

Notes and gleanings

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HOME NEWS

At their united sitting last Thursday the two Houses re-elected the whole of the Federal Council. At the top of the poll was Federal Councillor Haab, who received 175 out of 211 votes. The former vice-president, Dr. Heinrich Häberlin, was elected Federal President with 151 out of 158 votes; he was born in Weinfelden (Thurgau) in 1868 and is the youngest member of the Federal Council, which he joined in 1920 to replace the retiring Federal Councillor Calonder. (Most of our London readers will recall Dr. Häberlin's visit last July, when he was entertained by the City Swiss Club.) — At the close of the present mandate all the seven Federal Councillors will have occupied the highest position in Switzerland, and a new "series" will commence again with the doyen of the Council, Dr. Giuseppe Motta, who is now occupying the vice-presidency.

The national debt of the Confederation at the end of the present year amounts to 2,086 million francs, nearly 114 millions having been paid off since 1924, when the figure was at its highest. This works out roughly at 594 francs per head of population, against 75 frs. in 1914, that is to say, an eightfold increase during the last decade. This does not include the outstanding loans on account of the Swiss Federal Railways, which total about 2½ milliard francs.

A marked increase in unemployment is recorded for the month of November, those officially registered numbering 15,760, against 12,219 in October. The building, machinery and textile trades are chiefly affected.

In their endeavour to provide work for the abnormal number of unemployed, the cantons of Geneva and St. Gall are receiving from the Federal Council financial assistance to the tune of Frs. 170,000 and Frs. 600,000 respectively.

Several urban organisations at St. Gall, embracing property owners, traders and retailers, have petitioned the Cantonal and Federal authorities with a request for common action in order to arrest the depopulation of the town and the impoverishment of the community, caused by the constantly increasing number of vacant houses and business premises.

According to recent statistics the present value of the embroidery exports is about a third of the figure for 1913, and the number of workmen employed in the industry has fallen from 72,000 to under 35,000.

Thanks to improved conditions in the industry the Swiss watch manufacturers have renounced the credit of Frs. 300,000 which the Confederation voted in order to enable them to participate in the forthcoming jubilee exhibition at Philadelphia.

An international enquiry is at present being conducted at Berne into the mysterious theft from American postal bags, which took place on Dec. 9th on the Paris-Milan-Trieste express. The loss is said to be over Frs. 200,000, and though it is asserted that the robbery did not take place on Swiss territory, Switzerland will have to bear its share of this amount if the crime cannot conclusively be proved as having been perpetrated in one of the other transit countries.

In felling an old apple tree near Rünkhofen (Berne) a hoard of gold and silver coins amounting to Frs. 1,109 was unearched. It is stated that this refers to a charge of theft for which, as far back as 1870, a farmhand was sentenced to 2½ years' hard labour, although at the time he vigorously protested his innocence. As the man in question only died about five years ago, having evidently failed to secure the treasure he was credited for having hidden, a miscarriage of justice seems to have occurred.

The taxicab drivers of Geneva are threatening to declare a strike, as those on duty outside the Cornavin station were fined for having, on a cold night, deserted their taxis in order to warm themselves at the station bar.

As the result of a preliminary investigation, a garage and automobile proprietor of Geneva is

to be charged with manslaughter. He had arranged last month in connection with a motor excursion to Pont de la Paille, near St. Julien, a revolver shooting competition; a street indicator of the Touring Club was used as a target, and one of the shots rebounded and unfortunately fatally wounded one of the party, a Mrs. Mayer-Kellenberger.

For accidentally shooting and killing his brother with an army rifle which he was cleaning, being unaware that it still contained a cartridge, Franz Wyser, of Huggervald, was sentenced by the Solothurn assizes to two years' imprisonment.

Mr. Louis Reichenbach, the principal of the well-known embroidery export business of the same name, died in St. Gall at the age of 76.

A sexagenarian, M. Léon Oueloz, who is in business at Porrentruy, has died from Tetanus. One day last week he missed the last train and was obliged to walk home, when in the intense cold his hands got frosted. Soon after being admitted to the hospital he developed tetanus.

Following an operation for ear trouble, the painter Hans Widmer, of Hochstetten, died in Berne at the age of 53.

The "Wurzembethli," whose real name is Elisabeth Ackermann, died in Mels (St. Gall) at the age of 101.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Die berufliche Gliederung der schweiz. Bevölkerung.
Auf Grund der schweiz. Volkszählungsergebnisse ergab sich auf 1. Dezember 1920 ein Bestand von 3,880,000 Einwohnern. Gegenüber dem Jahr 1860 ergibt sich eine Bevölkerungszunahme von 1,368,000 Personen. Besonders interessant ist es, zu verfolgen, welche starke Umschichtung in der beruflichen Gliederung stattgefunden hat. Während noch im Jahre 1860 1,115,000 Personen oder 44,4 Prozent der schweizerischen Bevölkerung in der U-Produktion, vorzugsweise der Landwirtschaft, tätig waren und 997,000 Personen oder 39,8 Prozent in Handel, Industrie und Gewerbe, hat sich die Zahl dieser letzteren im Jahre 1920 auf 1,979,000 Personen oder auf 51 Prozent erhöht. Selbstständig erwerbende Personen zählte man im Jahre 1920 543,650. Personen mit unselbständigem Erwerb waren 1920 1,308,403 vorhanden. Der grösste Teil der Bevölkerungszunahme in den letzten Jahren ist somit von Handel, Industrie und Gewerbe absorbiert worden und zwar infolge der stetigen Konzentration, welche die moderne Wirtschaft mit sich bringt, in der Stellung unselbständigen Erwerbs. Eine grosse Zahl der selbständig Erwerbenden gehört überdies bei uns dem Kleinbürgertum an (kleine Gewerbetreibende, Handwerker, kleine Landwirte). Deren Selbstständigkeit ist mehr eine rechtliche als eine wirtschaftliche und deren soziale und wirtschaftliche Lage ist von derjenigen der Arbeiter und der Mehrzahl der Angestellten nicht sehr verschieden. (*Neues Winterthurer Tagbl.*)

Für die Toten. — Eine Badener Dame hat dem Gemeinderat von Baden 500 Franken übergeben mit dem Zwecke, dass aus dem Zins jedem Toten, der ohne Angehörige in der Stadt bestattet wird, ein Kranz im Preise von Fr. 10—12 auf den Sarg zu legen sei. Sollte der Zins hiezu nicht ausreichen, so soll der nötige Betrag vom Kapital genommen werden. Die Fondstifterin erklärte sich bereit, die Summe jeweilen wieder zu ersetzen. (*Wohler Anzeiger.*)

Ein Preisausschreiben. — Die Bürgerpartei der Stadt Bern hat eine Zuweisung von 400 Fr. erhalten mit der Zweckbestimmung, dass ein Preisausschreiben veranstaltet werden soll über Stimmbeteiligung und Stimmzwang. Es soll darin untersucht werden, ob sich für die Gemeinde Bern die Einführung des Stimmzwanges empfiehlt und wenn ja, in welcher Form. Das Preisergericht besteht aus den Herren Prof. Dr. Karl Geiser, Prof. Dr. Burkhardt und Prof. Dr. Milliet. Mögen sie das grosse Rätsel lösen. (*Freie Rätler.*)

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

By the time you read these Notes, Christmas has been and gone once more, leaving, I trust, happy memories in the heart of each of you.

Looking through my Gleanings this week, I find that nearly all of them are about the Winter Sports in Switzerland, which, this season, seem to be a greater attraction than ever.

I should like to hear of a newspaper published

in the United Kingdom or even the Irish Free State which did not, at one time or another, publish alluring reports of the fascination of this wonderful, health-giving activity in our Swiss Alps.

Well, Switzerland can do with all the money these tourists take to her, for her industries, or some of her most important ones at least, are sorely handicapped by high customs tariffs of other States. How this works in a vicious circle is well illustrated in the following article by Dr. Arthur Steinmann, of Zurich (*Manchester Guardian Commercial*, 10th Dec.):—

Switzerland: Foreign Tariff Handicaps.

Switzerland has developed a considerable woollen industry, but she is compelled, notwithstanding her extensive agricultural industry and cattle and sheep breeding, to make use of foreign raw materials. The countries supplying these are, first and foremost, Australia, the La Plata States, and South Africa. The home production of wool is very small. The number of sheep decreased from 447,000 in January, 1866, to 245,000 in 1921. While the average annual consumption of wool for the years 1911-1913 amounted to 5,450 tons, it rose in 1916 to 12,650 tons, and sank in 1919-1920 to 4,715 tons annually, including the small amount of wool produced in Switzerland. In the year 1924, however, nearly 8,000 tons, of a value of 54 million francs, was imported. The spinning of woollen yarns and worsted is almost equal in amount.

The worsted spinning trade, the production of which before the war was estimated at, in round figures, 22 million francs in value, furnished yarns for weaving, embroidery, and knitting, as well as for smallware manufacturing. Its products are highly valued both at home and abroad. In the first place, it supplies the worsted weaving industry of Switzerland with the half-manufactured material for the production of ladies' dress goods, muslins, poplins, crêpes, etc. A speciality is the production of worsted knitting yarns. Export before the war averaged 1,100 tons, of the value of 10 million francs, annually, and after falling off during the years of crisis it attained 1,336 tons, of the value of 28.9 million francs, in 1924. In these figures the wool waste, noils, and tops, which in the same year were exported to the amount of 3,370 tons, of a value of 14.7 million francs, are not included. In 1916 and 1917 the products of the Swiss worsted spinning industry were largely claimed by France. In normal trade the principal exports go about equally to England, Germany, and Asia. It is interesting to note that at the same time 880 tons of the worsted yarn, of the value of 14.4 million francs, were imported. The spinning of woollen yarns in Switzerland is not an independent industry, the spinning plants being, without exception, attached to the weaving concerns and working for their own consumption.

Besides the weaving of worsted, the weaving of woollen goods, the cloth, counterpane, and carpet industries, as well as the manufacture of felt, are represented. While the worsted weaving trade produces the ladies' fine dress goods and light fabrics, bleached, dyed, and printed, weighing less than 300 grammes per square metre, the cloth or woollen yarn weaving industry, besides all wool or half-wool men's clothing and ladies' dress goods, from either worsted or woollen yarns, produces military and other official cloth in part of the finest quality. The coarser wools serve to provide the country population with strong and durable fabrics for clothing. The manufacture of friezes and various sports goods has also attained considerable importance. The woollen industry generally is actively supported by a highly developed dyeing and finishing industry capable of turning out work of the highest quality.

The war greatly increased the home demand for goods, thanks to the increased civil demand and the issue of new uniforms to the army. Record deliveries signalled the revictualing of the blockaded districts in the first year of the peace, 1919, raising the exports to 62.5 million francs. The value of exports in 1913 was 5.8 million francs; in 1920, a year after the record year, 31.7 millions; in 1921, 15.7 millions; and in 1924, 16.5 million francs (631 tons). The almost prohibitive Customs tariffs of Germany, France, and other States, and the secession of England from Free Trade, threaten the position of the Swiss woollen industry as an exporting trade more and more. For this reason Switzerland may be constrained to protect the woollen industry on the home market, and that this should bring increased sales is shown by the fact that not less than 2,270 tons of foreign

woollen fabrics, of the value of 48 million francs, were imported in 1924.

Truly, the world is in a terrible plight just now, but these perfect orgies of Tariff Reform are hardly likely to make things better permanently, and the aftermath will be painful to a degree unheard of yet. How very wonderful this *saave qui peut* business in international commerce and trade!

Let us turn to more pleasant subjects. There is in the *Daily News* of 14th Dec. a very interesting report on the—

Wonders of a New Narcotic.

Dr. Maurice Sandoz, of the University of Lausanne, recently succeeded in producing, in the form of soluble white crystals, a substance termed tricaïne, remarkable for its rapid narcotic effect on cold-blooded animals.

If a fish, a frog, or a salamander were for only two to six minutes placed in a 1.10 per cent. solution of tricaïne, thorough insensibility ensued. It could be withdrawn from the soporific bath and extended on the glass plate fixed to a microscope. Through the most transparent portion of the body (e.g., in the case of fish, the caudal fin), the fascinating spectacle of blood circulation could then be watched in all its phases.

If, however, the subject were left a few minutes longer in the narcotic solution it was withdrawn in an immovable, apparently lifeless state. Wrapped up in moist cotton wool, it could, without any danger to life, be conveyed from one place to another, and it had only to be put in ordinary water to be resuscitated immediately.

It will be seen from this that animals rendered unconscious by means of tricaïne can be used in connection with tests and observation so far impossible without vivisection.

If a solution of tricaïne be diluted further, the substance will no longer have any soporific effect, but it will reduce the rate of cell division in animal organisms, particularly the development of the embryo from the egg.

In the presence of the merest traces of tricaïne it is, for instance, possible to keep frog eggs for a few weeks in their original condition, while eggs left, for checking purposes, in pure water have long been converted into adult frogs.

These tests would seem to open up promising vistas in connection with the biological problem of rejuvenation. As long as a living organism is growing, there can, in fact, occur no symptom of senility, and not until the organism has reached the end of its development, not until its growth is completed, can the reverse process, that of "devolution" (degradation), commence and continue, first slowly, but eventually with growing rapidity.

Human growth normally lasts about 20 years. If this process by some suitable means could be distributed over 40 years, an adult person 40 years of age would show the same elasticity and resistance as a normal person of 20 years. However, as long as there are available only results relating to cold-blooded animals, who can tell whether this slackening of physical growth would not be attended by a concomitant slackening of mental development?

Cancerous tumours, according to modern theories, are the result of the sudden growth of one or several cells of the organism. These cells, it appears, will secrete toxic substances reducing the resistance of the adjoining sound tissues. This is how the cancerous cell grows in parasite fashion, multiplying to the detriment of neighbouring tissues and eventually at the cost of the whole body.

Now, inasmuch as tricaïne will stop the division of cells, it could be resorted to in an attempt at checking the cancerous process.

An injection of one cubic centimetre of 1% tricaïne solution is absolutely painless, insuring sufficient insensibility to be used as a narcotic in connection with minor surgical operations of one to two minutes' duration.

Much more valuable than injections are, however, internal doses of tricaïne, which, in opposition to cocaine, is entirely harmless; and, therefore, can be administered even in large doses for alleviating intense pain.

In continuing his investigations, Dr. Sandoz hopes, preferably, to use a number of chemical derivations from tricaïne, which he thinks are even more efficacious than the original substance.

And so science marches onwards to ever fresh victories!

And so on to the New Year! May 1926 get the world a step nearer Peace, may it further appease the passions let loose by the Great War, may it bring to each one of us the recognition that brotherly love and tolerance are the weapons with which to fight the evil tendencies fostered by the artificial cultivation of war-feelings, and that the Sermon of the Mount is still the best catchment to lead us on towards better things.

And to you all, dear readers, I extend a sincere and happy wish for a prosperous and, more important,

A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

"STILLE, NACHT, HEILIGE NACHT"

Es gibt wohl selten ein Weihnachtslied, das so gerne und auch so innig gesungen wird wie das "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht." Sagen wir's aber gleich, dass sowohl Melodie wie Text beinahe nie richtig wiedergegeben, und dass auch die Urheber des Liedes nicht allgemein gekannt sind. Und doch ist man es den beiden Männern schuldig, dass ihr Werk als ihr Eigentum bekannt gegeben werde. Wer sind also die Schöpfer des heiligen Liedes, das eine so kindliche, ächte Frömmigkeit offenbart?

"Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Wer hat dich, o Lied, gemacht?
Mohr hat mich so schön erdacht,
Gruber zu Gehör gebracht,
Priester und Lehrer vereint."

Dieser Vers ist die vorläufige kurze Antwort auf die gestellte Frage. Wir wollen nicht den ganzen Verlauf der Streitigkeiten über die Verfasser des Liedes wiedergeben, denn das wäre nur für Fachleute von Interesse. Ebenso können wir nicht die Originale hier abdrucken, sondern müssen das einmal an einem späteren Weihnachtstest tun, indem wir das Lied so darbringen wie sich gehört.

Zwei Freunde schufen es zu Oberndorf in Oesterreich und sangen es zum ersten Male in der Christnacht 1818. Der Verfasser der Worte ist der Priester Josef Mohr, der in der Stadt Mozarts geboren wurde. Nachdem Mohr die Schulen seiner Vaterstadt besucht hatte, empfing er die niederen Weihen. Im Jahr 1817 kam er nach Oberndorf an der Salzach. Oft hat dieser Mann seine Stelle gewechselt, aber das Gemüt ist immer das gleiche geblieben. Wie ein Kind hat der Mann die Weihnachtsgeschichte angebetet. — Mögen von Seiten seiner eigenen Glaubensgenossen Urteile laut geworden sein über die "fädelnde" Art seiner Dichtung, so ist das ganz nebensächlich angesichts der Antwort, die ein Volk aus aller Welt gegeben hat, denn das Lied hat sich über die ganze Erde verbreitet und ist in die Herzen von Millionen von Menschen eingedrungen, und zwar ohne dass man es im Buchhandel vertrieben hätte. Es hat sich im Laufe der Herzen der Alten und Jungen erobert.

Nicht unwesentlich zu diesem Erfolge hat auch die Melodie beigetragen, die von dem Schulmeister Franz Xaver Gruber herrührt. Gruber wurde am 25. November 1787 zu Unterweizberg geboren. Seine Eltern waren arme Leinweberleute. Der Knabe zeigte schon frühe eine grosse musikalische Begabung, aber sein Vater wollte nicht in Musikstunden einwilligen. Heimlich hat Franz Unterricht empfangen, und da ihm daheim kein Instrument zur Verfügung stand, soll er sich Holzkätzchen in die Fugen der Holzwand seiner Kammer geschlagen haben, um auf diesen Fingerübungen machen zu können. Als in seinem 12. Lebensjahre einmal der Lehrer seines Dorfes erkrankte, erbot sich der Knabe, das Hochamt zu spielen und spielte es so gut, dass auch sein Vater den Widerstand endlich aufgab und für seinen Franz sogar ein altes Spinett für 5 Gulden kaufte. Schliesslich durfte er auch das Seminar besuchen. Am 12. November 1807 wurde Gruber zum Lehrer und Organisten in Arnsdorf ernannt. Im Jahre 1816 wurde er noch dazu Organist an der St. Nikolauskirche zu Oberndorf. Diesen Dienst versah er von Arnsdorf aus. Das Lied "Stille Nacht" ist nicht seine einzige Komposition. Die Melodie unseres Liedes ist die eines Wiegenliedes; das zeigt schon der Sechschachteltakt an. Aber in der ursprünglichen Fassung ist das Ganze noch viel schmiegsamer und wegender. In der Christmette 1818 "sangen Dichter und Componist mit hellklingendem Tenor und volltönendem Bass ihr eigen Lied zum ersten Mal; ein Chor von etlichen Sängern wiederholte bei jeder Strophe den Schlussvers. . ." Begleitet wurde das Lied mit einer Gitarre, denn die Orgel der Kirche war in keinem guten Zustande. So wie der Abdruck des Originals vor mir liegt, ist die Instrumentierung folgende: Cornu in D, 1. und 2. Violin, Violon und Cello, Orgel. Tenor und Bass setzen erst bei der Wiederholung des "Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh" ein. Schade ist besonders, dass der 11. Takt nicht richtig gesungen wird. Aber wie gesagt, die genaue Wiedergabe des Liedes müssten wir auf einen anderen Zeitpunkt aufschieben. Meine Angaben verdanke ich dem trefflich geschriebenen Büchlein von Franz Peterlechner, das herausgegeben ist vom Landesverein für Heimatschutz in Oberösterreich und im Verlage von Qu. Haslinger in Linz an der Donau erhältlich ist. Der Schreiber dieser Zeilen hat während seines zweijährigen Aufenthaltes in Oberösterreich dieses überaus musikalische Volk kennen und lieben gelernt. Er betrachtet aber Schreiber solcher Lieder als Grössen, eben weil sie dadurch zum Herzen der Menschen gelangen und darin ein Gefühl der Seligkeit zurücklassen.

C. H.

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QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES

BONDS.	Dec. 15	Dec. 21	
Confederation 3% 1903 ...	79.50	79.00	
" 5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln.	100.25	100.75	
Federal Railways 3½% A-K	81.05	81.85	
" 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	100.50	100.82	
SHARES.	Nom.	Dec. 15	Dec. 21
Swiss Bank Corporation ...	500	703	702
Crédit Suisse ...	500	705	770
Union de Banques Suisses ...	500	610	610
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	1855	1842
Fabrique Chimique ci-dév. Sandoz	1000	3320	3310
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe ...	1000	3265	3295
S.A. Brown Boveri ...	350	379	379
C. F. Bally ...	1000	1140	1172
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	297	301
Entreprises Sulzer S.A. ...	1000	946	943
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	550	540
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco ...	100	73	80
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon ...	500	680	680

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