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HOME NEWS

The last session of the two Houses of Parliament, previous to the re-election of their members, opened last Monday, Sept. 21st. In the National Council several written replies were submitted to questions previously addressed to the Federal Council: one of these dealt with the military exemption tax of Swiss residing abroad. It was stated that, although a Swiss may have been naturalized in the country of his adoption, any tax to which he had made himself previously liable would be recoverable as soon as he set foot on Swiss soil.

Dr. Alfred Stooss, the President of the Federal Tribunal in Lausanne, died last Sunday (Sept. 20) in that town at the age of 65; for some considerable time he had been suffering from pulmonary trouble. Dr. Stooss was a scion of an old Bernese family and, a lawyer by profession, has been a member of the Federal Tribunal since 1905. He never took an active part in politics, but was a talented musician and an enthusiastic chess player.

Passports cannot under present conditions be abolished—this is the unanimous recommendation of the cantonal police commissioners at a recent conference. The visum regulations may in the near future be modified in so far that foreign tourists and possibly commercial travellers may enter Switzerland without first securing this permit. For those seeking employment the visum will be retained for the protection of home labour; the cantons, however, will enjoy a certain latitude according to local conditions, where in certain trades the influx of some foreign labour may be desirable. This applies chiefly to hotel staff during the season and domestic servants, for whom there is a constant strong demand.

A "friendship" treaty has been concluded between Turkey and Switzerland; but no statements have been issued as to the meaning or effects of this "entente."

Instead of a budgeted deficit of 2.6 million francs, the accounts for 1924 of the Berne municipality close with a surplus of about Frs. 160,000.

According to statistics compiled by the Zurich municipality, the number of children attending public schools is showing a constant decrease. In the year 1914 the number was about 26,000; it is now 18,800, and is expected to fall to 16,000 in 1931.

In order suitably to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of its foundation which the Suchard chocolate concern is celebrating next year, three prizes of Frs. 2,500, Frs. 1,500 and Frs. 1,000 are offered to Swiss artists for the best design of a poster; the competition closes on November 1st next.

State Councillor Dr. Adalbert Wirz died in Sarnen at the age of 77. He has been a member of the Ständerat ever since 1901; in his native canton he has, for the last 50 years, been a leading figure, occupying in turn different civic offices and presiding during four years as Landammann of Obwalden. He was the recognised leader of the Conservative-Catholics and a staunch supporter of the re-introduction of compulsory religious teaching in public schools.

A terrible motor accident happened on Wednesday (Sept. 16th) early in the afternoon on the Furka road just below the Hotel Belvedere. In an attempt to negotiate the second curve, a large Fiat car went over the edge and fell on the road below. All the occupants were killed on the spot. They are: Dr. Grob-Conradin, a well-known oculist of Chur, who was in charge of the car; Mrs. Grob, his wife; Dr. Plazidus Plattner, another medical practitioner at Chur; and Mrs. Hanna Lichtenhahn-Brenner, the wife of Dr. Lichtenhahn, the latter being able to jump off in time and thus escape without injury.

Another accident due to a similar cause occurred on the road from Locarno to Bellinzona, the victim being Mr. A. Berti, of 3, Stroud Green Road, Finsbury Park, London, N.4, who is spend-

ing his holiday in his native canton. He was transported to the hospital in Bellinzona in a serious condition, but is now reported to be out of danger.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Geneva.

Last week I commented upon the multitude and variety of articles in the English press which profess to describe the social and intellectual life of Geneva in the past and present; here is another contribution in a lighter vein, taken from the *Evening Standard* (Sept. 16th):—

Smug, self-satisfied little Geneva! How exactly like her to get herself cast as scenester of this gigantic international circus called the League of Nations.

She has become a sort of patchwork quilt of races, of every shade—temperamentally as well as physically—of white, black, yellow, and brown. Fifty-four nations of them—not counting the onlookers. . . . Each with their own already sharp little axes to grind, each with their own little needs, likes, prejudices, hatreds to serve.

What is the mysterious element that gets added to those ingredients, up in the League's City by the lake? The thing that makes the whole so infinitely much bigger than the sum of its parts? The accomplishment so immeasurably much better than the sum of its efforts?

Dieu sait. But there is something. One of the queerest things about the League of Nations is the way in which it grips the people who come into its atmosphere—even when they came especially to laugh.

Some day, of course, it is going to realise that its best work will be done without the circus accessories. Then the General Assemblies with their galaxies of political headlines will disappear. The permanent delegations will settle down to untying the knots in international relationships, perhaps no more earnestly, but because of their very unobtrusiveness with a better chance nevertheless. And Geneva will cease to be one of the "chic" resorts for those who have no earthly business there.

Just at present, however, the League's great preoccupation is the necessity of what the Americans call "selling the idea" of herself to five continents of an onlooking world.

And, accordingly, the music of Geneva is the music of the typewriter, and her voice that of the press-agent. The army of 275 journalists that garrisons the town is regarded as her chiefest treasure . . . sought out for honours, and overwhelmed with many different kinds of free information.

Accordingly there is a feverish coming and going of celebrities; it is impossible to get a sleeper on the night express; and there is not an hotel in Geneva with an empty room . . .

Delegations are being accommodated in the reception rooms, plain and fancy tourists are sleeping on camp beds in the *salles de bain*, and well-known novelists in search of 'atmosphere' are weaving words in converted store-rooms up in the attics.

The fascinating game of celebrity-scalp hunting has reached such proportions that if you go into a restaurant and are greeted at all effusively by the head waiter, you will eat your meal under a battery of gimlet eyes, while arguments rage as to your identity—and in the end some bold soul asks for your autograph in order to settle the point once and for all.

Every hotel in Geneva obligingly flies the flags of the delegations in residence, so that the curious may know exactly where to wait, in the morning, for the exodus of the statesmen they have marked down as the sights for the day. And that floating population of charming people who are seen at Ascot and the Grand Prix, spend August at Deauville, late September in Biarritz, January on the Riviera, and—now—Assembly time in Geneva, make unheard-of efforts to put up at the same hostelry as their country's official representatives.

Incredible are the ruses adopted to obtain a ticket to the Assembly Hall on the big occasions . . . and no mandatory question more successfully strains diplomatic relations than the impossibility of fitting fifteen important personages who really need not be in Geneva at all into one and the same seat.

As someone remarked the other day in the lobby of the secretariat (the only room in the world where you can see so many famous people at the same time), "If ever the League gets

really short of cash, they have only to build a large auditorium containing several thousand seats, around the new Assembly Hall—and charge a pound admission. They would make a fortune."

Probably there are times when the delegates, sitting each among their national flock, in neat rows going lengthways or crossways of the Assembly Hall, and obliged to listen to every speech first in French and then (through an interpreter) in English—or first in English and then (through an interpreter) in French—wonder what on earth can be the attraction about their deliberations. There are certainly times when the two hundred and seventy-five journalists—who have all been provided with copies of practically every speech, in both languages, beforehand—look around on the packed and breathless public galleries and wonder it too . . .

But there is all the difference in the world between listening to the same speech twice over because you have to, and doing the same thing purely of your own free will. . . . (Add, of course, the hope that one day one of the interpreters will make a bad slip; and the natural desire to be "there"—then.)

This year one big difference is noticeable about the City by the Lake. . . . For the first time the whole thing, the League and all it represents, is being accepted as an established and permanent institution. It has at last, once and for all, stepped out of the freak class. Impossible to define the subtlety in which the change consists. . . . It is just there—like the crowd!

A strange thing, really, the consummation of this dream that was dreamed by the third Napoleon, and realised by a college professor from across the Atlantic. It almost needs to be seen to be believed—certainly it needs to be seen to be realised . . . which, I suppose, means still more tourists for Geneva!

Swiss Rhapsody.

A delightful little record of a first visit to the Ticino has been contributed by a fair pilgrim to the *Clarion* (Sept. 11th); its freshness and *naïveté* of conception is quite exhilarating:—

I had no idea that Switzerland was such a beautiful and engrossing country. Switzerland I had always imagined—whenever I vouchsafed it a thought at all—to be a land of barefaced mountains whereto certain folk of incomprehensible taste resorted in winter to skate on ice and toboggan down slopes. What breath-taking surprises were in store!

The whole summer-time journey from Basle was one of such varied beauty that, like a small child tremblingly opening parcels at Christmas-time, one was kept in a constant state of excitement and enthusiasm. Is there another country of its size in the world which can cram so much entertainment into so small a space?

What manner of people are these Swiss who can conjure up such magic in their house-building and so much cunning in their flower-decorations? Never have I seen a flower hold such flaming, undisputed sway as the beloved scarlet geranium does in Switzerland. Should the sun ever choose to go on holiday at the wrong time of the year, I think that the red geranium might quite easily accomplish the melting of the mountain snows without his help.

And if there be mountains that can turn my heart away for one single moment from the kindly, human valley and the eloquent reassuring sweep of meadow-land, then the heights of Switzerland may accomplish it.

But you, you poor enthusiasts over Snowdonia, may keep your scowling Welsh variety, for I have discovered mountains that do not chill the spine—mountains with friendly, green, smiling faces and unaggressive demeanour. Mountains that stand gaily in the sunshine and a bright clear air and do not woo cold, wet mists with black looks and sinister eyes!

In the late evening we were afforded a glimpse of loveliness so disturbing, so seductive, that it seemed as though some mocking hand had deliberately thrown the scene into our path in order to provoke in us an insistent and unsatisfied longing.

We were standing on the starboard side of the train, drinking in the cool, soft air of the evening, when suddenly, gazing down through the close, screening trees and the darkness, we espied lights dotted here and there. Lights that danced and twinkled and lit up something now and again that shimmered—moved. Water!

"Maggiore!" we cried. Maggiore in the twilight. At the feet of luxuriantly-clad hills of

dark, velvet-soft enticement lay the lake, blithe, but elusive. And almost indistinguishable, like some playful siren on mischief bent. A few greedy seconds, and the scene vanished as suddenly as it had appeared.

Ten o'clock, and—"Lugan-no" shouted a porter. We jumped on to the railway line at a clean, bright-as-a-new-pin railway station, and glancing beyond the station, the magic scene spread before our eyes caused me to deliberate seriously with myself as to whether I was really awake or not.

Having decided that I was not indulging in a dream of almost blinding vividness, I rubbed my eyes well and ventured another look. The station apparently lay on the hillside above the little town which stretched down to the edge of the lake, and the entrancing whole—town and lake and mountains—sparkled and danced under a soft flood of light which lit up so bewitchingly a scene that one began to speculate furiously as to the exact whereabouts of Aladdin's lamp!

To the left some public gardens, themselves in darkness, were edged by a row of lights that hung over the water with apparently no other object than to add to the gaiety of the picture. The mountains on the opposite side of the lake stood out clearly, yet gaily and not too massively. Monte Bré sportively flourished a line of soft red lights that marked the path of its "funicular." Salvatore replied with another line of pale yellow.

They brought us glasses filled with crimson, dancing liquid—the only possible sort of nectar under the circumstances, surely—and we sat on a balcony overlooking the lake to drink in scene and port wine in alternate quaffs.

The end of the town in which we were quartered is called "Paradiso," and one can picture the triumphant smile of those responsible for the name when they burst upon the world with a challenge so unanswerable. I had no difficulty in believing I had dropped into Paradise.

Lugano by day has no disillusionments to offer. Such a quaint little town it is, virginally, miraculously clean as most of these lakeside towns seem to be. And in this matter there is, apparently, great rivalry between town and lake, for I have never seen water more transparently clear either in its deep blueness or the milky-blue of the sunny, early morning.

We boarded the white steamer in the afternoon under a sun that shone with uncompromising splendour, and the steamer picked her dainty way along—in order, I suppose, not to sully any more than she could help a lake like a piece of rare jewellery.

Each old-world, picturesque village nestling among the hills on either side shone in the sun like some bright gem in an emerald setting, and in the centre of it all lay the broad band of deep, sapphire-blue on which we journeyed.

The Psychology of Mountaineering Accidents.

Nothing is less painful nor more comforting than to go to one's last home via an unexplored Swiss alpine crevasse—these are the conclusions of a Genevese writer whose book is reviewed in the *Morning Post* (Sept. 14th). So this is a new tip for those who prematurely wish to retire from the surface of our disreputable planet, and I shall not be surprised to hear of some enterprising touring agency arranging special parties with reduced return fares for the actors and spectators in this new craze.

Robert Sans-Terre, of Geneva, a climber of reputation and the victim of an unusual number of mountain accidents, has written an interesting little volume, "A Travers les Périls de l'Alpe," in which he discusses the psychology of such accidents with an authority due to his personal experiences. The sub-title of his volume is, "Les sensations extraordinaires." It is thoroughly justified. The author's adventures and escapes, in what he calls the Kingdom of the Vertical, are sufficiently hair-raising, and are better not read, as I read them, the night before starting on a climbing expedition.

M. Sans-Terre has an appropriate name, for he seems more at home falling through space than standing securely on terra firma. The gods of the mountains are evidently his friends. "I have had the misfortune," he says, "to be the victim of many accidents, due mostly to my own imprudence, and the rare good luck to have come through them with no mental anguish, and with but insignificant wounds." He has fallen down precipices, been caught by avalanches, passed a night in a crevasse, hung over an abyss from his ice-axe, been exposed to falling stones, and has broken through a cornice on an arête where only a miracle saved his life. And the most interesting part of his book is what he has to tell about the thoughts, emotions, feelings of a man in these positions, and his positive assertion that no physical pain attends an actual fall.

On hearing an account of a mountain accident, he writes, the first impression, after those of pity and terror, is that of curiosity. How did the guide, wounded by fallen ice which has

swept away his companions, manage to cross the glacier alone in search of help? What were the feelings of the man who passed hours in a crevasse, uncertain whether help would ever come? What terrors are felt by the unfortunate man who falls over a precipice, and what kind of suffering is experienced by a party roped together when swept headlong down the couloir by an avalanche? Usually, he says truly, the newspaper accounts are brief, the accounts of the victims who escape still more brief. The psychology of the situation is not touched upon. The author hastens to make good the omission so far as his own accidents are concerned, and his firm assurance that no pain accompanies a fall is certainly a comforting one. There is doubtless mental anguish, he thinks, though of very brief duration, just before a fall—when a man feels he is going to slip—but any accident of this kind that is sudden, unexpected, and which one has had no time to foresee, is painless.

To someone whose friend had fallen to his death down a couloir the author quotes a letter he sent by way of comfort: "You ask me," he writes, "what in my opinion were the sensations of the poor young man as he crashed down the couloir, dashed from side to side on his way to the edge of the abyss. . . . I can assure you that your friend, as indeed all who have met their death by such a fall, experienced no physical pain at all. Even though it lasted several minutes, and resulted in broken limbs and terrible wounds to the head, such an accident, because of the stupefaction and shock experienced, is accompanied by no physical pain, and by a mental pain of only the briefest duration." Nature, he holds, provides an anodyne in such a case; he quotes the well-known story of Livingstone and the lion, and mentions that soldiers in the heat of battle are too excited to suffer at the moment. "I would go so far as to say," he adds, "that where mountain accidents, falls from heights, are concerned, these far from being painful, have quite another effect: that, in fact, each shock against the rock produces a sort of 'électrisation du corps assez agréable,' and that this renders the body insensible to pain, and counteracts both psychological and physiological tension."

His comparative analysis of the various kinds of mountain accident is also interesting to any climber. Which, for instance, is the most terrible? Which involves most mental torture? Is death by cold a painful one? Lying in the depths of a crevasse, bruised, wounded, waiting for problematical help, is this more dreadful than the blows and smothering due to being caught in an avalanche? Having spent a night on a glacier himself, he says that he only began to suffer physical pain when, with rescue, the blood returned to the extremities of his body. The victim of an avalanche, again, if quickly stunned by a blow from some huge lump, or if suffocated by the terrific mass of snow, have no time, obviously, for physical suffering. The worst fate, in such cases, is to be buried just below the surface, unable to move, unable to pierce the walls of what may prove a living tomb. There may be air to breathe, even space enough round the face for the voice to cry out to those who can be heard digging and searching overhead, but not enough for the voice to carry beyond the immediate hole. An avalanche of powder-snow, of course, means instant suffocation; the lungs are choked in a moment; there is no time even for realisation.

This reminds me of a little paragraph which during the last few days has been found in some of the English papers and which, I believe, was culled from an over-zealous French paper. It is to the effect that in the bedrooms of a certain Swiss hotel a notice is placarded to the effect that "visitors undertaking high-mountain climbing expeditions are requested to pay their bills before they start." Nobody, of course, could blame that particular hotel proprietor for his commercial prudence and foresight, but I fancy this refers to the ordinary notice about leaving which an ingenious mind has somewhat maliciously interpreted.

Vintage Time.

The following is from the *Glasgow Herald* (Sept. 11th):—

While we are busy in this country with our

harvest homes, the inhabitants of Switzerland are making merry over the "Vendange." High up on the terraced slopes of Lac Léman, on whose "flots d'azur" white-sailed barges move like giant butterflies, dotted here and there are tiny farms, in front of which creepers hang like blood-dyed curtains. To those whose acquaintance with the vine has so far been confined to the graceful twining plants of the greenhouse or to the spirals of the Hampton Court giant, these rows of stumpy rasp-like plants come at first as something of a disappointment. But when vintage time arrives and everyone is pressed into the service of gathering in the harvest, these same colourless patches present an animated scene. From early morning till sunset the pickers (mostly women) are hard at work gathering the "grappes," which the farmer collects in an elongated basket or "panier" slung on to his back. By the retaining wall there are generally to be seen two patient cream-coloured oxen yoked to a wooden carreau or elongated cart waiting to receive the sea-green or purple fruit, as the case may be, which is then taken to the winepress, where the juice is squeezed out either by means of machinery or by tramping it with bare feet. It is then put into large tubs or "cuves" and left to ferment, when it is drawn off into casks and bottles and stored away in the "cave" or cellar.

The toil, however, is tempered by much merriment, and on a clear day, when "The sun with a golden mouth still blows blue bubbles of grapes down the vineyard rows," the workers in their coloured smocks give a gay and happy impression. It is the duty of Jean, the foreman, to examine the plants after they have been picked to see that no fruit has been overlooked by some careless worker, and custom has decreed that Jean may claim a kiss from the offender (from

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the farm hands at least). Needless to say, omissions of this sort are much more frequent if the supervisor be young and "bien beau."
 Even as I write I can recall the scene, and with what delight our whole pensionnat sallied forth to help. "Mangez autant que vous désirez" was Mademoiselle's parting advice—an injunction which did not need to be repeated a second time. We soon discovered, however, that enough is as good as a feast, and that one bunch, or "grappe," is just about as much as anyone can consume at a time. Eaten thus with the scent of the vines pervading the atmosphere and in the heat of the sun, the grapes have an elusive flavour which it is difficult to capture elsewhere. It may be worth while adding that we swallowed seeds and skins without a qualm, and there was no immediate outbreak of appendicitis such as we are led to expect by authorities on the subject.

After the harvest has been gathered in there follows a night of feasting and jollity when the owner of the farm (be he the "seigneur" of a "château" or just a simple "fermier") invites all the helpers to feast at his board. Lanterns are lit and hung up in the old stone-paved courtyard, where the young people dance under the chequered shade of the trees to the music of the flute or fiddle, or, if more up to date, to the strains of the gramophone. Wine is handed round, and the fun grows fast and furious, lasting till the morning and making the old ravers ring with songs and toasts to the "Succès au Vendange."

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

Switzerland has now for a long time been in a position to enjoy all the advantages of a gold currency, although her paper circulation is still on an inconvertible basis. The return of Great Britain, Sweden and Holland, together with various overseas countries, to gold standard causes attention to be directed to the situation of Switzerland. The question has been systematically studied in the last two bulletins issued by the Swiss Bank Corporation, and it is shown that the position of the national finances is now sufficiently strong to eliminate danger of fresh inflation of government origin while the balance of national payments has regained a state of equilibrium sufficient to justify the free exchange of bank notes against gold. Why, therefore, should Switzerland delay in taking her place with Great Britain, Holland and Sweden?

The objections are immediately connected with her membership of the Latin Monetary Union, which, though inoperative in present practice, is still an existing entity in Europe and cannot be dismissed from European monetary politics without further ado. One point to be emphasised is that Switzerland undertook in 1921 that if free convertibility of notes should be resumed, she would at once take over at their full nominal value the five-franc pieces of the Union which are at present held by the National Bank. These amount to about 156 million francs, and the original owner States have agreed to take them back during a period lasting from 1927 to 1932, paying for them in gold. A new agreement between the Bank and the State might easily remove this difficulty, or a special loan might be raised to cover the amount involved. There are, however, more subtle underlying reasons to delay the return to gold—more particularly the continued adherence of Switzerland to the bi-metallism consequent upon her membership of the Union. The five-franc piece of the Union is legal currency in Switzerland, but is of no practical value for meeting foreign payments. It, therefore, remains to be seen what will be the future of the Union, and what will be the trend of the currencies in France, Belgium, Italy and Greece, where the franc is at present depreciated. Switzerland must decide between three courses: whether she will remain faithful to the metallic franc, whether she will adopt a pure gold standard, or whether she will ally herself to some other European group. When the monetary situation of the countries which surround her is completely cleared up, it will be time for her to adopt definite resolutions regarding a return to the convertibility of notes.

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES

BONDS.	Sept. 15		Sept. 22	
	Frs.	Fr.	Frs.	Fr.
Confederation 3% 1903	78.75	77.50		
5% 1917, VIII. Mob. Ln	100.12	100.27		
Federal Railways 3½% A-K	81.87	81.75		
Canton of Basle (City) 4% 1910	100.45	100.65		

SHARES.	Nom.		Sept. 15		Sept. 22	
	Frs.	Fr.	Frs.	Fr.	Frs.	Fr.
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	697	697			
Crédit Suisse	500	752	759			
Union de Banques Suisses	500	588	597			
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	1750	1762			
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3097	3085			
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	3362	3367			
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	357	357			
C. F. Bally	1000	1151	1148			
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	234	230			
Entreprises Sulzer S.A.	1000	918	910			
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	588	575			

EIDGENÖSSISCHE GLOSSEN.

St. Galler Aufklärung.

Vor acht Tagen erlebten wir zwei Dinge: In Bern ein Volksfest, und im Kanton St. Gallen eine Volksabstimmung. Im Westen war alles schön und gut, man sang und tanzte und zeigte die alten und neuen Trachten—wer sollte noch am ächten, währschaftigen Geist der Schweizer zweifeln? Im Osten war es nicht halb so schön und gar nicht gut. Aber es handelte sich hier auch nicht um den Schein, sondern um Schuldentilgung und Frauenstimmrecht. Auf diesem Gebiete kann man sich mit einem Kuhreigen nichts vormachen. Die Frauen mochten in ihren mit Meerriehr gesteihten Tuchmiedern nach Bern reisen und den ausländischen Diplomaten stolz zuwinken, zu Hause würde unterdessen von dem wackeren Mannesvolke beschlossen, dass die Weiber vorläufig in den Kirchgemeinden nicht mitzureden hätten. Und gleichzeitig beschlossen diese Männer mit 3 gegen 2, dass sie selber nichts von dem vorgeschlagenen Schuldentilgungsgesetz wissen möchten. Es ist ja klar, dass ein Volk sich gegen neue Steuern wehrt, wenn von den 71,000 Einkommensteuerpflichtigen 67,000 in Zukunft jährlich eine Extrasteuer von 80 (achtzig) Rappen bezahlen sollten. Man denke: 80 Rappen im Jahr, das ist keine kleine Summe! Nun muss also die Staatsschuld von nahezu 39 Millionen noch ein wenig auf die Amortisierung warten. In dieser Summe sind zwar neben den Defiziten der Verwaltungsrechnungen 12,3 Millionen Aufwendungen zur Linderung der Not während der Kriegs- und Nachkriegsjahre und die gleiche Anzahl Millionen für die Ausführung gemeinnütziger Werke, also Ausgaben für das Volk, sodass die Mitwirkung des Volkes bei der Rückzahlung dieser Schulden nicht unberechtigt erschiene. Doch das Volk wollte nicht, und die Sozialdemokraten können stolz sein auf ihren Sieg. Wenn es sich um 80 Rappen handelt, wird, scheint, auch der andersdenkende Bürger ein Sozialdemokrat. Und so weiss man nicht, wen man bei dieser ganzen Geschichte mehr bemitleiden soll: die Bürger oder die Sozialdemokraten . . .

Schweizertrachten.

Die Trachten feiern eine Wiedergeburt. Gut: niemand wird verlangen, dass man diese Wiedergeburt ernst zu nehmen habe. (Es handelt sich übrigens um eine internationale Erscheinung: am vorigen Sonntag feierten auch die Pfälzer und die Badenser Trachtenfeste.) Es gibt aber etwas anderes, das immer wieder ernst genommen werden sollte. Es hat zwar nicht an Gelegenheiten gefehlt, hier davon zu reden. Aber es gibt immer wieder neue Gelegenheiten, um davon zu reden: Von einer Vereinfachung unserer Bedürfnisse, ohne dass man damit bis zur höchsten Stufe amerikanischer Rationalisierung des Wirtschaftslebens steigen müsste. Wir denken immer noch zu wenig daran, dass wir irgend einer Laune, einem Gelüste, einer Mode folgend, morgen das nicht mehr kaufen, was wir heute mit Freude gekauft haben. Wir denken nicht daran, dass beispielsweise jede Aenderung der Zeichnung des Musters, des Gewebes, für den Fabrikanten eine Gefährdung seines Fabrikbetriebes ist. Wir kaufen, was uns gefällt, was uns heute gefällt, und morgen aus irgend einem unerklärlichen Grunde (wegen Paris oder Wien oder London) nicht mehr gefällt. Der Fabrikant möge sich danach richten. Gewiss, er richtet sich danach, mit dem Erfolge, dass die Ware teurer wird (auch der Fabrikant existiert) oder dass die Ware nicht teuer genug verkauft werden kann in anbetrachter aller Umstände (und dass der Fabrikant nicht mehr existiert). Wir stehen in wirtschaftlichen Nöten aller Art. Wenn wir daraus die Folgerung zögen, dass auch der Konsument denken muss, so wäre dem Produzenten schon halb geholfen. Wenn der Gedanke einer Schweizertracht auftaucht, auf Grund dieser Überlegungen (ich gebe zu, es ist eine Utopie), nicht auf Grund historischer Gefühle und scheinbar vaterländischer Gedanken, so wäre der Schweiz zu gratulieren. Wenn sich die Schweizer und Schweizerinnen einigten, bestimmte Tuchsorten zu tragen (wobei man immer noch seine Phantasie walten lassen könnte), dann würde beispielsweise unsere Wollindustrie die Hände über dem Kopf zusammenschlagen vor Freude. Sie könnte sich danach einrichten, wir hätten billigere Stoffe und die Fabrikanten einen besseren Verdienst. So einfach wäre es. Aber es ist eben zu einfach!

Schweizerische Arbeitszeit.

Wir haben überhaupt keine Freude an der Rationalisierung. Beispielsweise lassen wir unsere Zweiteilung des Tages ruhig fortbestehen. Es machen sich zwar in jüngster Zeit wieder Stimmen geltend, die für eine Einführung der englischen Arbeitszeit sprechen. Sie werden wohl auch diesmal ungehört verhallen. Der Schweizer scheint keinen Sinn dafür zu haben, dass diese grosse Mittagspause ein Luxus ist, ein kostbares Vergnügen, dabei ein Vergnügen, bei dem recht wenig herauskommt. Man reißt sich selber gewaltsam und ohne Nötigung im Höhepunkt des Tages aus dem Rhythmus der Arbeit, eilt oder fährt unter Umständen halbstundenweit, um zu essen, belastet Trambahnen und Bundesbahnen mit seinem Gewichte, ohne dass die Bahnen dafür etwas Entsprechendes erhalten (denn man ist ja abonniert), kommt müde oder gereizt zum Mittagessen, um

zu den eigenen Gedanken auch noch die Gedanken aller andern Familienmitglieder zu erhalten, läuft oder fährt zurück, braucht wieder Zeit, um von neuem in Gang zu kommen, und erscheint abends zu einer Zeit zu Haus, wo's zu spät zum Wandern, Spielen und Werken ist, und doch zu früh zum Schlafen. Begnügten wir uns mit einem Butterbrote um die Mittagszeit, so hätten wir schon vor Fünf die Freiheit des Christenmenschen, die Kinder am Arm, den Himmel über uns und die frische Luft in der Lunge. Wir wären nicht mehr an die Stadt oder Stadtnähe gefesselt, der Zug dürfte uns auch weiter führen, als es jetzt erlaubt ist, und es wäre sicherlich vieles besser und nichts schlimmer. Die Schulen wären genötigt, an dieser Befreiung des Menschen irgendwie mitzumachen, die Kinder kämen auch zum Achtstundentag, und wer sollte eigentlich gegen dies alles etwas einzuwenden haben? Wirtschaftliche, gesundheitliche und seelische Vorteile in Hülle und Fülle, und doch tut man es nicht? Vielleicht, weil es auch zu einfach ist?

(Felix Moeschlin in der "Nat.-Ztg.")

THE RIGHT TO VOTE OF THE SWISS ABROAD.

Of recent months we have read quite a good deal in reference to this question, but nobody appears to go to the root of the matter, viz., Does the Federal Constitution really exclude the Swiss abroad from enjoyment of their political rights? I say it does not.

I have in my school days listened to well over 150 lectures on the Federal Constitution, by an eminent jurist and judge, one of the best living authorities on Swiss constitutional law, but I do not remember this question having been thrashed out. It is, however, not difficult.

The rights and the duties of the citizens towards the State are determined, at any rate in their guiding principles, by the constitution. We Swiss abroad ought, no doubt, to congratulate the makers of the constitution, the Swiss citizens who lived before us, upon the fact that the Federal Constitution does not mention once in its 130 odd articles, either explicitly or by inference, the question of Swiss residing abroad. When we consider that the constitution goes so far even as to prescribe that "les animaux de boucherie" are to be stunned before they are bled, it may perhaps appear surprising that no reference whatsoever is made to Swiss citizens outside Switzerland.

But the makers of our fundamental law were building strongly, and this fact is our greatest protection from the clutches of bureaucracy, if we know how properly to use it. It makes it evident that all Swiss citizens have the same rights and the same duties towards the State, immaterial whether they are inside the territorial frontiers or not. The only difference, in principle at any rate, are the limitations deriving from the operation of International Law and International Treaties.

The article relating to our political rights is No. 43, the material portion of which reads:—

"Tout citoyen d'un canton est citoyen suisse. Il peut, à ce titre, prendre part, au lieu de son domicile, à toutes les élections et votations en matière fédérale, après avoir dûment justifié de sa qualité d'électeur."

According to the letter of the law, if the country where we live allows it, I think we ought to have the right to vote even here. That we should, at any rate, have the right to vote at our place of Swiss domicile, even if we only return temporarily, is, however, indisputable.

The duty to do military service or to pay military exemption tax is specified in just the same general way: no mention is made of Swiss abroad. It would, therefore, seem natural that the Legislative and Administrative authorities, in giving effect to the provisions of the constitution, would follow a line of logical thought and elementary justice. None of that is, however, apparent in our legislation in this respect.

For the purpose of the fulfilment of our military duties we are kept on the register of the unit to which we belong; we pay military exemption tax when we are on leave abroad, and are kept on the respective registers; we are under obligation to return to Switzerland, at our expense, immediately the army is mobilised, and although we may still be in possession of a permit of leave, if we should happen to be in Switzerland, even only temporarily, when our unit is doing military service, we are treated as deserters if we do not join it within 24 hours, although we may be totally unaware of it. One would think it only logical that we should be allowed to have our say immediately we return home, but this is not the view taken by the Federal Legislation. To my way of thinking this conclusion represents an incorrect application of the constitution and of the will of the people expressed therein.

The question has really been of little importance to the Ticinesi, because, with a few ups and downs, it is now giving on for 50 years that the laws of the Ticino grant the right of vote to the Ticinesi living abroad. At any rate, they are retained on the voters' lists and can exercise their political rights immediately they return home, and this also in Federal matters. This right is further