

**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:** - (1923)

**Heft:** 98

**Rubrik:** Note and gleanings

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# The Swiss Observer

Telephone: CITY 4603.

Published every Friday at 21, GARLICK HILL, LONDON, E.C. 4.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

No. 98

LONDON, APRIL 21, 1923.

PRICE 3d.

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(Swiss subscriptions may be paid into Postcheck-Konto: Basle V 5718.)

## HOME NEWS

The vote of April 15th on the *Customs Initiative* has so far given a total of 452,340 votes against and 170,239 for the Initiative. The results of the Cantons are as follows:—

Cantons	Yes	No
Zurich	35,556	70,427
Berne	31,503	78,759
Lucerne	4,812	27,374
Uri	748	2,787
Schwyz	1,170	7,496
Obwald	174	2,633
Nidwald	173	1,903
Glaris	1,919	4,464
Zoug	967	3,875
Fribourg	2,639	24,513
Soleure	7,296	14,548
Bâle-Ville	9,517	6,999
Bâle-Camp	4,380	8,147
Schaffhouse	2,941	7,106
Appenzell (R.E.)	3,100	7,082
Appenzell (R.I.)	173	2,018
Saint-Gall	14,975	38,787
Grisons	2,391	13,469
Argovie	13,305	36,396
Thurgovie	4,751	21,638
Tessin	3,573	10,611
Vaud	8,212	36,556
Valais	1,329	15,290
Neuchâtel	7,815	11,423
Genève	6,820	8,039
Militaires	—	—
Totals	170,239	452,340

This has brought to an end a very violent and energetic campaign, which has perturbed public opinion in our country nearly as much as the one on behalf of the Capital Levy. If one analyses the result of the vote, one is struck by the fact that Basle Town is the only accepting canton. It is, no doubt, owing, to a large extent, to the energetic stand the co-operative movement, which has its headquarters at Basle, made for the initiative.

The *British visa for Swiss* has been abolished as from April 15th. Those who come over to look for work, however, are expected to apply for permission to the Ministry of Labour. Visas are still necessary for Gibraltar or Malta. It is not yet quite certain whether all the Dominions will adhere to the abolition for their territories.

On April 23rd an extraordinary spring session of the *National Council* is expected, which will last no longer than a week. Of the different items on the agenda we may mention the Rhine question, the report on the third session of the League of Nations Assembly, the prolongation of the customs tariffs, and the final account of the cost of the war mobilisation.

The Federal Council has recently voted a credit of half a million francs for the fostering of *emigration*. It is expected that cantons and communes will vote similar subventions in order to give those compatriots who have, owing to circumstances, to earn their bread abroad, an opportunity of making a good start.

The Federal Council is going to delegate its President and the Head of the Department of Political Economy, Federal Councillor Schulthess, to the *International Middle-Class Congress*, which will take place on September 21st. The preparation of this Congress arouses a great deal of interest in the Swiss press.

The Federal Council has elected the former State Councillor, Dr. *Usteri*, of Zurich, as President of the *Swiss National Bank*. The banker, A. Sarasin, of Basle, was appointed Vice-President. National Councillor Hirter had to resign from the presidency, owing to the state of his health.

The *VII. Swiss Samples' Fair* was opened on Saturday at Basle. Its Director, Dr. Meile, said in his opening address that the number of exhibitors had risen from 812 to 863. No less than fifty meetings of syndicates, etc., are to be held in Basle during the Fair. The First Exhibition of the Swiss Abroad was opened on the same day in the Rosenthal Schulhaus. The Auslandschweizertag of Monday, the 16th, was a great success.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

### Swiss Clocks and Watches.

My readers know that Swiss Watch Manufacturers have again scored heavily as a result of the published test results for high-precision watches (Kew and Neuchâtel). That our manufacturers are also holding their own in respect of ingenious devices, is manifest from *The Times* (April 13th), whose Geneva correspondent reports that—

"The Baer watchmaking factory at Summiswald, in the Canton of Berne, has just sent a clock, which cost £2,600 to manufacture, to the Pilgrim's Chapel at Bilbao. It has an automatic peal, worked by electricity, which plays religious tunes; the peal consists of twenty-three bells."

### Motoring in Switzerland.

Extremely vexatious to the enthusiastic motorist, but in many places necessary for the protection of the non-motoring public, the restrictions in force in most of the Cantons are, as far as their practical working is concerned, often farcical. I remember being told last year that Bernese motorists motor into the Canton of Fribourg on a Sunday morning, enjoy themselves to their heart's content and to the limit of their car's capacity and, at night, run back home into Berne again, the latter Canton restricting motoring to a few hours in the morning and a few more late in the evening, whereas Fribourg has no such restrictions. I remember listening to a Bernese Hotelier; his arguments were forceful; he knew what the motorists' Sunday visits meant for the Fribourg Hotelier!

Again, I have watched motorists motoring home along the Thalwil-Zurich route of a Sunday evening. Talk of exceeding the speed limit! Having been kept waiting all day long, perhaps some good distance away from Zurich, and being allowed to proceed again after 7 p.m. only, or may be 6 p.m., these Zurich motorists were in a hurry to get home, and some very pretty racing could, therefore, be seen on the route mentioned.

Motorists in Switzerland complain naturally that these Cantonal restrictions are unfair. There ought to be one law for the whole of the country, especially in Switzerland, where you reach another Canton almost before you have properly settled down after starting the car up.

I have also enjoyed the mere Pedestrian's share in these "pleasures of the open road" on a Sunday. I remember, also last year, the road between Ossingen and Andelfingen. Granite surface. White powder-dust. A powerful pic-pic rushing past us and turning us into "snowmen," absolutely covered with fine white dust. Fortunately, the dust is beautifully clean, but the experience was not enjoyable, and I could understand that, under certain circumstances, real danger might have arisen. There are, of course, extremely few footpaths in our lowlands, at least near the great roads, and, to get from one place to another, the open road is often the only way for the motorist and the pedestrian alike.

Tarring, etc., will probably have to be adopted by and by. Motoring is becoming very popular in Switzerland, with commercial men especially. This is shown by the fact, as mentioned in the *Commercial Motor* (April 3rd), that—

"At the end of last year there were 5,902 commercial vehicles in use in Switzerland. The Swiss Tourist Office has addressed a petition to those Cantonal Governments which have prohibited the running of motor vehicles on Sundays, requesting the removal of these restrictions, at any rate so far as they affect the main roads."

### Swiss School Affairs.

The *Catholic Herald* (April 7th) states:— "A vote of great interest has recently been taken at Basle, Switzerland, upon the school question. The people were consulted and required to vote on the advisability of abolishing Article 13 of the Basle Constitution, which reads as follows: 'The direction of schools and educational establishments cannot be assumed by persons belonging to religious orders or congregations, nor can such persons teach in these schools and establishments.'"

The people were likewise required to vote on the question as to whether or not the State should subsidise private schools of at least 120 pupils which might be established, for reasons of religion, by associations of heads of families. The subsidy given to these schools would correspond to the amount which would be saved by the public schools.

The Socialists and Radicals opposed both measures, and they were rejected by 15,000 votes to 4,000. Only the Conservative Protestants voted with the Catholics.

### Linking up Belgian and Swiss Electric Power?

The *Electrical Review* (April 6th) refers to an article which appeared in 'Eclairage et Force Motrice,' in which M. Paul Basiaux explains his idea of using the 45 m. level-difference of the Meuse for the creation of huge electric works, cap-



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able of producing an average total of 100,000 h.p. or about 70,000 kw. As regards regularisation of the power supply, M. Basiaux thinks that steam power might be employed at first, and then goes on to suggest an eventual linking up with Switzerland, because: in the latter country water shortage is more prevalent in winter, whereas in Belgium the opposite is the case.

Quite so. A most desirable means of joining forces for a common beneficial end. You may think of all sorts of difficulties standing in the way of its realisation. The engineer knows that he can overcome all difficulties which are not created by *man-kind*! Nature itself would easily agree to be harnessed much more in the service of humanity, if only humanity would not be too stupid and oppose such harnessing by all kinds of ridiculous opposition.

The other day, up at Manchester, I was discussing Free Trade, etc., with a leading manufacturer, possessing world-wide experience of industrial and commercial problems and their solutions. We came to freight, and boldly I advanced one of my pet theories, namely, how silly it was that we should pay freights for goods transport, that we should have to buy railway tickets if we wanted to use the railway. Why could not the State run these transport services, the same as he, together with local bodies, runs the high roads. In former times we had to buy the right of using the roads—tolls, etc.—but we don't do it now. But we have not yet tumbled to the idea that railways ought to be as free as roads. Now, dear reader, don't think I am writing nonsense. Think it over carefully, get up your arguments against such a proposal, and you will see, if only you take the trouble to think well enough, how easily most of the arguments against the adoption of free railway service can be refuted. Of course, if you start shouting "Nationalisation," "Socialism," etc., you will be unable to think fairly. I want you to think purely and simply on the merits of the case, keeping in mind the goal, which is the achievement of better conditions for all of us to live and work and amuse ourselves and, maybe, to have a bit of spare time in which to improve our mind, if any. Myself, I have a few suggestions to some of your likely arguments, but before I give them in anticipation, I should like to get your point of view, your arguments, your criticism, your scornful, wincing, deploring, and despairing, also helpful replies to the above idea.

## AN EAST

"Le Consistoire et la Compagnie des Pasteurs de l'Eglise nationale protestante de Genève" has forwarded an appeal to all the Christian Churches, of which the following is an extract:—

"Au moment où l'avenir de notre civilisation paraît gravement compromis, nous croyons que l'heure est venue pour la chrétienté évangélique de rendre publiquement témoignage à son Maître en adressant au monde un message inspiré de son exemple et de son esprit de charité!"