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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The new building of the Federal Tribunal on Monrepos in Lausanne was inaugurated and taken possession of last Monday.

The new civil code regulating the terms of employment of municipal employees in Zurich provides for the payment of bounties to those who are able to make suggestions which result in the improvement of the administrative services or municipal enterprises.

A strong movement in the canton Aargau seeks to bring about legislation prohibiting the circulation of automobiles and motor cycles during night-time.

At the meeting of cantonal school inspectors at Herisau it was decided to recommend the issue of a new school atlas; the cost is estimated at about 300,000, of which the Confederation is expected to bear two-thirds.

A sudden landslip on the Via Mala (Grisons) carried away one of the road repairers, Kaspar Dönz from Thusis, and it is feared that he has perished in one of the Rhine gorges.

An automobilist in Winterthur who had run into and killed a local farmer, Robert Hintermeister, age 27, from Haldenhof-Elgg, was saved from being badly handled by infuriated witnesses of the accident by the prompt intervention of the police.

Quite a number of deaths have recently been reported through the consumption of poisonous mushrooms, the latest victim being Mr. Ernst Burgdorfer, aged 33, of Lüscherz (Berne).

Through suddenly applying the brakes in order to avoid a collision with a farm cart on the road between Merstetten and Weinfelden (Thurgau), the car of Dr. Ernst Himmel, of Rafz, turned a somersault, burying him and his wife underneath. The lady escaped with minor injuries, while the husband succumbed a short time afterwards to a broken spine.

Col. Franz Bünzli, local commandant of Solothurn, died suddenly, following a stroke of apoplexy, at the age of 57.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### The Game of Boules.

As there are quite a number of skittle enthusiasts in our Colony whose reputation for "Kränz" and "Babelis" is unique, they will be interested to gather from the *Observer* (Sept. 4th) that an International Federation has been formed for the purpose of holding championship meetings.

If you have ever watched a game of boules being played in a country inn of the South of France, or Switzerland, or North Italy, you will be interested to know that the boulistes of these three countries are about to form an international federation, and to hold a championship meeting. Those of us who know the game as practised in the noisy wooden skittle alleys of country inns on Sunday nights, may be inclined to suggest that the championship shall include a medal for the stranger who manages to sleep soundly in his bedroom during a closely-contested match carried far into the night; but, as a matter of fact, the real game is not played in a wooden alley, but in the open village square, with the villagers sitting around in the summer evenings with their white wine and hot sausages. It is nearer to bowls than to skittles, and on the Place Bellecour at Lyons—for the game is Lyonsais in its origin—there are already half-championship competitions, which, without being international, attract large and enthusiastic crowds.

### Survival of the "Unfit."

The World Population Conference at Geneva is productive of many instructive papers, though we need not subscribe to everything which the theorists have prepared for us as to the future outlook; the following is culled from the *Daily News* (Sept. 3rd):

The most interesting paper at the World

Population Conference to-day was read by Mr. E. J. Lidbetter, who had some severe things to say regarding the activities of philanthropists in their efforts to improve the standard of living of a "socially inadequate community."

Mr. Lidbetter spoke specially in regard to conditions in the East End of London, of which he claims to have special knowledge.

The problems of population, he said, could no longer be regarded as essentially economic; they were in the main biological, and economists should modify their teachings accordingly.

Mr. Lidbetter said he had found that inbreeding among feeble-minded, tuberculous and socially deficient groups is common—in fact, more prevalent than in normal groups of population. This habit he regarded as a good thing for the community in general, holding that if defectives must reproduce, it was better they should do so together than that good stocks be vitiated by inbreeding.

Improvement in the standard of living of a "socially inadequate community" appeared to have no effect on a community other than an improvement in survival. Protection through sanitation and hygiene increased the fertility, but in no way raised the quality of the new generation produced.

Mr. Lidbetter showed that reproduction in the socially defective groups much exceeds that of other sections of the community. This phenomenon, he thinks, is not due to a naturally higher fertility ratio, but rather because defectives have neither personal, parental nor social responsibility.

The activities of philanthropists, he said, have to a large extent lifted the burden of responsibility from the shoulders of many of these people, so that the worst class of the community has often a better chance to survive than the best. In many cases adaptation to slum conditions and endowment from various public sources has probably reduced a community that could not otherwise have survived.

## SOCIÉTÉ DES NATIONS.

Au moment où je vous écris, la huitième Assemblée de la S.D.N. vient de terminer l'examen du rapport présenté par le secrétaire.

C'est là une phrase qui semble banale, ennuyeuse à lire, vide de sens. Ce sont pourtant les moments les plus intéressants que l'on puisse vivre lors de l'Assemblée de septembre. En voyez-vous la cause? Elle est simple. Sous prétexte de discuter l'oeuvre accomplie, les délégués des différents pays, petits aussi bien que grands, ont la possibilité de dire franchement ce qu'ils pensent, de remonter contre une emprise sans cesse grandissante de ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler "grandes puissances" et de manifester de la mauvaise humeur qui ne fait point mal vue en de tels lieux.

Cette session qui devait passer "inaperçue," ou presque se révèle comme un des plus palpitantes que nous ayons suivies. Les tensions secrètes ont percé au plein jour, avec beaucoup de politesse, les délégués se sont dit des choses fort désagréables, et, lorsque, par surcroît, hollandais et polonais prétendent reprendre les vieux textes enterrés, on en forge de nouveaux qui auraient mis pour de bon la guerre hors la loi, ce fût une levée de boucliers, de protestations et de récriminations comme on avait encore peu vue à Genève.

Les voix des grandes puissances ont grondé; elles n'étaient pas d'accord. Elles n'en ont pas moins "fait poids" pour écraser les généreux.

On a dit que le projet polonais, par exemple, sous sa forme première comprenait près de 40 pages. A la suite de l'examen minutieux et de la censure remarquable que lui firent subir juridiques anglais et allemands, MM. Hurst et Gaus, il fût réduit à 40 mots!

Vous comprendrez avec moi que tout le monde, n'apprécie pas de la même manière l'oeuvre du rouleau compresseur!

Le grand artiste et le remarquable diplomate qu'est Monsieur Briand grisa ses collègues en se grisant lui-même, des plus belles paroles de paix. A l'ombre de son monocle, impassible et froid, un ministre que vous connaissez bien, tint lui, un langage bien différent. On a reproché à Sir Austen Chamberlain qu'il ne savait pas lui-même où le conduisait sa politique. Peu importe, mais, il y va quand même...et carément!

Inutile de dire que la lourde menace, la tension, et la mauvaise humeur qui se manifestèrent durant cette première semaine eurent leur répercussion, non seulement dans les couleurs et au sein des délégations, mais aussi dans la presse tout entière. Dès que la scène politique s'obscurcit,

## ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

Sept. 19th, 1470.—Agreement with France against Charles the Bold.

Sept. 20th, 1522.—Cardinal Schinner dies at Rome. He was by far the most distinguished Prince of the Church in Switzerland immediately before the Reformation, and in 1521, after the death of Leo X, he missed election to the papacy by no more than one or two votes. In his figure is most strikingly displayed the secularisation of the Church. Schinner had nothing of the ecclesiastic about him except the dress. Just as his master Julius II had mounted town walls by scaling-ladders in person, so Schinner, clad in his red cardinal's robes, led the Swiss army into battle.—*Oechsli*.

Sept. 22nd, 1499.—Peace of Basel. In the treaty of peace the independence of Switzerland was not expressly recognised. The Confederates, however, would no longer permit themselves to be described as "members of the Empire"; and the king was forced to promise the remission and abolition without exception of all feuds, all expressions of disfavour, all bans, all legal proceedings and complaints, undertaken against the Confederates, their allies, and their dependents, before or during the war. In those matters which were not expressly touched upon in the peace, both parties were to remain as they had been before the war. Before the war, however, the Confederates had rendered no military service to the Empire, nor paid any taxes to it, had obeyed neither the resolutions of the Reichstag, nor the commands of the King, nor the judgments of the Imperial Court of Chancery. Since this state of affairs was recognised on the German side as having a legal right to existence, the peace of Basel did establish the practical separation of Switzerland from the Empire, even though the official terminology avoided any open expression of this fact.—*Oechsli*.

Sept. 24th, 1799.—2,500 Russians, under Suwarow, pass the St. Gotthard.

c'est pour mes collègues comme pour moi une course échevelée et qui s'oppose quelque peu aux paisibles vacances d'août.

Ne me demandez pas quel est le résultat auquel on a abouti? Vous savez, comme moi, que l'on cause beaucoup à ces assemblées de Genève, que l'on propose pas mal, que l'on accepte ces propositions, mais que l'on ne décide jamais rien du tout.

Comme le disait si justement certain délégué, la S.D.N. n'est pas un super-Etat, elle ne peut rien décider. Cette déclaration a soulevé pas mal d'opposition, elle n'en est pas moins l'exacte vérité.

Car, au fond, le seul, but—je parle ici au point de vue purement politique, excluant tous les bienfaits déjà accomplis par la S.D.N. dans les domaines hygiénique, intellectuel, sanitaire et social—des assemblées de Genève c'est d'éveiller l'opinion publique du monde entier à l'importance des problèmes internationaux, de lui montrer ce qui menace la paix et de lui laisser voir bien franchement la politique des différentes nations.

Cette huitième Assemblée est, à ce point de vue, une des plus caractéristiques.

Demain, va commencer le travail des commissions mixtes, l'opposition irréductible entre la conception pacifique des grandes et des petites puissances n'y sera point résolue. Les problèmes esquissés dès 1923, et repris cette année, ne pourront se dérouler qu'au cours des sessions à venir. La distance à franchir est trop grande pour qu'elle soit parcourue en cette fin de mois.

Cet intérêt soutenu est une chose à laquelle nous ne nous attendions pas. Il valait la peine que je vous en dise deux mots. *L'observateur.*

## EIDGENÖSSISCHE GLOSSEN.

### Wahrzeichen aller Art.

Der schiefe Turm von St. Moritz soll dennoch gerettet werden. Die Gemeindeversammlung war nicht der gleichen Meinung wie der Gemeindevorstand. Der schiefe Turm sei das "Wahrzeichen des Dorfes." Wäre es nicht wesentlich, 70,000 Fr. für eine neue Schöpfung auszugeben, in diesem St. Moritz, das auf dem Gebiete der Versorgung mit elektrischem Strom (nicht nur auf dem Gebiete der Hotellerie) pioniermässig vorgegangen ist. Ein schiefer Turm ist nicht das rechte Wahrzeichen einer hochalpinen stadtmässigen Siedelung, sondern das Wahrzeichen einer Sentimentalität, die vor der Wirklichkeit die Augen schliesst.