

# Personal

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**Ceux qui renoncent à la nationalité suisse.** — Un de nos concitoyens, M. J—N—H—, domicilié à Londres, désire renoncer à la nationalité suisse. Il adresse la requête suivante au Conseil d'Etat:

Londres, 1er décembre 1924.

Monsieur le président du Conseil d'Etat, Genève.

J'ai l'honneur de vous demander respectueusement de me dégager de la nationalité suisse pour la raison suivante:

Je suis marié depuis le 30 août 1924 à une dame anglaise et pour des raisons de famille je désire acquérir la nationalité anglaise, car mon intention est maintenant de rester définitivement en Angleterre.

Je vous communique à cet effet une lettre du "Home Office" m'informant que la nationalité anglaise m'est assurée si vous voulez bien annuler ma présente nationalité suisse.

J'ose donc espérer que vous ferez un accueil favorable à ma requête.

(La Tribune de Genève.)

**Un hôtel de la monnaie clandestin.** — On signale de nouveau la mise en circulation de fausses pièces d'un franc Confédération suisse, 1920, en argent, au titre officiel et dont la frappe ne diffère des pièces authentiques que par de menus détails que seuls des experts peuvent apprécier.

Rappelons à ce propos que depuis une dizaine d'années, on a constaté que des pièces de deux francs en argent, fabriquées de la même façon, étaient répandues en abondance. La seule différence appréciable entre ces pièces et celles de la Confédération était que pour ces dernières, le bas de la robe de l'Helvétia dépassait d'une tête d'épingle l'écusson fédéral, alors que sur la pièce imitée, on avait omis ce détail.

Mais comme, à l'époque, les autorités fédérales firent une large publicité pour mettre le public en garde et signalèrent avec précision les plus petits défauts de la pièce fausse, il est probable que le peu scrupuleux fabricant resté inconnu en fit son profit et que ses émissions ultérieures furent corrigées et mises au point avec soin.

Il y a lieu de remarquer, d'ailleurs, que le préjudice causé par cette frappe de monnaie est nul et qu'en somme tout le monde en profite, puisque la fortune publique est augmentée d'autant. Le particulier qui se livre à cette fructueuse industrie (au taux de l'argent, il gagne environ du 50%) ne fait que s'arroger un droit réservé strictement à l'Etat.

Rappelons qu'une affaire à peu près semblable donna lieu, il y a bien des années, à un long procès qui se déroula devant les tribunaux genevois, puis devant le Tribunal fédéral; des industriels avaient frappé en grande quantité, sur notre territoire, de la monnaie égyptienne, identique à celle de l'Etat, et avaient réalisé des bénéfices considérables en mettant ces pièces en circulation en Egypte.

(Journal de Genève.)

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

### 2LO in Switzerland.

Daily Mail (13th Dec.):—

London's Christmas broadcasting is not to be relayed for winter visitors by Swiss stations, because the Swiss themselves are showing preference for direct British rather than Swiss broadcasting.

Swiss listeners-in have increased from a few hundred a year ago to more than 30,000, and with all who have sets of sufficient range, Cheimsford or 2LO is the favourite entertainment. Thousands of people in Switzerland nightly tune in these two stations.

Shall I ever forget the thrill I experienced last New Year, when on a four-valve RI set I picked up a message from Barcelona, wishing everybody a Prosperous New Year? And, on a Saturday afternoon, a few months later, when I got Lausanne and heard somebody talking about the Société des Carabiniers Suisses! Truly, wireless telephony is a wonderful invention, and it would be strange if it did not result in getting the various peoples a good deal nearer to each other. And who could talk of the stillness of the night, or even the stillness of the air, who has ever listened-in to the tumult of sounds, on various wave-lengths? But to all I would advise not to shirk the initial expense, but to buy a good valve set, so as to be able to pick up Continental stations. Listening-in to dear old 2LO is so tame by comparison, and, besides, it is nice to get a bit of lively music from Radiola Paris just at the time one sits down to enjoy the Sunday pre-dinner *apéritif*! Or to have some dance music on a Sunday afternoon, a thing which British broadcasting stations still shrink from giving out.

### Swiss Banks and French Capital.

Financial Times (18th Dec.):—

It transpires that large quantities of short-term Treasury Bills have during the past few months been sent abroad by their French holders for foreign, chiefly Swiss, banks to collect in France at maturity, then converting the proceeds into sound currencies and holding them abroad to account of their French customers.

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This is a roundabout form of exporting capital from France, and the export of capital is legally forbidden.

At a time when the question of repaying war debts is being discussed by French and other Governments and peoples, it is funny to note that the practice above referred to should be resorted to by patriotic French investors. I remember the fulminations against German "patriots" doing the same thing a little while back. But then, capital and patriotism are different things, else one would not have seen the British over-subscribing the Greek Loan, whereas underwriters had to take up 91 per cent. or so of the Victorian Loan! For most of the really monveged people capitalism expresses itself in "percentages" and *ubi bene ibi patria* is their motto.

### Swiss Railway Rates.

Western Mail (19th Dec.):—

A report received by the Department of Overseas Trade from the British Legation at Berne calls attention to articles in the Swiss press regarding the reduction of railway rates in Switzerland. According to a statement in the "National-Zeitung" it would appear that the rates for the transport of goods on Swiss railways are the highest in Europe. They exceed Swedish rates, which are the next highest, by no less than 24 per cent., whilst the difference compared with Belgian rates amounts to 78 per cent. These figures, the paper claims, appear to prove that the Swiss Federal Railways cannot afford to retain their exorbitant tariffs much longer if they are to compete with foreign railways in international transit traffic. The "Zeitung" further states that although the present high charges obtaining in Switzerland have been an important factor in the brilliant recovery in the financial situation of the Swiss Federal Railways, their purely fiscal character cannot fail to exert a restrictive influence on the development of local and transit goods traffic in Switzerland if a reduction does not intervene in the near future.

The Direction-General of the Swiss Federal Railways have, however, grasped the importance of reducing freight rates at an early date, and it appears from a communiqué published in the "Feuille Officielle Suisse du Commerce" of October 3rd that in addition to the reductions proposed previously the following modifications will presumably be made, as from January 1st, in the goods tariffs on the Swiss Federal Railways:—(a) Modification of rates in class II, for part consignments of goods in order to adapt them to pre-war basic rates; (b) establishment of a special tariff, based on the pre-war special tariff No. III.b; (c) modification of the tariff for the transport of luggage in express tariff, and of cattle, etc., correlatively with the reduction to be effected in the tariff for the transport of goods over long distances.

It is anticipated that a decrease of six million francs in the revenue of the Swiss Federal Railways will be the direct result of the steps towards a reduction of freight rates.

Another powerful argument—as Mr. Lovat Fraser would describe it—of my old contention that it would pay any country to levy taxes for the cost of running trains and other travelling and transport facilities, rather than make users pay individually. We shall come to it, dear readers, in another few hundred years, just as we came to do away with bridge and road tolls!

### Swiss Airman for Persia.

Daily Express (20th Dec.):—

The Swiss aviator Lieutenant Mittelholzer, who has been invited to Persia by the Persian Government, left Zurich on Dec. 18th for Teheran by way of Italy, Greece, and Turkey, a distance of 5,600 miles. He hopes to reach his destination within nine days.

Lieutenant Mittelholzer is flying in an all-metal monoplane, and is carrying a weight of about one ton.

All Heil!

### Swiss Book Printing.

The Star (18th Dec.):—

There is a little Christmas Exhibition this week at the London School of Printing in Stamford-street of the specimens of the best Conti-

ental printing which its principal (Mr. E. R. Riddell) brought back on his recent Continental tour.

Although technical institutes abroad are more imposing than our own, Mr. Riddell did not find the extensive plant or the large enrolments of the London school.

In Switzerland he found a machine with a keyboard like a typewriter. When the operator has completed a line, it is inked, and when a page has been completed, an impression is taken on special paper, which, after developing, becomes the negative to be photographically printed on to the machine plate.

A book is being printed for an English publisher by this method.

### The New Year.

By the time my readers see these lines, they will have almost recovered from the after-effects of the New Year's Eve celebrations. Most of the New Year's resolutions will also have joined those similar ones of yester-year. Life will have become quite normal again, and the festivities and parties, the merrymaking and the searchings of soul, which precede the end of the year, will have given place to every-day considerations of business and the daily routine of life.

It is too late, therefore, for me to add to the more or less platitudinous phrases which we all either hear, read or perpetrate at this time of the year, and my readers will be spared this at least.

One or two reflections I should, however, like to put before my readers:—

(a) I have been wondering why we Swiss do not have a Pantheon or Valhalla in which to lay to rest our illustrious Dead?

(b) I have been wondering why our gracious Minister does not hold a New Year's Reception, as Ministers of other countries do? I do not mean one of the select social functions, for which admittance is by private invitation only, but a real democratic "at home to countrymen and countrywomen," just to make them feel, once a year, that the "President of the Swiss Republic in London" is somebody alive, real and *primus inter pares*?

I wish my readers a Happy New Year, with "Glück und Gottes Segen," as we say at home.

## PERSONAL.

Dr. William Martin, directeur de la Politique Etrangère du *Journal de Genève*, is at present passing a week in England. He is lecturing to English students on international economic problems of the present time. Dr. W. Martin is a brother of Monsieur Henri Martin, of the Swiss Legation in London.

The Publisher will be pleased to forward free specimen copies of "The Swiss Observer" to likely subscribers whose addresses may be supplied by readers.

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