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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The Federal Council has declared its willingness to grant the Canton of Uri a loan of Frs. 820,000 at 3 per cent. on the condition that the cantonal finances are subjected to a reorganisation.

The Swiss Federal Railways have now come to an understanding with the widow of the German Minister Dr. Heflerich, who lost his life in the railway accident near Bellinzona; she will receive a total indemnity of Frs. 300,000.

The index figure to January 1st, as compiled by the Swiss Co-operative Societies (Schweiz. Konsumvereine) shows a reduction of nearly one per cent. as compared with the figure to the end of December last year; this is chiefly due to the lower prices ruling in the meat market.

At the end of last year, 66,797 persons (against 67,106 to 31st Dec., 1923) were employed in the different departments and services of the Swiss Confederation; of this number, 35,345 were in the service of the Swiss Federal Railways.

Two Zurich medical practitioners, who were establishing themselves in the canton Ticino, were taxed by the local authorities Frs. 200 each for the "patent" or permission; they appealed to the Federal Tribunal, which ruled that such an imposition is contrary to Federal law, and that the cantons may charge a small registration fee only for purposes of control.

Liberal concessions are contemplated by the Federal Council as a result of the memorandum which the Ticinese authorities presented a few months ago. In the first instance, the necessary funds will be granted for a cantonal survey and the establishment of a land registry. The present subsidy of Frs. 200,000 for the upkeep of the alpine roads will be doubled. The surtaxes in connection with the goods traffic in the mountain districts will be abolished as from the 1st of January next year. Financial assistance to local societies promoting and encouraging agriculture is also contemplated. On the other side, the present subsidy enjoyed by the German schools in the canton is to be withdrawn, and the latter are to be continued only for the purpose of enabling the children already attending of finishing their education.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Der Ertrag der Bundesfeierkarten.**—Das Interesse, welches das Publikum an unserer letztjährigen Bundesfeierensammlung genommen hat, kommt in folgenden Zahlen zum Ausdruck. Es wurden abgesetzt an Abzeichen 298,374 Stück; an Bundesfeierkarten 389,636 Stück. Nach Abzug der Kosten für die Erstellung der Abzeichen, Karten, der Entschädigungen an die mitwirkenden Kunstler, der Spesen für Propaganda usw. sowie einer notwendigen Einlage in den Reservefonds verbleibt ein Reinerlös von 184,000 Fr. Dieser wird unter die Pro Juventute, die Schweizerhilfe, das Ausland-schweizer-Sekretariat der N.H.G., die Caritas-Zentrale, die Vereinigung der Russlandschweizer, die Pro Senectute verteilt werden, mit der Bestimmung, dass er von diesen Organisationen für unsere notleidenden Landsleute im Ausland, insbesondere die Kranken unter ihnen, verwendet werde. Mit einem bescheidenen Betrag soll auch das Heim "Nos Pénates" in der Waadt bedacht werden, das betagten, arbeitsunfähigen Erzieherinnen im Ausland eine Unterkunft bietet. Mit diesen Mitteilungen verbindet das Komitee den besten Dank an alle, die in irgendeiner Weise zum Gelingen dieses patriotischen Liebeswerkes beigetragen haben. (Nat.-Ztg.)

**Gegen das Fluchen und Zoten.**—Der Zentralvorstand der italienischen Liga zur Bekämpfung der Gotteslästerung holt zur Zeit die Zustimmung der fremden Regierungshäupter ein für einen internationalen Feldzug gegen das Fluchen und Zoten. Kürzlich veröffentlichte er das aus Bern erhaltene Zustimmungstelegramm des schweizerischen Bundespräsidenten. (Bündner Tagebl.)

**Seconde mise à prix de la Furka.**—La Chambre des poursuites et faillites du Tribunal fédéral a décidé de ne pas accepter l'offre de 1,750,000 frs. faite à la première mise à prix de la ligne de la Furka par le directeur Marguerat et d'organiser une seconde mise à prix, qui aura lieu à Brigue le 30 mars 1925 à 2 heures de l'après-midi. A cette occasion, le tronçon Gletsch-Décentis, non exploité jusqu'à ce jour, sera offert avec la concession ou sans celle-ci, c'est-à-dire pour la démolition. Le tronçon Brigue-Gletsch sera pour la seconde fois aussi mis à prix avec l'obligation de continuer l'exploitation. Les conditions détaillées de la mise à prix seront communiquées ultérieurement. (Gazette de Lausanne.)

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

### We Swiss Abroad.

Most times we think of our family, our business and our friends, and little of the world at large. We all love our far-away country and its democratic institutions, its simplicity, its beauties, its majestic grandeur, and in moments of patriotic fervour perhaps even firmly believe that pretty story of its origin:—When Adam and Eve were driven forth from Eden, the Archangel Gabriel came down from Heaven to gather up Paradise and take it back to Heaven. On the way up a corner of Paradise, overlapping Gabriel's apron in which he had placed Eden, broke off, fell back to Earth, and that corner constitutes Switzerland! But what about us Swiss abroad? Firstly, of course, we endeavour to be a credit to our mother country, while at the same time honouring the institutions, laws and customs of the mighty country which gives us such charming and unfettered hospitality. But, after all, we might sometimes think also of the good we are doing, or that we ought to be doing, to our own country. An instance will explain what I mean. The other day, last Saturday to be precise, I had occasion to ring up a business friend at Sheffield. The call came through in less than half a minute, and in that time I was speaking with my friend—be it Sheffield, I in London—as plainly as if we were sitting opposite each other. Three minutes' talk. The result of that talk was a message to Switzerland. That message brought work for a number of our people for several weeks. That work brought those people wages and good ones at that, enabling them to provide their families with the necessities of life and a few luxuries, making life not only bearable, but enjoyable. Their labours produced articles which will be shipped to this country, where they will form parts of instruments. The assembling of these instruments will give employment to many hands here, and many English families will be provided with bread and butter. The finished instruments will be shipped to India. Apart from the middlemen who get a living out of the merchanting of these instruments, retailers in India will reap a profit which will do good to their families, and finally somebody will have to pay the final selling price for the instrument he buys. Paying that price will oblige him to do something whereby to make good the outgoing and to replenish his cash box. Maybe he will gather the fruits in his garden and sell them. Maybe he will give education to children and use the instruments to demonstrate. And so on.

Now, I think that by following occasionally one's actions along the same lines, we would all benefit, because such thoughts bring a great lesson home to our minds. They show us how closely interwoven present-day business life is, and how vast are the oscillations in the social life of the world produced by an action, insignificant and banal in itself, customary in every-day business procedure. And we Swiss abroad will think further: We see by the above cited example how we act as pioneers for our countrymen at home, providing, at least helping to provide, them with work. And, therefore, although we are the exiled Swiss, and for that reason perhaps even keener on our kinship with the Swiss at home, we have reason to be proud of the work we are doing, not only for our own benefit, not only for the sake of earning a living—no, but because we are helping our mother country to obtain some of the work which is so vitally necessary to feed our population at home.

Some of you, dear readers, may have had the same thoughts many times, as I have; some of you may not, and to those of you who have not, the above may, I hope, be not only an eye-opener,

but a great and uplifting stimulus and an exhortation to do your best always, and if it is only for the sake of being not only a Swiss abroad, but a Swiss Pioneer. (Here endeth the sermon!—Ed.)

### The Geneva Protocol.

A lucid and masterly article by Lord Parmoor appeared in the *Contemporary Review* (January) and ought to be read by all Swiss, because all Swiss are vitally interested in the doings at Geneva.

### The World Court in Session at The Hague.

A speech by its President, M. Huber (*Manchester Guardian*, 17th Jan.):—

The first public hearing of the sixth (extraordinary) session of the Permanent Court of national Justice was held in the Peace Palace at The Hague, under the presidency of M. Huber (Switzerland), who sat in the chair for the first time. The Court was composed of eleven judges, Lord Finlay being the British judge.

The convocation of the Court for this extraordinary session was rendered necessary by the recent decision of the Council of the League of Nations at its Rome meeting last month to ask the Court for an advisory opinion on the interpretation of the word "established" used in Article 2 of the sixth Lausanne Convention (on the exchange of Greek and Turkish populations) and also on the conditions to which the persons designated must answer in the said article as "Greek inhabitants of Constantinople" in order that they may be considered as "established" in the meaning of the Convention, and therefore exempted from the obligatory exchange provided for in it. As, pending the solution of this question, the exchange work must be suspended and thousands of people remain in uncertainty as to their fate, it could suffer no unnecessary delay.

In the course of his address M. Huber said:— In accordance with its statute our Court must represent all the main forms of civilisation and the principal legal systems. We are thus involved in difficulties which do not exist for a national court composed of judges who in general speak the same language and have been trained in accordance with the same legal principles. However, that which may be for us a source of weakness, delay, and even friction, may and should be the source of a special strength and a guarantee against the danger of working in a groove and becoming stagnant amid legal theories.

Nothing is further from me than to underestimate the difficulties of my task and the special responsibility resting upon me; but far greater is the responsibility resting equally on all of us who are called to maintain and, if possible, to increase the authority of the Court. There is no doubt that since the Great War the opinion has become prevalent that international life requires to be deeply reformed; none the less, the great effort made in this direction which the League of Nations constitutes is still the object of much scepticism. Public opinion is more ready to note the shortcomings and apparent failures of this institution than the remarkable results which it has accomplished. Many persons think it merely constitutes a manifestation of old political ideas, although disguised under new methods.

It is none the less true that one conception has acquired and possesses an enhanced credit—namely, arbitration in general, and more particularly international justice. Public opinion is unable to appreciate the essential limitations of justice, in the strict sense of the term, in the realm of international law—a branch of law so imperfect, so incomplete, and so difficult to transform. But that matters little; the essential is a belief in the possibility and the existence of an organism above the more or less brutal or more or less subtle competition of national selfishness, of an organism which represents impartiality and justice, principles of a higher order of things. This idea of international justice is—whatever one may say—at the present time essentially represented by our Court. On the success of our institution depends to a great extent the victory of the forces of goodwill and of the world's hopes, forces which in case of defeat must give place to a new pessimism more deadly than the old. Such is our responsibility, and it is truly formidable.

The number of cases brought before the Court will always be relatively limited. This is due to the composition of the community of nations. For that reason the value of each judgment which we deliver has upon the authority of our Court