rain—actually fell. It was as if the war had included Alpine weather in the universal European upheaval. But that threat passed. There has now been snow everywhere since mid-January, enough to make the hearts of the ski-runners rejoice. The winter-sportsmen are wise who, profiting by experience in pre-war days, have chosen mid-January and February for their annual visits to the ski-ing slopes, for then the prospects of settled weather with hot sun shining in a cloudless sky while the frost holds strongly in the shade are the best. There have been many such days at Mürren this year, where the hotels have been overflowing, to the envy of St. Moritz, which wonders why the English should prefer the Bernese Oberland to the Engadine.

"Mürren, indeed, is itself again. The sick British prisoners who were interned there have done nothing to alter it, even though, disliking everything that savoured of the Boche, they rechristened the Jungfrau 'Flossie.' The Jungfrau is not too well pleased, and she mutters to herself about it. She has complained a good deal this winter, though the natives will tell you that her mutterings are only falling avalanches. But she does not alter the even tenor of her way. Every evening she changes her white robe for a mantle of pink and assumes her crown of gold, and the Mönch and the Eiger try to outvie her. Then the ski-runners make for the hotels like homing birds. There is not so much fascination in the snow at night, unless it be the fascination of fear, though the expert ski-runner will assert that there is no thrill sweeter than afforded by a run on a still night when the moon is at the full. But most winter-sportsmen and sportswomen are satisfied with the dance or the ice carnival for the evening's amusement. Something they must have. They take life strenuously, for the Mürren crowd is youthful. The war has not changed the complexion of the crowd any more than that of 'Flossie.' The individuals are different, but the newcomers are very like the old. But it seems that the fascination of the snow for the youth of 1921 is just as great as it was for the youth of 1912, 1913 and 1914. Mürren this winter was an all-British playground full of the laughter and cheery voices of sunburnt youths and maidens. They were just as keen on running the ski-slopes straight and on acquiring the telemarks and Christiania swings, and stemming turns, as those whose places they have taken. Life is sweet to them, and it is a pity that for a week or a fortnight the whole workaday world could not be transformed into one great Mürren. The transformation might settle many problems."

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

- March 1.—CITY SWISS CLUB.—Monthly Meeting and Supper, 6.30 p.m.
 March 4.—SWISS INSTITUTE.—Lecture: "La Reconstruction en Belgique," par M. Emile Cammaerts. 8.30 p.m.
 March 5.—CITY SWISS CLUB.—Cinderella Dance at Gatti's, 6.30—11.45 p.m.
 March 9.—Lecture by Lieut. Henri Pillichody, of Geneva, "BY AEROPLANE OVER THE SWISS ALPS." King George's Hall, Tottenham Court Road, W., at 8 p.m. sharp.
 March 11.—SWISS INSTITUTE.—Lantern Lecture on Southern Italy, by Walter Sanderson, Esq. 8 p.m.