

Home news

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HOME NEWS

By a small majority, the Grosse Rat of the Canton Berne has unseated National Councillor Choquard from the office of Préfet of Porrentruy, to which post he was appointed as a result of the cantonal elections last June. A judicial investigation has shown that the election in this particular district was characterised by gross irregularities: voters were bribed and employees unduly influenced for the purpose of executing voting proxies in favour of their superiors. No blame is attached to National Councillor Choquard, but some of the culpable parties are to be prosecuted.

By a decision of the Thurgau Cantonal School Board, instruction in the State Schools is to be reorganised in so far that the belligerent side of history is to be reduced to a minimum so far as to inculcate in the coming generation strong ideas of peace.

A new Municipal Gymnasium is to be built in the centre of the town of Berne at a cost of Frs. 420,000.

The Rhone valley in the Canton Valais was the scene last Sunday of further inundations, the mass of rocks and boulders rushing down resembling a landslide over a wide region. The first reports of the catastrophe were somewhat alarming as will be gathered from the following reports published in the *Daily Telegraph*.

"Owing to the recent great heat, which caused the bursting of the pocket of the glacier at the foot of the Dents du Midi and a consequent rush of water carrying down an avalanche of mud, boulders and hundreds of trees uprooted in the forest through which it passed, the bed of the Rhone has been blocked and the river diverted. In fact, a sort of dam was formed across the river. Now the sudden heavy torrents of rain which have followed within the last twenty-four hours have aggravated matters, and the Rhone has washed away part of the Simplon railway line, between St. Maurice and Evionnaz. The Simplon express this morning had to be stopped at St. Maurice, and the passengers taken by motor car to Evionnaz to continue their journey to Italy. The sleeping car passengers were rudely awakened to dress hurriedly in order to catch their connection.

Meanwhile the inhabitants of the Rhone Valley, particularly in the village of Lavey and the town of St. Maurice, are becoming more and more alarmed. Sappers sent by the Swiss authorities are helpless to divert the terrible rush of water. In all the villages of the Rhone Valley the tocsin has been sounded, and every one has been called out to assist in arresting a disaster. Certain hamlets have been cut off from all communication owing to the bridges being swept away and the roads flooded. Fortunately the heavy rain has now ceased, facilitating slightly the work of salvage."

Since the floods are subsiding, the large number of voluntary workers and soldiers have succeeded—by digging huge trenches—in bringing the river back into its natural course. No lives have been lost. The railway traffic through the Simplon is being diverted over the Lötschberg.

A special office is to be created in the Canton St. Gall to study the introduction of—and if possible to assist in establishing—new industries; the Municipal Council is to be asked to vote a credit of Frs. 25,000 for this purpose.

The taxes levied in the Canton Grisons from motorists, amounted since the beginning of this year to nearly Frs. 180,000, which exceeds by 25% the figure originally anticipated; the money is supposed to be used for the upkeep of the roads. It is feared that this new competition of road transport—in addition to that of the postal auto—will in future, seriously affect the receipts of the Rhaetian railways.

The Swiss Alpine Club has received an anonymous donation of Frs. 5,000, the interest on which

is to be used for recompensing guides who have distinguished themselves in life-saving exploits.

Criminal proceedings are to be taken against Heinrich Ruegg, the Clerk of the Commune of Herisau (Appenzell A. Rh.), a preliminary investigation of his accounts having brought to light defalcations to the amount of Frs. 75,000.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Beaux gestes.—Nous avons entretenu nos lecteurs du geste de Sir J. E. Heaton qui, par reconnaissance envers Montreux, versa la somme de fr. 500 au fonds pour Montreux Plage. On nous signale un fait analogue qui, à s'adresser non à une oeuvre d'utilité publique, mais à un particulier, n'en est pas moins noble et désintéressé.

D'ailleurs c'est toute une histoire que voici : Il s'agit de M. MacCormick qui est à la fois gendre de M. Rockefeller, habitué du Montreux Plage et grand joueur de golf. On sait que les Montreuxiens pratiquent ce jeu à Aigle, sur les terrains achetés à cet effet; on sait en outre que ce jeu exige un personnel de "caddies" qui portent les cannes ou "clubs" nécessaires aux joueurs; ce qu'on ne sait peut-être pas c'est que les fonctions de "caddies" sont, à Aigle, confiées à des femmes. Or M. MacCormick s'aperçut un jour que celle qui le servait amenait avec elle une fillette, ou plutôt non, un petit être rattatiné rabougris, aux membres paralysés et recroquevillés sur eux-mêmes. La pauvre petite, mal venue sans doute au monde, était atteinte de paralysie infantile, interdisant non seulement tout mouvement, mais condamnant la malheureuse enfant à l'inaction totale. M. MacCormick est un brave homme, il eut pitié et s'enquit de ce qu'on pouvait faire pour l'enfant ajoutant qu'il se chargerait de la dépense. M. le Dr. Darcy Chessex fut appelé qui consentit à s'occuper de la malade et à l'hospitaliser à la Clinique de Florimont.

Simone, c'est le nom de l'enfant, s'y trouve depuis une année à peu près. Grâce aux soins empressés d'un personnel d'élite et d'un chirurgien de talent, l'enfant aujourd'hui, a le corps droit les membres, étendus, se réécroulent lentement, c'est le retour à tous petits pas, vers la vie, la vie qui semblait avoir disparu de ce corps disgracié. Quant au cerveau, qui contient la volonté, il se développe aussi, faisant un commencement d'homme de ce petit être qui n'avait rien d'humain.

Sans être trop optimiste, on peut supposer maintenant, que Simone réchappera de sa prostration première pour devenir sinon une femme normale, du moins un membre utile à la Société.

Et cela, c'est à M. MacCormick et au Dr. Darcy Chessex qu'elle le devra.

Feuille d'Avis Montreux.

Une S.A. en miniature.—La Suisse est le paradis des sociétés par actions; nous n'en possédons en effet pas moins de 8000, dont le capital varie entre des centaines de millions et... 1000 francs, ou moins encore. En effet, une société par actions au capital de 500 fr. vient d'être inscrite au registre du commerce! Il y a là un abus manifeste, contre lequel notre C.O.S. n'est pas armé. Car dans la pensée du législateur, la société anonyme, a pour but de permettre la constitution d'une entreprise là où le capital d'un seul individu ne suffit pas. Aussi une société anonyme au capital de 500 fr. est-elle un véritable non-sens. Sans compter que la fondation de sociétés de ce... calibre compromet le crédit des sociétés anonymes qui autrefois étaient considérées comme des entreprises tout particulièrement solides au point de vue financier. Il faudrait pouvoir exiger que l'en ajoutât à la raison sociale le montant du capital-actions; par exemple: "X.X.S.A. 500 francs!"

Feuille d'Avis de Lausanne.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

League of Nations.

Thoiry, the small village across the frontier 12 miles west from Geneva, has for a short time overshadowed the League capital. Some of the English papers treat the meeting of the two prominent statesmen as a sort of modern "Canossa," which, in the absence of something more definite, the host of disappointed reporters have jumped upon as a basis for generous though millennial suppositions. However, for the present, the only indisputable fact about this historic luncheon is the menu which consisted of sausages, pâté de Garenna, trout, chicken en casserole, artichoke, and a tart "sugared" over with the words "Vive la Paix," and all this for 15 French francs or 1/9 (Oh! where art thou, Pagani!). We are not told who

paid the bill and some enterprising reporter may yet discover that a coin was spun—as is usual in this country between two who understand each other so perfectly.

A singular article appears in the *North-Eastern Daily Gazette* (Sept. 17th), from which I give the following extracts:—

Christianity, declared Leo X., is a profitable superstition for Popes. Even more has the conception of a League of Nations proved profitable for the Genevese.

During the session of the Assembly, the entire galaxy of international statesmanship inundates their town, drawing in its wake those lesser armies of secretaries, journalists, and the merely curious, whose spendings, though individually modest, provide in bulk a highly appreciable augmentation for the municipal finances.

No wonder that Geneva regards with anxiety any movement calculated to upset so satisfactory an institution, or that her Press has scant sympathy for those unwilling to co-operate. She stands before the world like an amiable shopman displaying to wealthy but juvenile customers some peculiarly expensive toy, terrified meanwhile lest their squabbles should endanger the success of the negotiations.

The world cares little how the League is organised or whether it sits at Geneva, Constantinople, or Timbuktu. The constitution of the Council is a matter of local importance, interesting here in Geneva, but hardly affecting the masses farther afield. But it is a great and undeniable good that the leaders of all nations should meet, if only to lay before one another their different points of view. Personal contact is the only basis for a true understanding.

The Genevese and their beautiful city and its politics are merely accidents in the realisation of a practical scheme. Let them realise this lest they discover that they have inadvertently slain the goose that lays the golden eggs, and that the world has gone to find its peace without the aid of the League of Nations or of Geneva.

From this one would conclude that business and trade is flourishing in Geneva, but economic conditions and the state of the cantonal treasury are at present little short of disastrous.

In the Lobby.

How the many-sided opportunities which the League Assembly offers are quickly seized by audacious art students—and probably others—is shown in the following report taken from *The Star* (Sept. 20th):—

The Assembly of the League of Nations is a tame affair compared with the ever-changing life of the Lobby. Everybody is accessible in the Lobby of the League—"Sir Austen," "The Lord" (Lord Cecil), M. Briand, "Nansen," are successfully captured, first by one, then by another protagonist or journalist.

At the moment, I am watching with absorbing interest a pretty bit of Lobby play by a very insistent group of "lobbyists." Bright-faced and brightly-dressed girl artists, intent upon their job, are casting the "glad (artistic) eye" round for well-known Members.

One, near the window, is regarding her quarry first from this angle, then from that, asking herself, "Will he make a good sketch?" The quarry appears to be nobly unconscious of the "glad eye," but his slight nervousness betrays his thoughts, which are certainly, "Will she sketch me?" Alas for vanity! Mademoiselle passes on with the unromantic mental reflection, "He may make a good sketch, but he won't sell!"

Another fair damsel, however, has got a great stroke of luck. Paul Boncour, the ever-popular and brilliant French orator, is seated in yonder corner engaged in animated discussion with a German journalist—a great chance!

Coyly she approaches him, and waiting for a lull in the flow of conversation, she lightly pounces upon her victim—"Will Monsieur permit?"

An Englishman would be "too busy," but what could a Frenchman say? Only what M. Paul Boncour did say—"Mademoiselle flatters me!"

Then with amazing rapidity Mademoiselle gets to work with pencil and brush, whilst the French statesman reclines comfortably in his chair, alternately smoking his huge cigar, discussing politics with his German interviewer, and lightly throwing across his shoulder to Mademoiselle little flatteries not meant for the ear of the public.