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HOME NEWS

By a large majority the two Federal Chambers have elected Dr. K. A. Brodtbeck, of Liestal (Socialist) to be a Federal judge in the place of Mr. Hauser, deceased.

The granting of financial aid to distant mountain districts is to be studied by the Federal Council, pressure having been exercised by several representatives in the National Council; a subsidy to farmers working those regions is even suggested.

A further credit of three million francs has been voted to the Swiss Hotel Trust (Hotel-Treuhänder-Gesellschaft). By common consent this institution has rendered valuable aid to the Swiss hotel industry, without which the latter could hardly have survived the long-drawn-out crisis. No less than 154 hotel companies have been saved from compulsory liquidation; another 150 concerns are to be reorganised in the near future.

National Councillor Belmont (Communist, Basle) demanded monetary contributions in favour of those Swiss wishing to emigrate to Russia.

Some abusive remarks were made by Socialists in the Bernese Town Council against the Roumanian Government, when the application of the 10,000 francs (generously left for local charities on the occasion of the recent visit of the Royal couple) came under discussion. The amount is to be added to a fund for a holiday home to benefit needy school-children.

A conference of railway authorities has recently been held in Berne in order to devise ways and means of preventing accidents at level crossings; during the last three years over a hundred serious cases have been reported where motor-cars came into collision with passing trains.

The largest and busiest railway station in Switzerland as regards passenger traffic is Zurich, which issued last year 2.1 million tickets; Berne and Basle follow with considerably less than half this amount. As regards goods traffic, Basle is an easy first, having handled over four million tons in the same period, second and third place being taken by Geneva with 775,959 tons and Zurich with 692,464 tons.

Aargau does not seem to be a paradise for foreigners, the latter numbering only 5.5% of the total population—probably the lowest percentage recorded in any canton.

The première of a Festspiel, written by the romansch poet Florian Gamathias to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the "Grauen Bund," was rendered last Sunday in Trons.

Through the capsizing of a boat, two young men from Zurich—Heinrich Vollmann and Walter Binninger—were drowned in the Lake of Lugano.

Dr. Frédéric Ferrière, a well-known surgeon and keenly interested in philanthropic work, died last Saturday (June 14th) in Geneva at the age of 76. He was vice-president of the International Red Cross Committee and during the war interested himself chiefly on behalf of deported and imprisoned civilians.

Captain Armbruster, with his balloon 'Helvetia,' took eleventh place in the race for the Gordon Bennett cup, covering about 142 miles, against the 433 miles standing to the credit of the winner, the Belgian De Muyter, in the 'Belgica.' The latter definitely secures the trophy, having been first three times in succession. Thus this hazardous competition, which, commenced in 1906, has outlived its utility, comes to an end. This year's performance, the thirteenth, compares unfavourably with previous events, Lieut. De Muyter, for instance, having flown last year a distance of 730 miles. The race has been won twice by the Swiss competitors, first in 1908, when Col. Schaeck, starting from Berlin, covered no less than 760 miles in 73 hours; and again in 1921, when Armbruster, crossing the Channel from Brussels, landed on the Isle of Lambay.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Die Obsternte 1924 scheint viel versprechend zu werden, in manchen Landesteilen sogar unheimlich viel versprechend. Der Fruchtsatz ist so reich, dass man mit Sorge der kommenden reichen Frucht-ernte entgegen sieht. Der Absatz wird wieder in grossem Masse fehlen. Es steht ja so, dass ohne Brennen in grossem Masstab eine richtige Verwertung der Ernte vielfach überhaupt zur Zeit unmöglich ist. Gleichzeitig sind wir aber auf dem Punkt, dass auch für gebranntes Produkt die Aussicht auf Abnehmer zum Teil einfach fehlt. Es wird also nichts übrig bleiben, als dass die Landwirtschaft energisch aus eigener Initiative den Weg zu Abhilfsmassnahmen vorbereitet.

Vor einem Jahr, am 3. Juni 1923, kam die Alkoholvorlage zu Fall, die dem Bund, vielmehr den Kantonen endlich wieder den ersuchten Ertrag aus dem Alkoholmonopol und dem Landwirt gleichzeitig eine Abnahme der Produkte zu gutem Preis gesichert hätte. Für unsere Landwirtschaft gibt es nichts anderes als dass sie, die auf das Alkoholmonopol so stark angewiesen ist, die Initiative zur Wiederaufnahme jener Verfassungsrevision ergreift.

Anderer Mittel zur Verwertung unseres Stein- und Kernobstsegens gibt es nicht. Einzelne Interessenten könnten vielleicht noch einmal an eine "Hilfsaktion des Bundes" denken. Aber was sagt dazu unser Finanzdepartement? In einem Vortrag zu handen der Presse hat es kürzlich wieder seinen festen Standpunkt dargelegt: Um das Programm vollständig durchführen zu können, muss unbedingt auf jede neue ausserordentliche Ausgabe verzichtet werden. Es wäre in der Tat doch unfassbar, wenn der Bund schliesslich auch noch bei überfüllten Bäumen als Nothelfer finanziell dauernd angezapft werden sollte.

(Lebensmittel-Handel.)

Die Bündner Automobilabstimmung. — Pessimisten hatten vorausgesagt, das Bündner Volk werde die provisorische Zulassung des Automobils im Bündner Oberland während der vierzehn Tage der Trunser Zentenarfeier ablehnen, zumal die Bündner Oberländer wegen ihrer bisher automobilfeindlichen Stimmung im übrigen Kanton keine zu starken Sympathien geniessen; als nun dazu noch die sozialdemokratische Partei des Kantons die Verwerfungspetition ausgab, schien das Schicksal der Vorlage besiegelt. Nun ist es aber anders gekommen: mit rund 1500 Stimmen Mehrheit hat das Bündner Volk "Ja" gesagt. Mitgewirkt mag dabei der patriotische Charakter der Trunser Feier haben, die 500jährige Feier der Entstehung des Grauen Bundes; bei einem solchen Feste wollte man den Oberländern die erbetene Hilfe nicht verweigern. Die Entscheidung für die Vorlage haben aber im Grunde nur drei Landesgegenden gegeben: erstens der interessierte Kreis Disentis, der von der Höhe des Oberalp- und Lukmanierpasses bis Truns, Schlans und Brigels reicht; in diesem Gebiete fielen 1071 "Ja" und 356 "Nein." Zweitens hat das Engadin von Sannaun bis Maloja mit Einschluss des Müntertals 1216 "Ja" neben nur 655 "Nein" geliefert (St. Moritz 301 "Ja" und 72 "Nein"). Ganz glänzend hielten sich endlich die italienischen Teile des Kantons: in Puschlav, Bergell und Misox stehen den 693 "Ja" nur 98 "Nein" gegenüber. Wären die 3000 "Ja" (gegen nur 1100 "Nein") dieser drei Gebiete nicht gewesen, so wäre die Vorlage heute abgelehnt. Denn andere Gegenden und Orte haben stark enttäuscht: so hat die Hauptstadt Chur (offenbar infolge der sozialistischen Parole) verworfen, so haben im Oberland fast alle Gemeinden des Kreises Ilanz, wie auch Flims, Ems, Bonaduz, Rhâzüns und mehrheitlich auch das Domleschg und Thüsis abgelehnt, und an der grossen Autostrasse von Chur über die Lenzerheide und den Julier ins Engadin halten sich die "Ja" und die "Nein" nur die Wage.

Jedenfalls darf man es sagen: wenn in den nächsten Monaten die Automobilfrage für den Kanton Graubünden definitiv geregelt wird, wird es den Freunden des neuen Fahrzeugs noch einen schweren Kampf kosten, bis sie den vollen Sieg für ihre Sache erfochten haben.

(National-Zeitung.)

Association Vaudoise pour la Société des Nations. — Samedi 24 mai, a été, à Vevey, la journée consacrée à l'Assemblée générale annuelle de l'Association Vaudoise de la Société des Nations.

L'Assemblée générale ordinaire de l'Association a été ouverte par une allocution de M. A. de Meuron, conseiller national, président, qui a salué avec joie la constitution de la section veveysanne.

M. Leresche, avocat, a donné lecture du rapport du Comité. Le nombre des membres de l'Association est en augmentation. M. Spielmann, notaire, a été remplacé comme caissier par M. Faillietaz, député, et au comité par M. Miéville, professeur.

M. Faillietaz présente les comptes pour 1922 et 1923, qui sont adoptés sans discussion. Au 31 décembre 1923, la situation de fortune de l'Association était de fr. 5331.70, en diminution de fr. 18,20 sur l'année précédente. La cotisation annuelle a été maintenue à fr. 3.— et le comité réélu par acclamations.

M. Eug. Couvreur, syndic de Vevey, souhaite à tous la bienvenue. Il salue particulièrement MM. de Meuron, E. Bovet, secrétaire général de l'Association nationale, D. Lasserre, l'actif secrétaire vaudois. M. W. E. Rappard et parle avec chaleur de la liberté des nations dans l'unité du genre humain.

Aux propositions individuelles, trois propositions de la section veveysanne, tendant à définir la situation des sections régionales au sein de l'Association vaudoise, ont été acceptées par le Comité pour étude et rapport. Une quatrième proposition, tendant à la modification de l'art. 3 des statuts et relative à l'admission des étrangers comme membres associés ou affiliés à l'Association vaudoise, a subi le même sort. Cette suggestion a provoqué un intéressant débat. Des avis exprimés il ressort que l'admission des étrangers n'est pas désirable.

La séance s'est terminée par une causerie de M. E. Bovet, sur le "Pacte d'assistance mutuelle." Elle a contribué à éclairer la religion des auditeurs sur cette question si complexe et si délicate.

Le soir une importante manifestation à laquelle assistaient au moins 700 personnes, a eu lieu au théâtre où M. W. E. Rappard, directeur de la section des mandats au secrétariat de la S. d. N. était venu à Vevey tout exprès pour y parler du président Wilson et de son oeuvre pour la Société des Nations.

Un chœur d'élèves de l'Ecole supérieure et du Collège, dirigé par M. H. Lang, ouvrit la manifestation en exécutant avec une pureté admirable une suite de chants qui remportèrent un très vif succès.

M. J. de la Harpe, président de la section veveysanne de l'Association vaudoise, fit ensuite le discours d'ouverture. Convaincu qu'il est de la nécessité et de l'excellence de la S. d. N. il prononça un vigoureux plaidoyer en faveur de cette institution. "Notre patriotisme, a-t-il dit entre autres, a pour complément nécessaire, pour contrepartie vitale, l'institution de Genève; plus qu'aucun autre peuple, nous devons nous délier du nationalisme qui creuse les fossés, qui crée les haines et les partis-pris, qui nous divise au lieu de nous unir. L'Association vaudoise est d'un intérêt commun pour tous les Suisses. Elle s'insurge contre la Ligue pour l'indépendance de la Suisse qui tend rien moins qu'à séparer les Romands et les Suisses allemands.

M. Rappard prend ensuite la parole. Il parle avec chaleur et précision du président Wilson qui, dit-il, n'a pas été ni l'homme naïf, ni l'arbitre orgueilleux qu'ont proclamé ses détracteurs.

Toute la vie de Wilson a été d'une magnifique rectitude, tous ses actes internationaux ont été dictés par sa volonté de paix, le respect absolu du droit et de la justice.

Le public a suivi avec un intense intérêt la conférence de M. Rappard malgré des divergences de vues qui subsistent sur le rôle exact du grand homme d'Etat américain. L'orateur a éclairé certains côtés obscurs sur les dernières années de Wilson, mais il n'en reste pas moins l'impression pour beaucoup que son rôle dans la conclusion du traité de paix a été néfaste dans ses conséquences. Si M. Wilson était mu par un grand idéal de justice, il ne s'est pas rendu compte des nécessités justiciables qui devaient rendre la victoire des Alliés plus éclatante et d'une efficacité plus réelle pour l'établissement de cette paix au nom de laquelle il croyait agir. On voit aujourd'hui les conséquences néfastes de la paix wilsonnienne.

M. Rappard n'en a pas moins conclu en affirmant que ce qui peut a bon droit étonner, c'est que la paix de Versailles porte malgré tout l'empreinte ineffaçable de l'idéal wilsonnien.

La manifestation se termina par l'exécution de la "Sonate en sol mineur de Haendel," interprétée par MM. de Ribaupierre, Loew et Vuillemin, ainsi que par quelques éclaircissements qu'à la demande de ses auditeurs, M. Rappard a donné fort obligeamment. (Courrier de Vevey.)

Les épaves des Bourguignons. — L'Etat de Fribourg, dit l'"Independant," a reçu en héritage, de feu M. le prof. Angst, archéologue à Zurich, une épée et divers documents provenant de la bataille de Morat, ainsi qu'une somme de 10,000 francs dont les intérêts doivent être affectés à la recherche des souvenirs de cet important fait d'armes de notre histoire.

Ce qui fut abandonné sur terre ferme, après la défaite, a été ramassé depuis fort longtemps. Par contre, les eaux recèlent encore certainement les

débris et les armes des Bourguignons qui furent pourchassés et refoulés dans le lac. Les découvreurs sous les flots et la vase qui les recouvre n'est pas chose aisée. Aussi M. le Dr. Fluckiger, à Morat, spécialement chargé de ces fouilles s'est-il adressé à M. l'ingénieur Studer, à Neuchâtel, lequel, avec son collègue M. Martenet, ingénieur de la ville de Neuchâtel, a imaginé un appareil qui décèle la présence d'objets métalliques cachés à une certaine profondeur.

Le samedi 17 mai ont eu lieu les essais de cette ingénieuse machine. M. le conseiller d'Etat Buchs assistait à l'expérience, qui fut tentée en face de la presqu'île de Greng, où, selon les chroniqueurs, un grand nombre de chevaliers du Téméraire sautèrent dans l'eau, telles des grenouilles aïolées. Après quelques tentatives infructueuses, l'aiguille marqua une déviation sensible due sans doute à la rencontre d'une pièce de métal. La place précise en fut notée par une pierre munie d'un flotteur. Reste maintenant à explorer le fond du lac en cet endroit afin d'entrer en possession de l'objet signalé. Les recherches continueront. (La Revue.)

Ein sonderbarer Vogelzug. — Dem "Bund" wird aus Spiez geschrieben: Vor einiger Zeit beobachteten Anwohner des Thunersees einen seltsamen Vogelzug, über den wir bis heute durch Vogelkennner nicht aufgeklärt worden sind. Mittags gegen 1 Uhr zog mit rasender Geschwindigkeit, die wohl an die 100 Kilometer in der Stunde erreichen mochte, ein in Dreieckform organisierter Vogelzug von ungefähr 100 Exemplaren dicht über die Wasseroberfläche, Richtung Faulensee-Leissingebucht. Von dem erhöhten Spiez aus erschien der Zug wie eine wunderbare Perlenkette, die ein Unsichtbarer rückwärts und in Schlangenlinien hinwärt und über die Wasser zog. Weissrötliche Perlen! Um 3 Uhr sahen wir sie in Spiez wieder, und bald erhoben sich die unermüdeten, über erstaunliche Kräfte verfügbaren Flieger unter grossem Lärm, der an Gänsegeschmetter erinnerte, in die Höhe, und in ausgesprochener Dreieckform, auf jeder Schenkelseite flankiert von je einem Aussenseiter, flogen sie Richtung Thun davon. Bald kehrten sie wieder, und bei dem mehrmaligen Kreisen über dem Thunerseebecken gewann der staunende Zuschauer den Eindruck, als ob die Vögel im Bergkessel sich verfangen hätten und keinen Ausweg mehr wüssten. Und doch kamen sie auf einmal nicht wieder herauf: sie hatten sich landabwärts gewandt und offenbar die Orientierung wieder gefunden. Leider hatte sich nie Gelegenheit geboten, die Vögel in der Nähe zu betrachten; mit dem Feldstecher bewaffnet, suchten wir Anhaltspunkte zu ihrer Bestimmung zu erhalten. Weiss-rotes Oberkleid, schwarze Schwingen auf der Unterseite, lange Beine, langer Hals liessen die Vermutung aufkommen, dass Flamingos uns einen Besuch abgestattet hätten. (Thurgauer Zeitung.)

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KIBURG."

The Troubles of Switzerland.

Contemporary Review (May, 1924):—

A very interesting article by E. Fueter appears in the above, and I would advise all my readers who are interested in the economic side of Swiss politics to get the *Review* and read that article. It will be an eye-opener for many, although for others it may provide controversial matter.

Summer.

Even my optimism would not let me express any too great hope for a prolongation of the summery weather we have been enjoying these last few days. But it is nice while it lasts, and, incidentally, it does turn one's mind towards the coming summer holidays. If any of my readers wish to be posted concerning possible holiday tours in Switzerland, let him turn up last year's files of *The Swiss Observer*, or else, let him look in almost any of our English contemporaries, where he will find articles, illustrated and documented. Each year, it seems to me, judging by the enormous wealth of information on Switzerland given to English newspaper readers, Switzerland is becoming more and more the happy holiday ground for John Bull. And, I feel pretty sure, no guests are more welcome in Switzerland than English ones.

Swiss Federal Railways.

My readers know that the Swiss Federal Railways are showing good returns. Goods traffic seems to be growing as well, as will be seen from the following, culled from *The Times* Trade and Engineering Supplement (17th May):—

Goods traffic on the Swiss Federal Railways shows great activity, and at certain points has exceeded its pre-war level. At Basle the daily arrivals, to a large extent German coal in transit to Italy, exceed 100,000 tons, whereas the highest pre-war figure was 60,000 tons. The question of improving the station is being discussed.

At their last session the Federal Chambers at Berne adopted the decree raising the Swiss duties on tobacco, which should bring a revenue of 25,000,000 francs to the State. Having regard to pipe-smokers, the Federal Council has, however, decided to reduce the duty on Kentucky tobacco. The Government has also raised the price of benzine in spite of the protests of the growing number of motor-car owners.

Rather sad, of course, is the news, contained in the above, *re* Tobacco and Benzine. I don't know

from personal experience whether Kentucky tobacco is particularly nice or otherwise. I suppose it is a brand smoked largely by an 'influential' section of our compatriots at home!

As regards the very often vexatious bye-laws against motorists in Switzerland, I am confident that things will improve when our Legislators, Federal and Cantonal, have taken to motoring themselves. The A.C.S. ought to see to it that all Legislators have a car. I am sure it would pay in the end.

Greater Switzerland.

According to the *Daily Express* (22nd May)—The authorities of Liechtenstein, an independent Austrian State, having decided on the use of Swiss postage stamps, have just had all remaining stocks of Liechtenstein stamps destroyed at the Swiss paper mill at Eichberg.

The stamps, about nine millions, represented £640,000.

Liechtenstein, as my readers know, has been linked up with Switzerland by a Customs Union, which, by the way, has been officially recognised by Great Britain.

Almost Human Typewriter.

Daily News (10th June):—

A description which I sent to the "Daily News" last October of a phonetic typewriter—that is to say, a machine to produce on paper written copies direct from dictation—excited a great deal of interest, and was quoted all over the world. Several British engineering firms asked to be put in touch with the inventor, but he was already in negotiation with American firms, and just before Christmas he went to New York.

The machine, of which the parts had been made by different firms in America, was assembled, and he was able to demonstrate its practical utility, but it proved too complicated. He therefore set to work to simplify it, and succeeded in doing so, and also in interesting some private capitalists in his invention. Now he is back in Switzerland.

Expenses in America were prohibitive, but a Berlin firm has been found, willing to construct the model for 25,000 gold marks, and after a short rest the inventor is going to Germany to see it through. The construction of the model will probably take about six months.

The alterations have necessitated fresh patent applications, and it is not expected that the patents will be obtained before another three months in Switzerland and six months in the United States.

For the moment, judging by the cost of production of this ingenious machine, 'Kyburg' will have to be satisfied with his present typing outfit. I daresay that, by and by, even the newspapers will be made in such a way, that one can either read them or, if the light is not good enough, may, perhaps, by turning over one corner of the page, get them to speak up. And I do not even think that any of us would be greatly astonished, so used have we become to new inventions, which, in former years, would have meant inevitable death for the inventor, as being obviously in league with the devil.

Strike against Ugliness.

Daily Express (17th May):—

A strike against ugliness has occurred at Belfort, near the Swiss frontier, where schoolchildren of both sexes have objected to their newly-appointed school-mistress because she wears American spectacles.

They demand a prettier teacher, resembling the one who resigned recently on her marriage, and refuse to go to school unless one is appointed. Parents and school-mistress at Belfort are in a dilemma, as the type of teacher specified is scarce.

La vérité souvent sort des bouches des enfants! There is hardly anything more ugly than the owl-like look these American, horn-rimmed spectacles give the wearer. I know, of course, that the latter thinks he looks intellectual. But what a poor intellect which has to rely on such exterior help! The fashion, I was once informed, originated in British Government offices, to wit, in the Civil Service, and, before the Great War, I believe only heads of departments were allowed to wear these horn-rimmed spectacles. The War, the great leveller, has also done its levelling "down" in this matter. Three throaty and hearty cheers for the "gosses de Belfort"!

Spine Hearing.

Sunday Chronicle (8th June):—

The extraordinary case of a deaf mute hearing music through his spine is puzzling Swiss scientists.

Eugene Butermeister, of Berne, a young man who has been born deaf, recently entered the Kursaal at Berne during a concert, and was surprised to find that he could "hear" and enjoy the music, not through the ears, but through the spine. "My spine seems to become a kind of lightning conductor, and I distinctly feel waves of sound passing upwards to the brain. The sensation is very pleasant," Butermeister explains.

He has been tested with music by doctors, and he can distinguish the name of the opera and the instruments played. He cannot "hear," however, if people stand between him and the orchestra.

Butermeister cannot hear the human voice nor a loud noise in his vicinity, and "speaks" by means of the finger alphabet, says a Geneva correspondent.

The Legend of the Pilatus.

In an article, entitled "The Mountain Railways of Switzerland, the *Sphere* prints the following, which may interest some of my readers and give them a somewhat creepy feeling when next ascending the famous mountain:—

Pilatus itself is one of the most interesting mountains in these parts, and its name has been the subject of much dispute as to whether it derived that name from 'pileatus,' which means "capped," or from the celebrated Pontius Pilate. The latter is more picturesque. It insists that the Roman governor, fleeing

from Jerusalem after the Crucifixion, was filled with a great remorse, and sought to do penance among the fastnesses of this melancholy peak. Here for many a lonely year he dwelt until at length, when he had reached to despair's deepest depths, he took his own life by drowning in a lake near the summit of the mountain. But his spirit continued to haunt the place, and certain travellers, known to be god-fearing men, have seen the ghost of Pontius Pilate rise up from the waters and slowly, solemnly, repeat the ceremony of the washing of hands. Then the tempest howled, the lake heaved, dark clouds and heavy mists swirled in passionate fury round the mountain's head, and a fierce storm inevitably followed.

Swiss Industrial Migration.

The Times (17th May):—

A very difficult problem is touched upon by the following from *The Times* Geneva correspondent:—

The emigration of certain old-established and almost world-renowned Swiss firms is beginning to cause serious anxiety. The Press describes it as a loss of intellect, capital and craftsmen. Large manufacturing concerns are installing branches abroad which are quickly becoming more important than the original house. For example, a certain enterprise at Arbon no longer keeps more than a fifth of its own staff employed, while its French establishment are trebling their payroll. At Rorschach a well-known factory is now no more than a branch of the works, which have been moved to Delle. At Basle activity has shifted across to the French suburb of St. Louis, and at Geneva to the neighbouring district of Annemasse. Brown-Boveri, of Baden, and Bailly, of Schönenwerd, have foreign off-shoots which seem to-day to be growing more powerful than the Swiss factories. This movement is attributed to four main causes: the cost of living, high wages, increased transport charges, and labour legislation.

It is perhaps interesting and *à propos* to quote here the following from E. Fueter's article "The Troubles of Switzerland," to which I have drawn attention at the beginning of these Notes. He says:—

And yet, the most effective means of putting new life into export, that is, into Swiss industry in general, would be a decrease in the cost of living, which is being made increasingly difficult by the laws for the protection of agricultural products. As long as the most necessary articles of food are as dear as they are at present, it is impossible to reduce wages in industry and the railways (the Swiss railways are probably the dearest in the world at the moment) to a level which would bring about normal competitive conditions for us abroad. But every attempt to take energetic steps in this direction is wrecked by the peasants' party, and therefore hopeless.

From the point of view of stability much can be said for this peasants' Government. Switzerland has as little to fear from Bolshevist ideas as France. There are no large private estates, there is no section of the country population where Socialistic tendencies could take root. But the question arises whether this advantage is not too dearly bought if the peasants' rule renders the existence of the other classes, who after all have to live, so difficult that it becomes impossible for them to maintain the export industry necessary for their support.

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