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HOME NEWS

Federal Councillor Scheurer, at the invitation of the "Staatsbürgerkurs" in Berne and the local group of the New Helvetic Society, delivered an address on "The Reorganisation of the Swiss Army," of which the following is a *résumé* issued to the Swiss press:—

Die grundlegenden Tatsachen sind die geographische Lage des Landes, die eine rasche Bereitstellung der Armee erfordert, die Kleinheit unseres Gebiets, die ganze Gestaltung unseres Landes, die Art unseres Volkes unsere Politik der Demokratie, der Neutralität, der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht. Der Redner verwies darauf, dass im Jahre 1914 die Entscheidung für uns in den drei ersten Mobilisationstagen fiel. Die Schweiz hat ihre militärische Aufgabe auf Grund des Militärsystems gelöst und ist auch der schwierigsten Probleme der Kavallerie, der Artillerie usw. Meister geworden. Die heutige Welt situation ist unsicher. Auf der einen Seite sind die Spannungen nicht verschwunden, auf der anderen Seite gewähren die neuen Institutionen noch wenig Garantien. Es liegt kein Anlass zur Annahme vor, dass irgend ein Nachbar Böses im Schilde führt. Wir können uns deshalb ruhig vorbereiten. Es sind uns dabei politische und wirtschaftliche Grenzen gezogen. Welches gesetzgeberische Vorgehen soll nun eingeschlagen werden? Eine Verfassungsänderung kommt wohl nicht in Frage. Ein neues Gesetz würde viel Zeit in Anspruch nehmen und ein langjähriges Provisorium schaffen. Es wird möglich sein, auf dem Wege des Bundesbeschlusses und der Verordnung die erforderlichen Neuerungen durchzuführen; die gesetzlichen Bestimmungen der Vorkriegsverhältnisse müssen wieder hergestellt werden. Zunächst wird die neue Truppenordnung dem Bundesrat und der Bundesversammlung unterbreitet werden.

Die bisherige Ordnung wird im grossen und ganzen beibehalten. Neu eingeführt werden gewisse Spezialtruppen, ohne dass wir jedoch alle Neuerungen der Grossstaaten annehmen könnten. Mehr als bis anhin wird die Armee dem Gelände angepasst. Die Landwehreinrichtungen wird wieder den Divisionen zugeteilt. Der Nachrichtendienst usw. müssen nach Massgabe der neuesten Errungenschaften ausgebaut werden. Die Radfahrer werden auch als eigentliche Kampftruppe ausgebaut werden. Die vierte Kompanie des Infanteriebataillons wird aufgehoben, dafür wird eine neue Mitrailleurkompanie eingeführt. In kürzester Zeit wird ein neues leichtes Maschinengewehr der Bundesversammlung zur Genehmigung empfohlen werden. Auch für das Flugwesen sind Pläne in Vorbereitung. Ferner wurde die Umgestaltung des Geschützes in aller Stille vorbereitet. Der Flugschutz und der Gasschutz sind ebenfalls in Vorbereitung.

Was die Ausbildung anbelangt, so kann im Rahmen des alten Gesetzes die vor- und ausserdienstliche Ausbildung, die körperliche Ertüchtigung gefördert werden. Die Zeit muss auf äusserste ausgenutzt werden. Grosse Vorteile brachten die taktischen Kurse der Stabsoffiziere. Man wird vielleicht auch die Subalternoffiziere zu Cadreskursen einberufen. Auch wird man darauf Bedacht nehmen, die Stellung der Instruktionsoffiziere finanziell und geistig zu heben. Der enge Zusammenhang zwischen Volk und Armee bildet für uns ein grosses Aktivum. Das im Militärdienst Geleistete stellt einen Hauptfaktor im Leben eines jeden Menschen dar, der ihn durchgemacht hat.

One-and-a-half million francs is the amount computed by the cantons concerned as representing the damage occasioned by avalanches during the present winter; the Confederation is expected to vote about 200,000 francs towards this item.

The building of new hotels in Switzerland is to be forbidden for another seven years, in continuation of the policy initiated in 1914. The present Act expires at the end of 1925.

In the canton of Lucerne the opening of new restaurants has been prohibited until the end of 1927, as it is considered that those in existence are sufficiently numerous to satisfy local demands. Non-alcoholic restaurants are exempt from this prohibition.

A novel strike, which has the advantage of not affecting those unconcerned with the dispute, has been declared in Simplon-Village. As a protest against the high prices charged by the three local "pubs," the *habitués* have signed an engagement to bear with their thirst under penalty of a fine.

Accused, *inter alia*, of having set fire to the warehouse in the Mattenhof (Berne), when a large stock of books, belonging to the publishing firm of Francke & Co., was destroyed, and which also contained furniture belonging to him and heavily insured, a dealer named Luginbuhl, for falsification of bills of exchange, was condemned to ten months' detention in a reformatory (*maison de correction*).

Jakob Bossart, who stood in the forefront of contemporary Swiss authors, died on Monday, Feb. 18th, at the age of 62 in Clavadel (Grisons), whereto he had retired in 1917 to seek relief and cure of a pulmonary complaint. Born in Stürzlikon (Canton Zurich) of peasant stock, his many novels deal chiefly with rustic life and offer a faithful picture of the national character. By profession

a teacher, he was at the time of his retirement rector of the cantonal college in Zurich.

Director Heinrich Kundert, a well-known authority in banking circles and the first president of the board of directors of the Swiss National Bank, an office which he held from 1907 to 1915, died in Berne at the age of 71.

Prof. Hermann Rothen, the husband of the well-known Valais artist painter Berta Rothen, died in Sion at the age of 67.

Director Adolf Gygi, of the Jura Cement Factory in Holderbank, near Aarau, was killed in a motor accident last Sunday. His car, in passing a level crossing, collided with a train and was carried along for some distance and completely wrecked. The 17-year-old son of Mr. Gygi was taken, in a serious condition, to the Aarau cantonal hospital.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Das sterbende Immortal.—Die hiesigen Einwohner benützen zur Zeit lebhaft die Schneestrasse, um die grossen Heuschober und Dingerhaufen von Tal zu führen, damit diese Arbeiten noch vor der Schneeschmelze beendigt sind. Täglich passieren 40—50 Schlitten die Notbrücke bei der grossen Staumauer, welche beim Eintritt günstiger Witterung auch verschwinden muss. Dann muss für den Transport die neue-Strasse benützt werden, welche einen erheblichen Umweg macht. Auch das Postauto wird bald diesen Umweg über die neue Strasse machen müssen. An der neuen Strasse, an sonniger Halde gelegen, erhebt sich das Dorf Neu-Immortal. Mit dem Bau der neuen Kirche geht es rasch vorwärts. Auch der neue Friedhof geht der Vollendung entgegen, und in nächster Zeit wird schon mit dem Ausgraben und dem Transport der sterblichen Ueberreste aus dem alten Friedhof begonnen werden. Das Schulhaus und auch das Hotel Neubad werden bald geräumt werden, und so wird in kürzester Frist das idyllisch gelegene Neu-Immortal erblühen, zum Troste Aller, welche schweren Herzens ihre alten Heimstätten verlassen müssen.

(*National Zeitung*.)
Un curieux procès.—La mort du "millionnaire" Stauffer avait déjà fait couler pas mal d'encre, par suite de l'originalité du personnage, et de ses moeurs d'ermitte poussiéreux et sordide, il était dit qu'on en parlerait longtemps encore après sa mort. En effet, la "Sentinelle" apprend qu'un procès est actuellement en cours contre les héritiers de la part d'un tiers qui se déclare fils légitime du défunt. Un papier aurait même été retrouvé, par lequel feu M. Stauffer se reconnaît père de l'enfant naturel en cause.

Les débats juridiques sont déjà engagés et il y a actuellement un incident sur les preuves. Les demandeurs s'appuient sur un cas de jurisprudence absolument spécial, et qui donne à ce procès un intérêt particulièrement grand. C'est peut-être la première fois, dans les annales du barreau neuchâtelois, qu'on enregistre un cas aussi rare et bizarre en même temps. Voici le quoi il est question: On sait que l'ancien Code civil neuchâtelois, remplacé en 1912 par le Code civil suisse, prévoyait qu'un enfant légitimé par une autre personne que son père naturel, a cependant le droit d'actionner son vrai père pour une allocation alimentaire et une somme pour l'apprentissage.

Cette curieuse disposition de l'ancien Code neuchâtelois (article 621) sera-t-elle applicable en l'occurrence? Comme l'enfant naturel présumé de feu M. Stauffer, est né en 1906, il semble bien qu'il tombé sous le bénéfice de la loi d'introduction du Code civil suisse, qui prévoit, que dans un cas de ce genre, c'est l'ancienne disposition cantonale qui fait loi.

On voit qu'il s'agit là, en effet, d'un des plus curieux procès qui aient jamais été plaidés dans notre canton. M. Stauffer, qui avait mis beaucoup de bizarrerie dans sa vie, ne pensait probablement point qu'il en mettrait presque autant dans les traces de ses héritiers!

Ajoutons que la succession ne se monte pas à deux millions, comme ce chiffre avait été indiqué, lors de sa mort. Sur papier, il n'y a guère que 580,000 francs. Il faut ajouter, il est vrai, la valeur des fermes et propriétés qui viennent en surplus.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KIBURG."

Switzerland and the Opium Convention.

Lancet (2nd Feb.):—

At the last assembly of the League of Nations Switzerland was severely criticised by Dame Edith Littleton, the British delegate, for not having yet joined the Opium Convention. As a matter of fact, the

Convention was signed in 1913 by the Swiss Minister at The Hague, but it was never ratified by the Federal Parliament. The reasons for this failure are several. One is constitutional. Legislation on general hygienic matters belongs to the cantons. The Federal Government cannot on its own power regulate the production and traffic of certain drugs. This belongs to the sphere of the different cantons. This constitutional difficulty was the cause that the question was allowed to sleep. As the drug-habit is practically unknown in Switzerland, public opinion did not take much interest in the Opium Convention. On the other side there was the opposition of certain chemical industries which feared a considerable damage through the regulations of the Convention. Naturally, in a small country like Switzerland the control would be much more effective than in a country with vast colonial possessions. It was feared that, while inflicting an enormous damage on one of our flourishing industries, the ultimate scope of the convention would be frustrated by the Great Powers tolerating drug-production on a large scale in their colonies. This lack of confidence found recent expression by Dr. A. Jaquet, professor of pharmacology at the University of Basle. Prof. Jaquet writes:—

"Whoever studies the question since the opium war cannot deny that this is a great enterprise of international hypocrisy; the States interested in opium production and opium traffic are hiding their fiscal interests under a humanitarian cover. The Opium Conference of Shanghai and the Conference at The Hague of 1911 were summoned with the definite object to suppress with all means the production of and traffic with opium. With time this object vanished in the background as the States interested in the opium commerce formulated so many conditions for their co-operation that the war against the opium pest became more or less illusory. Instead, the Conference concentrated its efforts more and more on the regulation of production and traffic of the alkaloids of opium and of cocaine, with the object of curtailing both. . . . I am of opinion that it would be best if each country would deal separately in combating the misuse of morphia and cocaine without taking refuge in an International Convention of which the great would take but small notice and which would crush the small."

I have quoted these words of an impartial observer. His views are shared by many Swiss not in the least interested in the chemical trade. In the last years, however, opinion is coming round in favour of a speedy ratification of the Convention. This change is probably due to the influence of the League of Nations on the Opium Commission. The Federal Council has lately been strongly attacked, both in the press and in Parliament, for moving so slowly in this matter. Under this pressure the Federal Council has prepared a Bill on narcotic drugs which will shortly be submitted to Parliament. When this Bill has become law the Convention can be signed. Waiving some constitutional scruples, the Government bases the Bill on a paragraph in the constitution empowering the Federal Council to take legislative action for combating epidemic diseases. The Bill, which is dated Dec. 12th, 1923, provides for the supervision of import, export, production, manufacture, storage, purchase, sale and distribution of the following drugs: opium in all its forms, morphia and its salts and all preparations containing more than 0.2 per cent. of morphia; heroin, its salts and preparations containing more than 0.1 per cent. of heroin; cocaine-leaves; cocaine, its salts and preparations containing more than 0.1 per cent. of cocaine. Production of and trade in these drugs are only allowed with a Government licence. Export to other countries which have signed the Convention is only granted if the addressee has a licence for his respective country. This Bill may be taken as a clear indication that the Swiss Government intends to carry out loyally and scrupulously the provisions of the Opium Convention.

Swiss Prince-Abbot's Death.

Catholic Herald (2nd Feb.):—

One of the most prominent figures of the Swiss Catholic world, the Prince-Abbot of Einsiedeln, Dom Thomas Bossart, has passed away at the age of sixty-five years. Dom Thomas Bossart studied at the Gregorian University at Rome, under Fr. Billot, who later became Cardinal Billot. Then for many years he was Professor of Theology at the Benedictine Monastery of Our Lady of the Armies at Einsiedeln. In 1903 he became the successor of the Prince-Abbot of the famous monastery Dom Colomban.

The funeral of Dom Bossart was attended by four Bishops and 300 priests and by delegates of the Governments of Schwyz, Lucerne and Unterwalden. Much attention was aroused by the fact that the Protestant city of Zurich sent an official message of condolence.

The reason for this action is very interesting. Before the Reformation, in 1462, to be exact, Zurich and the Convent made a pact of mutual assistance, as was frequently done in those days. Relations were not broken off by the Reformation, and to-day each new Abbot notifies the city of Zurich of his appointment, and the city receives him among the number of her burghers.

The Swiss National Park.

Observer (10th Feb.):—

The Swiss National Park (says the "Landmark") was founded (on a very small scale) in 1909 to provide a protected zone for Swiss wild animals, birds and plants. Its present area, to be considerably extended, is about fifty square miles; and small as this may seem in comparison with the 3,350 square miles of the Yellowstone, or the 4,400 square miles of the Canadian Jasper Park, it has features of special significance that rank it high among its fellows. Very irregular in form, it stretches from near Schuls-Tarasp on the north to near San Giacomo di Fraïele on the south (ca. twenty miles), and from near Scanis on the west to Scarl on the east (ca. fifteen miles). Its position in the north and less frequented section of the Grisons makes it particularly suited for the scientific objects which are its main raison d'être; but the fact that it marches for many miles with the Italian frontier exposes it to the inroads of foreign poachers, and makes great demands on the vigilance of its guards. Perhaps it may be said that no point actually in-

cluded in the Park has hitherto been familiar to the ordinary visitor to Switzerland. The nearest exception to this statement is the romantic Gorge of the Clemgia, one side of the upper part of which has been gripped by the north finger of the park. This gorge has long been known to frequenters of Schuis-Tarasop, the "Carlsbad of Switzerland", but interest in its really marvellous beauties has evidently been greatly quickened by the formation of the National Park, because only of quite recent years has it blossomed out into the asterisk or even double-asterisk of the guide-book.

Quacks in Switzerland.

Lancet (16th Feb.):-
I recently wrote of Appenzell as the only Swiss canton where no medical degree is required for medical practice. In the canton of Glarus, where up till 1920 the same freedom existed as in Appenzell, a popular movement has recently been started with the object of returning to the former practice. An amendment to this effect, however, was vetoed by the cantonal council, the minority consisting of Socialists. With this the question is not settled, as it will be brought before the referendum of the electorate. Behind the movement are chiefly herbalists and hydrotherapeutists. The canton of Glarus had good reasons to restrict medical practice to qualified men. Among the unqualified practitioners doubtful elements were frequent, and in the debate in the cantonal council the case of an ex-convict was mentioned. That these quacks have a very flourishing trade, which consists chiefly in postal treatment, is shown by a newspaper advertisement in which one of them put his practice on sale. "Daily income 300 francs, professional knowledge not strictly necessary," it ran in the advertisement.

There are probably very few of the older ones amongst us who, in their youth, have not heard of or even actually known one or more of these "Doctors." I myself went to the Gymnasium at Winterthur with a son of a very famous "Doctor," who not only had a great number of extraordinary cures to his credit, but who, incidentally, also made quite a nice fortune. The strange thing about many of these "Doctors" was their extremely simple manner of living, not due, I am sure, to mere advertising acumen, but simply to inclination. That, of course, made them even more popular, and the stories which used to be told about them and their wonderful cures would fill a big book and would make quite interesting reading.

Byron Centenary.

Northingham Guardian (11th Feb.):-
On the initiative of the Société de Développement de Montreux, in whose region the famous Chateau of Chillon is situated, the town is preparing to celebrate the centenary of the death of Lord Byron. The celebration will take place on the 27th and 30th May, at the Castle of Chillon, rendered famous by the poet's "Prisoner of Chillon," which he composed at a small hotel at Ouchy.

A committee, formed under the chairmanship of M. Marcel Ceunod, British Vice-Consul at Montreux, has been entrusted with the organisation of the festival, to which King George and M. Chuard (President of the Swiss Confederation) have extended their patronage. The official ceremony is fixed to take place on May 27th, when a medallion of Lord Byron will be unveiled in the chateau. This will be followed by 'tableaux-vivants,' songs, and recitations drawn from the works of the poet. The performance will be given in what is known as the Knight's Hall of the castle. The same programme will be followed on May 30th.

Re "Nationalisation of Railways."

My recent comments upon Nationalisation of Railways has brought me a very interesting letter from a correspondent who knows of what he writes, and who, therefore, has the advantage as far as facts are concerned. He states, for instance:-

"Les meilleures locomotives à vapeur, la série des 700 (et à peu de différence près, celle des 600) furent mises à l'étude avant les CFF, spécialement par la Cie. Jura-Simplon.

"Comme matériel roulant la Cie. du Loetschberg a des voitures qui valent de beaucoup celles des CFF. De même la Cie. du Gothard n'a pas attendu le rachat pour avoir un matériel roulant de tout 1er ordre.

"Les CFF ont perdu des années et des sommes folles avant de se décider à électrifier leur lignes.

"Fait avant la guerre l'électrification des CFF aurait coûté au peuple Suisse à peu près deux fois moins cher qu'actuellement.

"Les CFF sont une administration lente à mouvoir et de peu d'initiative. C'est un luxe que le peuple Suisse a voulu se payer et dont il faut qu'il fasse les frais."

Now, I really think that even if we admit at once the absolute truth of all the above comments of my correspondent, they do not prove in the slightest degree that the nationalisation of the Swiss railways was not for the good of the country. Once it comes to nationalisation, one has to take a very long view, and a generation or so, during which there are ups and downs, counts little. The importance lies in the fact that the chief means of transport, or whatever important public service is in question, has been taken out of the turmoil of conflicting private interests, ceases to be a plaything of La Haute Finance Internationale and becomes incorporated into the very life blood of the Nation, i.e., the people who form that nation. You will never see a nation playing fast and loose with such a national asset. No party, whatever its creed and professions, would dare to do it. That is the great thing, and that justifies nationalisation.

"Lex Schulthess."

From the immediate business point of view, I confess that even I would have welcomed the adoption of a longer working day in Switzerland, because it would have helped industries which are necessary for "Kiburg" to earn his daily bread and a little butter occasionally. Thus do business and abstract reasoning often conflict. From the wider point of view I am glad our people rejected the measure. Once we have adopted the League of Nations and all it implies, it would be wrong, I think, to start picking holes in it. We may

suffer temporarily. Neighbours, less particular how they interpret their obligations towards the League, and who are therefore called "cleverer" than we are, may for a time be able to compete unfairly against our manufacturers. But I feel quite sure that the brain power of our manufacturers will rise to the occasion. Our workmen will, by their skill, enable us to compete. Quality will tell, and even if a lot of cheap stuff, which has in recent years also been manufactured in Switzerland and found its way from there to other countries, is knocked out, it will not be to the lasting detriment of Switzerland, whose manufacturers can only hope to survive, owing to our geographical position, if our quality is better than our competitors'. I think that applies to nearly all our industries. And by quality I mean not only the quality of the goods, but also the quality of the organisations which go to the production of the goods.

Finally, Switzerland has once more shown the world that it is not easily turned back from a step which was once recognised as progressive, even if temporary need should indicate a retrograde step as opportune.

That, on reflection, is the opinion of 'Kiburg.'

PERSONAL.

Mr. J. Reutter, a member of the City Swiss Club, has been entrusted with the foreign representation of one of the oldest and most important firms on the London Stock Exchange; he has now left for Switzerland on an extended business trip.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(The figure in parentheses denotes the number of the issue on which the subscription expires.)

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STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.		Feb. 16	Feb. 26	
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	...	74.50%	73.75%	
Swiss Confed. 9th Mob. Loan 5%	...	100.40%	100.40%	
Federal Railways A-K 3 1/2%	...	77.50%	76.85%	
Canton Basle-Stadt 5 1/2% 1921	...	101.50%	102.00%	
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892	...	68.50%	67.00%	
SHARES.		Nom.	Feb. 16	Feb. 26
Swiss Bank Corporation	...	500	Fr. 678	Fr. 679
Crédit Suisse	...	500	Fr. 723	Fr. 687
Union de Banques Suisses	...	500	Fr. 567	Fr. 566
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	...	1000	Fr. 348	Fr. 3470
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	...	1000	Fr. 257	Fr. 2542
C. F. Bally S.A.	...	1000	Fr. 1115	Fr. 1115
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon	...	500	Fr. 635	Fr. 637
Entreprises Sulzer	...	1000	Fr. 665	Fr. 655
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	...	500	Fr. 314	Fr. 308
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