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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

During a debate in the National Council it was freely admitted that the present number of recruits is considerably below the constitutional contingent; the forced demands of economy in the military budget had brought about a reduction which was no less resented by the yearly recruits so put back than it constituted a national danger. In spite of protests from the Socialists, Federal President Scheurer intimated that in the coming year the quota would be increased.

From an interpellation in the States Council it would appear that Switzerland will officially take part in the International Exhibition, to be held in 1925 at Paris.

An unexpected decision was recorded last Sunday by the electorate of Thoun, who were asked to vote whether the town council should be empowered to grant a subsidy towards the cost of creating a direct connection between the new railway station and the landing stages of the lake navigation company. As the proposal has been negatived, the navigation company threatens to withdraw the service altogether on the lake of Thoun.

The date of the next Basle Fair (the eighth) has been definitely fixed for May 17th to May 27th. The work of rebuilding will be started immediately. The town council of Zurich have given their architect, Mr. Herter, whose plans had already previously been accepted, special leave of absence, so as to enable him to devote the whole of his time to the building details. A special building for the administration is to be erected in addition to the destroyed halls; the new conference room, with galleries to hold about 1400 people, will probably not be finished in time for next year's gatherings.

Two accidents to cavalry subalterns, which do not seem to testify to exceptional horsemanship, happened in the neighbourhood of Frauenfeld. In both instances the riders lost control of their mount; one of them, Schmid, was thrown from his horse, a double fracture of the skull being the outcome, whilst the other one, Robert Steinemann, during the fall got caught in the stirrup, was dragged along for a few hundred metres and picked up dead.

Three Basle councillors, Messrs. Calini, Frey and Grieder (the latter two representing Baselland) recently undertook an air trip to London on the invitation of the Handley-Page company. The following description appears in the *National-Zeitung* from the pen of Regierungsrat Calini:—

"Wir stiegen," bemerkte er, "bei schönem Wetter in Basel auf, und als wir das Häusermeer von Paris vor uns liegen sahen, da hatte bereits die schlechte Witterung gesiegt. Trübe bot sich das Bild der französischen Hauptstadt. Es war kein absolutes Vergnügen, bei diesem starken Wind, gegen den ständig angekämpft werden musste, das leichte Fallen und Sinken des Apparates mitzumachen; und doch — ich würde sofort wieder fahren, wenn ich Zeit und Gelegenheit hätte. Statt beinahe einen Tag im Coupé zu sitzen, waren wir in viereinhalb Stunden in Paris, und das bedeutete bereits eine Verspätung von einer Stunde, eben der ausserordentlichen Windströmungen wegen, gegen die wir kämpfen mussten. Wir landeten für eine Minute in Le Bourget und wurden auf dem Flugplatz, der ausserhalb Paris ungefähr in einer Distanz wie von Sissach nach Basel liegt, von Monsieur Croni, dem kommerziellen Leiter des Unternehmens, empfangen. Die Plätze im Flugzeug, das uns nach London führen sollte, waren bestellt, aber es war ungewiss, ob bei dem zunehmenden Sturm gefahren werden konnte, da die Handley-Page-Gesellschaft sehr vorsichtig ist. Aber trotz dem starken Winde entschloss man sich.

"Das grosse Flugzeug, das im Innern ohne Verstrebungen als offene Kabine recht luftig und behaglich aussah, war bald vollständig besetzt durch vierzehn Passagiere und drei Mann der Begleitung. Als wir aufstiegen, sahen wir gegen Norden, also rechts von uns, über Nordfrankreich und Belgien dichte Wolkenmassen schweben. Es waren jene, durch die am selben Tage die Freiballons beim Gordon-Bennett-Fliegen stiessen, wobei dann das grosse Unglück sich ereignete. Wir aber fuhren nun in gerader Richtung nach Boulogne zum Kanal. Unter uns lag gleich einer topographischen Karte das fruchtbare Land, das nur öfter als es nötig schien, wieder von Altweassern und Wassertrümpfen durchsetzt war, sodass man das Gefühl hatte, es könnte auch hier noch manche Strecke urbar gemacht werden. Dann schwebten wir über dem Meer, bis das englische Festland, immer wieder von Sonnenstrahlen erleuchtet, vor uns auftauchte. Unter uns sahen wir den Flugzeugschatten dahingleiten. Erst durch-

queren wir die Dünen, hinter denen sich das bebaute Land gleich einem schönen Garten erhob, bis Industriebauten sichtbar wurden, und so die Nähe Londons verkündeten. So tief glitten wir oft dahin, dass wir die Häuser in ihrer Anlage und ihrem Grundriss bequem studieren konnten.

"Als wir in Croydon, dem Flugplatz von London, landeten, konnten wir noch bei Sonnenschein aussteigen. Schon eine Stunde später war alles von Sturm und Regenschauern erfüllt. Ausser der Besichtigung der Weltstadt, die mir schon von früheren Aufenthalten her bekannt war, sodass ich meinen basellandschaftlichen Kollegen als Cicerone dienen konnte, genossen wir ein Stück englischen Land Lebens durch die freundliche Einladung des Herrn Handley-Page, sein sechzehn Meilen von London entfernt in Stanmore gelegenes Gut zu besuchen. Da ich am Dienstag wieder zurück sein musste, nahm ich den Schnellzug, der mich aber, mit dem Flugtempo verglichen, wie eine Schneckenpost durchs Land zu führen schien.

"Ich bin überzeugt, dass wir in wenig Jahren für weite Strecken das Flugzeug als normales Beförderungsmittel benutzen werden. Auch im stärksten Sturmwinde hat mich nie das Gefühl absoluter Sicherheit verlassen, und ich kann es begreifen, dass Passagiere, die öfters hinüberfahren, sich an das Surren der Propeller so sehr gewöhnt haben, dass sie behaglich dazu schlafen können.

"Wichtig waren für mich auch die Flugfelder. Dasjenige bei Paris ist eine grosse, grüne Matte, in die ein Zementboden für die Landungen eingefügt wurde. Der Platz ist mit einem soliden Drahtzaun umgeben, zu beiden Seiten stehen die grossen Hangars aus feuerfestem Beton, in denen je sechs Flugzeuge untergebracht werden können. In England ist als Landungsplatz ein Spezialabdomen aus Kies und Teermakadam gelegt worden, und der Platz selbst ist von einem nicht sehr schönen Blechhaus umgeben, wie überhaupt jener Landungsplatz eher einen provisorischen Charakter besitzt.

"Was uns nützt, ist vor allem der Bau eines grösseren Hangars, der wenigstens zwei Flugzeuge aufnehmen im Stande ist. Auch werden wir künftig nach dem Vorbilde von Paris und London Distanzen nicht so sehr scheuen müssen, wenn es sich herausstellen sollte, dass das Sternfeld nicht brauchbar wäre.

"Jedenfalls bietet dieser Flug bei stürmischem Wetter die Gewähr für die absolute Sicherheit, wie der heute unter ausgewählten Leuten auf der Linie Basel-London gefahren wird."

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

After the very nice things which were written about "Kyburg" in the *S.O.*, and especially after the very able way in which "Notes and Gleanings" were conducted during my leave of absence, I have a feeling akin to the one I used to get on the eve of some impending school examination, in setting about to write these lines. I am afraid that my readers expect too much. Perhaps they think, not unreasonably, that I am like a Giant Refreshed, that I am full of new ideas, impressions and "mustard." That may be true, but I am afraid my holiday has been over-successful in that direction, and it will take some time ere these impressions have been properly digested.

After the many flattering articles which have appeared in our paper on holidays in Switzerland, I think it only just to state, as a Swiss, that there is indeed only *one Switzerland*. And, apart from the natural beauties of our beloved country, it is always an inspiration to me to find our people on the whole extremely well-informed politically. One can feel how soberly, very often unbiassedly and deeply they read the various political manifestations and appraise them at their real worth. I was very much struck, in the Eastern part of Switzerland, by the views on politics I came across, and I confess that quite a number of my own ideas have been affected by arguments I have heard. Of this more by and by.

### The Middle Class.

There are, of course, also funny people in Switzerland. I consider funny, for instance, those who organise and attend a "Congress at Berne to consider the question of the formation of an International Middle Classes Union." I read in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (22nd Sept.):—

Organisation seems to be the order of the day, and its latest manifestation is a Congress at Berne to consider the question of the formation of an International Middle Classes Union. How far internationalism can be expected to aid the movement is not made quite clear, but some recognition of the part played by the middle classes is overdue is acknowledged. The living conditions of the class have not improved in recent years; but then, as history goes, the class itself is but a thing of yesterday. The Middle Ages knew nothing of a Middle Class, at least until the influence of the guildry system grew so strong in urban communities as to challenge the feudal rights of the lords-superior. Now the Middle Class has come to be looked upon as the fountain which can minister to the thirst of the other sections of the populace. Parliament can go almost into ecstasies over the worker, but let the middle class voice a grievance, then sympathy seems to vanish. Happily there is a growing element in our midst which urges that the middle class not only has grievances, but is determined that these shall be remedied. The starting ground for the ventilation of such lies at our doors, and not in any cosmo-



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politan society, however loud-sounding in name or well-meaning in objective. The movement inaugurated in Switzerland, however, shows that the burden on middle class has to bear knows no geographical limitation. Those who groan under it know that only too well, and will welcome even an international recognition that something must be done to lessen its weight.

I have written about this subject once already, in these Notes, and tried to show that a Middle Class Union has not got a iota of a chance. What is Middle Class? The "salaried" proletariat, as distinguished from the mere "wage-earners"? If the middle class of the population—I really do not know who they are—hope to get something by uniting into a Union, why don't they exercise their right to vote? In Switzerland, for instance, the Peasants have already got their Union. Are the peasants not Middle Class? Perhaps some of my readers will enlighten me on the subject.

### The Opium Convention.

*Morning Post* (22nd Sept.):—

League Assembly at Geneva: The Committee on Social Questions, which was discussing opium traffic, was the scene of a little tiff between Dame Edith Lyttelton and M. Ador, Swiss representative. The former complained bitterly about the way in which opium was smuggled from Switzerland into other countries. It was no use, he said, beating about the bush. The truth was that the matter would never be put right till Switzerland ratified the Opium Convention, a thing she had up to the present refused to do, and then Dame Edith Lyttelton proposed what appeared to be practically an appeal on the part of the League to the Swiss people over the head of the Swiss Government. M. Ador protested at the insistence with which his country was criticised, and indignantly repudiated the accusations, promising, however, that Switzerland would ratify the Convention some time next year. In the end the Committee passed a resolution, urging all Governments which had not ratified the Convention to do so promptly.

In Switzerland there is, so to speak, no danger arising out of misuse of drugs. I have been told that this makes it rather irksome for our Government to ratify the Convention. But, if it was possible to deal with absinthe, in order to help our few Welsh Cantons which were not strong enough to deal with the horrible danger alone, it will, I think, also be possible to get our people to favour the Opium Convention, in order to help peoples in other countries. That such a Convention must stand, in unfortunately not to be doubted. Liberty means restrictions wisely applied, or, as they say at home:—

"Mer sind halt frei Schwyzer,  
Mer tuend nu was mer müend!"

### Bishop of Basle-Lugano celebrates his Diamond Jubilee.

A Swiss National Pilgrimage will leave for the Holy City next month. There have been two successful pilgrimages to the shrine of Our Lady at Lourdes this year.

The Dean of the Swiss Episcopate, Mgr. Jacobus Stammer, D.D., Bishop of Basle-Lugano, recently celebrated the diamond jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood. All the other Swiss Bishops met at Soleure, the official residence of Mgr. Stammer, on the occasion, and attended a solemn service of thanksgiving in the ancient cathedral of St. Ursus. Similar services were held in every church and chapel throughout the diocese. A priest's exciting adventures in the early seventies, during the ill-famed "Kulturkampf," are recalled by the attainment of his golden jubilee in the priesthood by Fr. J. C. Weber, Rector of St. Mary's Church, Basle. At that time, Fr. Weber had to disguise himself as a