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communication between Geneva and Lausanne in the west and the Engadine in the east, and should prove a boon to both summer and winter visitors to Switzerland. Plans and concessions for the line were obtained as far back as 1908, and actual construction was started three years later. Work had, however, to be suspended on the outbreak of the war, but the line from Brig to Gletsch, the Rhine Glacier station, has been open since 1915. Lack of funds, however, prevented the completion of the whole enterprise until last April, when work was resumed and carried out with the utmost dispatch. The railway, which is of the narrow-gauge type, is operated by steam traction. In its stretch of 60 miles it passes over more than fifty viaducts and through twelve tunnels and several avalanche galleries. It reaches its highest point at Furka Station (7,093 ft.), after passing through a mile-long tunnel under the famous Furka Pass.

And for those others whose idea of bliss is Speed, especially speed attained under difficult circumstances, the Coupe Internationale des Alpes, described in the following, will bring a few thrills, no doubt. Says the *Motor* of April 13th (note the date!):—

**Alpine Motor Trials.**

Acceleration and brake test, and a 50 kilo. "resistance" test on bad surfaces, will be features of the trial, in addition to the reliability test over the whole distance of 3,295 miles.

Early in August a contest, organised by "L'Auto," will be held among the French Alps, starting at Nice and ending on the French shore of the Lac Léman. The daily distances will be easy compared with those to be covered in the other trials.

Greatest of all will be the first Coupe Internationale des Alpes, organised conjointly by France, Italy, Germany and Switzerland. Originally Austria was included, but withdrew owing to disagreement with the conditions of the contest. The trial will be a strenuous one, averaging 500 kilometres (310 miles) a day over the Central Alps. The different stages are as follows: August 19th, Milan to Nice; August 20th, rest at Nice; August 21st, Nice to Geneva; August 22nd, rest at Geneva; August 23rd, Geneva to Zurich; August 24th, rest at Zurich; August 25th, Zurich to Wiesbaden; August 26th, rest at Wiesbaden; August 27th, Wiesbaden to Merano; August 28th, rest at Merano; August 29th, Merano to Milan. Competing cars will be classified according to cylinder capacity.

But to conclude our "travelling" notes, as it were, further attention is being directed to—

**Swiss Inland Navigation.**

primarily, of course, with a view to getting less expensive means of goods transport, but offering, I should think, a slow and lazy way of seeing Switzerland to those who have time and the inclination for that sort of travel.

The *Newcastle Daily Journal and North Star* (April 16th) states:—

In view of the attention that is being directed to the question of inland navigation, a report just published by the Department of Overseas Trade on River Navigation to Switzerland is of interest. The report gives a full account of the inland traffic upon which Switzerland lays stress. The inference drawn so far is that the results of the 1925 shipping season clearly demonstrated that the large capital invested by Switzerland in Rhine shipping interests can only be made to pay when the duration of the shipping season between Strasbourg and Basle can be extended to more than 300 days a year, instead of from 90 to 180, as is the case at present. It is held by the Basle Shipping Board that with a yearly traffic of two million tons entering or leaving Switzerland by the Rhine route the saving in freight costs would amount to nearly five million Swiss francs a year. Switzerland is, therefore, keen on seeing her projects for the regularisation of the Rhine between Strasbourg and Basle carried out as soon as possible. The French projects for utilising the Rhône from the Swiss frontier onwards towards Lyons as a source of power, and for rendering that stretch of river navigable, have also been focusing the attention, not only of the Swiss authorities, but also of the public. These projects are coupled with those for the utilisation of the Lake of Geneva as a regulator of the flow of the Rhône, and their execution would involve variations of nearly two metres in the level of that lake. Such fluctuations would probably prove a source of great inconvenience to riparian proprietors; a strong opposition has therefore been growing among the public in Western Switzerland, and the Swiss delegates on the Franco-Swiss Rhône Commission have now proposed to limit the amplitude of these variations. The canal which was being made at Thoune (Canton Berne) to enable steamboats to moor alongside the railway station was completed and inaugurated in June last.

**Success of Dead Man's Invention.**

To the ordinary person it always seems that Steel is Steel, and that the metal necessarily is heavy. Why? the ordinary person, of course,

could not tell. But it is at least somewhat startling to read the following.

*Sunday Express* (April 18th):—

A new steel invented by M. Boshard, a Swiss engineer, of Zurich, who died a few months ago, is now claimed to be 40 per cent. lighter and 30 per cent. cheaper than the present product. Experts recently tested the steel at Zurich and Dresden, and reported that the new steel is specially suitable for building railway bridges.

Fancy, Steel weighing 40 per cent. less than Steel, and 30 per cent. cheaper. I have renewed hopes of being able, by and by, to exchange my "bus" for a real car!

The Budget Speech has not exactly stunned me, as it was not to be expected that the present Government could cut into the flesh of its supporters too much. The steady increase in expenditure is a phenomenon which I understand from personal experience, but which must be condemned all the same as unhealthy and antagonistic to the interests of the community. I have spoken!

I might be justified in feeling gloomy to-day. Beer is not going to be cheaper, nor is the income-tax going to be less, and although I do take coffee regularly after meals, I don't think that the chicory excise repeal will make me happier. And I am much too gentle to harbour any malicious joy over the prospects of some of my more fortunate—in point of cash—friends having to pay more tax on their posh cars, whereas my modest 12-H.P. will jog along at the same rate, which is anyhow too much already.

But at the back of my head there is an uneasy feeling to-day, due probably to the fact that the Budget ought to have been much better and failed to be so. On the other hand, it may be an attack of flu, or of the blues, or anything. However, let's not talk about it any longer and get on with the job.

**The French-Swiss Free Zones.**

The next unpleasant item in our list is the following from the *Manchester Guardian* of 16th April:—

The Foreign Minister, M. Motta, has made an important statement in the Swiss Senate on the Free Zones dispute between France and Switzerland. Since 1919 France and Switzerland have been in disagreement as to whether the free zones between Geneva and Upper Savoy are legally still in existence, and as to what should be the new economic relations between the populations in those districts. In November, 1923, the Poincaré Government, which had always refused the Swiss proposals to submit the dispute to arbitration, virtually abolished the free zones by posting French Customs officers directly on the French-Swiss frontier, notwithstanding a Swiss protest. In the autumn of 1924 M. Herriot came to an agreement with the Swiss Government under which the question whether the free zones conformed to international law should be submitted to the World Court. After the Court decision the French and Swiss Governments were to enter into negotiations on the economic situation. If agreement were still impossible, the World Court should also arbitrate on the economic aspects of the dispute.

This arbitration treaty was ratified by Switzerland nearly a year ago, but the French Parliament has not yet discussed it. French suggestions were made to Switzerland that M. Motta should not insist on a decision by the World Court, but should immediately enter into economic negotiations. Obviously the French hoped that Switzerland would come to accept the abolition of the free zones as an accomplished fact, and be willing to negotiate in order to get better economic conditions than those imposed by Poincaré's arbitrary act.

M. Motta has now declared in the most categorical terms that the Swiss Government absolutely refuses to enter into any economic negotiations on this matter before France has ratified the Herriot treaty and the legal dispute has been submitted to the World Court. The determination of the Swiss Government to get international justice is by no means weakened by the economic pressure exerted since November, 1923.

Concerning the above, I refrain from further comments. They seem not called for. The only comment I will make is to express thanks to Providence for providing our country with a man of the stamp of Mr. Motta. We need him.

My readers will—or will not, as the case may be—remember the controversy which arose in these columns some months ago anent the question of Swiss-Russian Relations.

Since then has come the attack of Chicherin, an attack directed not so much against Switzerland as against the League of Nations and the Powers connected with it, and especially their motives in calling the Disarmament Conference. However justified our Government may have been in its attitude, regret is still being expressed by many influential newspapers that a formula was not found to bridge over the difficulties, and frequent mention is made of the nefarious influence exercised over the Swiss Government by a certain class of our citizens who thought they were right in seeing 'red.'

'C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas politique' we might now say to them!

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 Dante, Inferno, C. xxvii.

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## World Economics.

Daily Telegraph (April 13th):—

On Friday there will assemble at Geneva the Preparatory Committee for the World Economic Conference, originally proposed to the League Council by M. Loucheur. M. Gustave Ador, the veteran Swiss statesman, will preside. . . .

Some members of the committee may incline to a dangerous system of compulsory world-distribution in regard to raw materials, on Socialistic and International lines. Its proceedings will therefore require to be very closely watched by those nations that are rich in raw materials, in view of the covetousness of others less favoured.

The Yorkshire Post of April 21st, dealing with the same subject:—

... Judging from what is being published here on the subject, the Preparatory Committee will, first of all, discuss the conditions of world production. It is argued that in certain industries, the metal trades, for example, production is disorganised. The French are concerned about their supplies of raw material, and certain economic writers are suggesting that this question, as well as the tendency to create monopolies in favour of some countries to the detriment of the world's requirements, will come before the Preparatory Committee.

Another matter to be debated is what is called "economic nationalism," the raising up of exaggerated Customs barriers which prevent the circulation of merchandise and restrict the exchanges. Here the recent action of the French Government is increasing, with only a few exceptions, the Customs duties by 30 per cent. will come under notice. . . .

Readers of *The Swiss Observer* will perhaps recall that I have always been in favour of "pooling raw materials" and abolishing Customs duties everywhere. Some people, of course, cannot see farther than their own selfish ends and call "utopian" anything which they think might run against their own interests. But the world is marching on all the same, slowly but surely, and the time will come—please put this in, Mr. Editor, because it will make some readers wild!—when the absurdity of having to pay for train fares will be apparent to most of us!

Meanwhile, even Mr. Motta had to deplore, publicly, the dangers of secret diplomacy adopted recently by some Powers at Geneva.

## Secret Diplomacy at Geneva.

The Manchester Guardian of April 14th says:

The Swiss Senate held a League of Nations discussion. Various senators protested against the return of methods of secret diplomacy during the extraordinary League Assembly in March. Secret negotiations had prevented any action being taken by the League Assembly itself, and might have been one of the causes of the failure. They insisted that the Swiss Government should promote the increased influence of the Assembly within the League.

The Foreign Minister, M. Motta, agreed that the secret diplomacy during the March session was deplorable. The Swiss Government wishes to prevent "the old diplomacy" becoming a Geneva tradition, and this is one reason why the Swiss Government is opposed to an increase in the number of Council members. If the Council is increased, a small executive committee of the Great Powers might be constituted, working by secret diplomacy, and excluding any real influence of the smaller States.

M. Motta repeated that the Swiss Government is of opinion that permanent Council seats should only be granted to the universally recognised Great Powers—France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the United States. The Swiss Government, therefore, formally instructed the Swiss Delegation to the March Assembly to oppose, for the sake of the League, any increase of permanent or non-permanent seats. Only had a new and unforeseen situation arrived were the Swiss Delegation to have consulted their Government in order to receive possibly some change of instructions.

M. Motta could not say what might be his formal instructions for the Commission on the Council reorganisation, in which M. Motta will represent Switzerland. Although, of course, the main lines will remain unchanged, it is inevitable that M. Motta will have some freedom of movement. If all members came to Geneva with bound hands, agreement would be impossible. Asked whether he would support the Argentine proposal made at the first League Assembly in 1920 to abolish all permanent seats, M. Motta replied that, although this proposal theoretically is right, he does not believe that practically it has any chance of success, as the Great Powers do not seem ready to abolish their privilege.

M. Motta furthermore declared that he was convinced that Germany will collaborate in the League Commission, and that he has been informed that the Argentine Republic also will accept the invitation for membership of the Commission. M. Motta said he considered it useless to discuss the question of unanimity of Council decisions after the Italian statement that Italy has decided to maintain this principle.

## "I NOSTRI BIMBI."

Era ritornato dall'Australia per offrire la sua bella gioventù, forte e baldanzosa, alla gran causa comune; e nei quattro anni circa che durò l'orribile carneficina, egli era là nel vulcano infuocato di Fiandra....

Due volte ebbe alcuni giorni di congedo, per godere un pò di tregna "in più spirabil aeree"... due o tre volte, leggermente ferito, passò per gli ospedali....

Dopo l'armistizio, tornò a Londra con pochi suoi amici, che, come lui, erano fra i più fortunati....

Londra gli piacque; ci si trovava bene, si sentiva "at home"... era sfiduciato e stanco della vita randagia che aveva sempre dovuto fare al di là dei mari... vita di famiglia non ne aveva mai conosciuta; gli morì la madre quand'era bambino, e, giovinetto ancora, emigrò nelle terre lontane.

Poi, in una serata fatidica, in casa d'amici, conobbe "lei"... una fanciulla bionda e rosea, l'affascinò, con la bontà sincera che le si leggeva negli occhi cerulei... decise allora di stabilirsi nella Capitale inglese; si fidanzarono; si sposarono dopo firmata la pace....

Erano felici; vivevano per loro soli... finalmente il povero solitario, reduce dai mari e dalla guerra, aveva un suo nido, un "home"...

Di bambini lui non ne voleva; bimbi?— oh no, non voleva fastidi lui! aveva tribolato abbastanza! ora voleva godere la sua libertà, vivere in pace, dormire sonni indisturbati... voleva la sua mogliettina tutta per lui.... "Bimbi?... oh no, non si usano più" diceva!

Li incontravo alle volte; sempre innamorati, in una continua luna di miele... una volta gli domandai: "Ma... e bimbi?...". "Oh no, non ne vorrò mai! non sono più di moda, costano troppo e siamo felici così!..."

Guardai lei... abbassò gli occhi, mi sembrò si commovesse, credetti sorprendere un fiavole sospiro....

Passarono sette anni; lo incontrai l'altro giorno... "E arrivata!" mi gridò....

"Chi?"

"Una bambina! una creaturina tutta rosea, bionda e bleu come la mamma sua... un tesoro mandotici da Dio! venga a vederla; è una meraviglia!..."

Attonita, guardavo la visibile trasformazione che veniva operandosi nel suo viso, dicendomi queste parole, con tutta serietà!

Vi andai in uno di questi bei pomeriggi di primavera; lui era seduto al sole, nel suo giardino, cullando una carozzella affatto nuova; s'altò in piedi.... "Venga, venga a vederla!..." ed il suo viso era raggiante... l'orgoglio paterno illuminava i suoi occhi neri e sembrava ringiovanito e d'aver riacquisita la sua bella baldanza d'anni indietro; accanto alla sposa sua contemplava estatico quel "cosettino" rosa, sprofondato nella bambagia, pizzi e seta... giuocava delicatamente con quelle manine che sembravano petali di rosa... non sapeva allontanarsi un minuto da quel suo capolavoro! era beato, felice!...

Si accorse della mia meraviglia a tanta metamorfosi....

"Ah" mi disse subito! "ero un egoista! non sapevo come la vita, già bella, può essere migliore... ora non vorrei essere senza bimbi per tutto l'oro del mondo..."

...I bimbi!... ma sono il sorriso della vita, l'incarnazione di noi stessi, il tratto d'unione fra i genitori... sono gli angeli di questa terra, quelle testoline riccicute bionde e nere....

Si, cari bimbi! che spronate i genitori ad alti ideali, a lavorare per voi... che riscaldate il cuore dei nonni; voi, ignari siete la forza, quasi indistinta, la chiara luce di coloro che vi amano e che vivono di voi e per voi!

T. LUNGI-REZZONICO.

## QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

BONDS.	Apr. 19		Apr. 26	
	%	%	%	%
Confederation 3% 1903 ...	80.00		79.75	
" 5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln.	101.67		101.50	
Federal Railways 3½% A-K ...	83.32		82.90	
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	102.32		102.00	
SHARES.				
	Nom.	Apr. 19	Apr. 26	
Swiss Bank Corporation ...	500	718	715	
Crédit Suisse ...	500	777	770	
Union de Banques Suisses ...	500	636	627	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2044	2052	
Fabrique Chimique et-dev. Sandoz	1000	3435	3432	
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe ...	1000	3238	3207	
S.A. Brown Boveri ...	350	464	460	
C. F. Bally ...	1000	1277	1280	
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	353	356	
Entreprises Suizer S.A. ...	1000	1005	994	
Comp. de Navig. n sur le Lac Léman	500	595	595	
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco ...	100	87	90	
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon ...	500	745	745	

## SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

In connection with the scholastic programme the following lectures were given by the students during last week:—

Mr. Walter Berger, Berne: "The Future of the Swiss Industries." Mr. Constantin Bezzola, Florence: "The Roman Language." Mr. Willy Inhelder, Buche: "Auto-Suggestion." Dr. Max Keller, Basle: "Women's Political Rights." Mr.

Traugott Haefeli, Milan: "League of Nations." Mr. Ad. Gruening, Basle: "A Few Considerations about Alcoholism." Mr. Rodolphe Stuber, Biberist: "Advertisements." Mr. Fritz Sandmeier, Baden: "Sounds of Stars." Mr. Otto Martin, Zurich: "Method of Coué." Mr. Max A. Thommen, Zurich: "Modern Young People." Miss Marie Antoinette Joris, Sion: "League of Nations." Miss Hanny Widmer, Lucerne: "Francis Bacon." Miss Schmid, Lucerne: "Girl Scouts in Switzerland." Mr. Max Roessler, Rorschach: "Emigration from Switzerland." Mr. R. R. Rietmann, Zurich: "Buenos Aires."

The debating classes dealt with the following subjects:—

"Should Priests be allowed to marry?" Proposer: Miss Marie Broennimann, Berne; Opposer: Mr. Henri Blom, Soleure. "Should Capital Punishment be abolished?" Proposer: Mr. Max Schelling, Zurich; Opposer: Mr. Max Buchwalder, Biberist. "Are you in favour of the law of Breach of Promise?" Proposer: Mr. Gustave, Berne; Opposer: Mr. Guido Marti, Breitenbach.

On Saturday a lecture was given by Mr. O. Ph. Masterman-Smith on: "The Conflict of National Temperament; the Origin and Effect upon National Politics." A social meeting of the students took place at the Foyer Suisse, followed by national Swiss songs.

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE.  
GROUPE LONDONIEN.

The Monthly Meeting of the London Group of the N.S.H. was held on April 21st at 24, Red Lion Square.

The Treasurer's report was quite a favourable one. There are now only nineteen subscriptions outstanding for 1925, and it is quite possible a majority of these may be recovered, whilst this year's subscriptions are coming in fairly well. Our present system of sharing our offices with the Swiss Institute is also proving an economical arrangement, as well as an entirely satisfactory one in every other respect.

The President brought several communications to the notice of the meeting, viz., a subscription list from the Swiss Sports Committee; a letter drawing attention to a new monthly, "Die Neue Schweizer Rundschau," which is taking the place of "Wissen und Leben"; and various circulars from the Secrétariat des Suisses à l'étranger. One of these gave detailed information about the "Day for the Swiss Abroad," and gave rise to some discussion. Mr. Baer informed the meeting that the Committee had gone into the question of the date of the "Auslandschweizertag," it having been pointed out that Wednesday was not really a good day on which to hold it. Most people started their holidays on a Friday or Saturday, and therefore would probably not be inclined to wait until the Monday to travel in order to arrive at Lausanne in good time for the "Auslandschweizertag." On the other hand, if it were agreed to leave on the Friday or Saturday, many people might not care to wait on in Lausanne until the Wednesday instead of proceeding to their ultimate destinations. It was remarked that it was a great pity this point had not been raised earlier, and, as one could not expect the date of the "Day" to be changed now, the only thing was to do our best to raise a party in the circumstances.

It was agreed by the meeting that sufficient circulars with regard to the "Auslandschweizertag" should be obtained from the S.S.E. in order that we might send them to the various Swiss societies in London, so that they might bring them to the notice of their members and point out to them that, if a sufficiently large party could be got together (at least 24), return tickets to Switzerland would be obtainable at considerably reduced rates.

It was decided that the financial position of the London Group would not allow of it making any propaganda in order to attract English visitors to the "Comptoir," though no doubt many English people would get to hear of it through our efforts to draw the attention of the London Swiss to it, and it is therefore hoped that these would join our party in order to benefit by the cheaper rates.

Dr. H. Egli having very kindly offered to give a lecture to our Group at the end of next month, the meeting discussed the advisability of this. It was pointed out that May was a very bad month for lectures on account of the Whitsun holidays, and the general feeling was that it would hardly be fair to accept the offer if there was every prospect of the attendance being a poor one. It was therefore agreed we should rather arrange for Dr. Egli to speak to us next winter instead, if he would be kind enough to do this. A discussion with regard to the tariff on alcohol having arisen during the course of the evening, it was suggested that for the meantime Dr. Egli might be kind enough to say a few words on this subject at the next Council Meeting (May 19th) in order to stimulate a discussion on a question which is of such grave moment to Switzerland.

One of our members having raised the question of allowing members the right to use our offices for any private purpose, such as giving or receiving lessons, this question was discussed by the meeting. In principle the suggestion was agreed