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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The new article of the Federal Constitution facilitating the naturalisation of foreigners residing in Switzerland has been accepted by the voters with a majority of nearly three to one. It is expected that about 2,000 foreigners, mainly children born of a Swiss mother, will acquire Swiss citizenship every year. Generally speaking the new law created no political controversy; scarcely 50 per cent. of the electors went to the polls. In the following table the three rejecting cantons are printed in italics.

	Yes	No
Zurich	106742	16468
Berne	33458	9523
Lucerne	7290	1481
Uri	1938	1149
Schwyz	1812	4896
Obwalden	1200	906
Nidwalden	922	416
Glarus	3763	1200
Zug	1203	414
Fribourg	3935	5124
Solothurn	9439	1600
Basel-Stadt	13611	1363
Basel-Land	6474	1319
Schaffhausen	8027	1188
Appenzell A.Rh.	6322	1827
Appenzell I.Rh.	281	1779
St. Gall	24049	23087
Grisons	7689	4023
Aargau	33192	14120
Thurgau	17956	5316
Tessin	5009	3705
Vaud	39743	28103
Wallis	4807	2133
Neuchâtel	4067	970
Geneva	4952	416
Total	347915	132525

It will be noticed that the largest majorities in favour were recorded by the cantons most affected by this problem: Geneva 14 to 1, Basle 10 to 1, Schaffhausen 7 to 1, Zurich 6 to 1, etc. Appenzell I.Rh. can always be depended upon for saying no to any proposal emanating from Berne. In Schwyz the Catholic-Conservative party resisted the revision whilst Fribourg, another Catholic centre, was little interested in the change.

Replying to a memorandum to the Federal Council submitted by leaders of the female suffrage movement in Geneva, the Council states that the granting of the votes to women would require a revision of the Federal Constitution.

A number of cantonal and municipal proposals were also placed before the electorate during the week-end. In Berne the procedure under the penal code undergoes a revision, the Insel hospital and the gas works are to be extended and a plot of land (Belpmoos) is to be acquired for the purposes of an aviation school.

In a by-election at Zurich the previously unsuccessful Dr. Häberlin (Radical) returns to the Stadtrat with 18,802 votes, his opponent, Dr. Brupbacher (Communist) obtaining 12,183 votes. A Bill regulating civil aviation and another extending unemployment insurance found favour.

In Basel-Stadt the members of the Regierungsrat (Executive) were granted the long overdue increase of Frs. 2,000 in their emoluments.

The electors of Obwalden refused to sanction the proposed addition of 11 to their Kantonsrat, the number of its members remaining at 28.

The civil servants of the town of Solothurn are to receive an increase in their salaries necessitating an extra annual expenditure of Frs. 46,000.

In connection with the recent frontier incident when two Italian deserters were without much ado handed back to the Italian frontier guards, the Ticinese States Council has now, as a disciplinary measure, suspended for one month the chief of the cantonal police, Capt. Ferrario.

The Ticinese poet Francesco Chiesa was made an honorary doctor of the University of Rome last Saturday, when all the professors and students and a distinguished gathering of scientists and politicians attended the impressive ceremony.

M. Robert Hofmann, one of the founders and a former president of the Secretariat des Suisses à l'Etranger in Fribourg, died in La Tour-de-Peilz at the age of 50 after a prolonged illness.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### Henri Dunant.

Of the many references which appeared in the English Press to remind us of the centenary of Henri Dunant's birth the following from the *Catholic Tablet* (May 12th) contains some singular allusions. We do not wish to quarrel with our contemporary. Belated religious polemics cannot impair the merit of Henri Dunant, and it has certainly not been enhanced by the fact that he was a Protestant; his work is above factitious conceptions. We firmly believe, however, that if the lofty ideals of our great compatriot had been identified with any particular religious doctrine they would not have obtained that unqualified universal response which culminated in the creation of the International Red Cross and which, thanks to the very absence of that association, is developing on a much wider basis than the original founder ever dreamed of. We do not dispute that the "Camillians" distributed milk of human kindness at the battle of Solferino, though we have never heard of it before, but we do know that similar acts of charity are on record from many other battlefields before that memorable date, though the noble dispensers have not been canonised. We are also informed that the Camillian samaritans wore red crosses at Solferino, but the *Tablet* omits to point out to its readers that this is in no way responsible for the ultimate adoption of this particular escutcheon.

"Let all due honour be paid to the memory of Henri Dunant, founder of the International Red Cross organisation as now established at Geneva. Last Tuesday was the centenary of Dunant's birth. But, in asking that he may have the whole of his "due" honour, it is not ungracious to express the hope that he and the Geneva Red Cross will no longer be given credit which belongs to others. Not very many years ago, an English Catholic lady published through Messrs. Burns, Oates & Washbourne a well-informed and soundly argued book called "The First Red Cross," in which it was shown beyond all possibility of contradiction that Catholics were the pioneers of succour for the wounded and dying upon the battlefield and that the trained men who risked their lives in this noble work wore a Red Cross as their emblem. We are alluding to the splendid sons of Saint Camillus de Lellis, who was himself a soldier. The Camillians had been risking their lives as trained helpers of the wounded on many a battlefield for hundreds of years before the Geneva Red Cross was heard of. In the remarkable book already mentioned, it is shown that Henri Dunant must have seen the Camillians wearing their Red Crosses and giving first aid at the battle of Solferino. Everybody who knows anything about the Geneva movement is aware that Dunant's Red Cross work was the outcome of his Solferino experiences. He wrote a book describing the sufferings of the wounded on the Solferino field, and therein pleaded for an international organisation which should be respected by the bel-

ligerents on both sides, in the sacred name of our common Christianity.

It is now more than sixty years since the splendid effort of Henri Dunant was crowned with success. Delegates from sixteen countries repaired to Geneva in 1864, and there drafted the famous Convention by which it was agreed that ambulances and field-hospitals should be protected from gun-fire by the flying of a flag with a Red Cross on a white ground. This humane movement quickly made progress until "firing on the Red Cross" came to be regarded as a barbarity which placed the perpetrator of such an outrage beneath the contempt of civilised peoples. Long may the Geneva Red Cross flourish; and long may the memory of Henri Dunant be venerated! None the less we must express our deep regret that certain persons connected with this great work seem determined that its Catholic origin shall be buried out of sight. The biographies of Henri Dunant which have been appearing this week have laid stress on his coming from "an old patrician and Protestant family" and on his early enthusiasm for the Y.M.C.A. movement. Whether these strongly non-Catholic associations disposed him unfavourably to the Catholic Church we are not in a position to say; but the fact remains that Protestants are surprised and even a little indignant when they are told that Dunant cannot have helped seeing the Red Cross Camillians in the thick of the fight at Solferino. A few years ago we were shown a correspondence with the Editor of the official magazine of the Geneva Red Cross. Unhappily this gentleman, who had published a misleading review of the English book, "The First Red Cross," which we have already mentioned, refused to let a rejoinder on points of fact be placed before his readers.

Somebody may ask how it has come about that the Camillians have not spoken up more loudly as the rightful heirs to Red Cross honours. They are still a vigorous Order; indeed, it is often said in Rome that no parish in the Eternal City is more splendidly worked than that which is staffed by the sons of Saint Camillus de Lellis. Although they are not likely to thank us for saying so, it is within our knowledge that these devoted men are conscious of the injustice that has been done to them. Not for the whole world, however, would they cry out against the Geneva Society, seeing that it is doing the very work which was so dear to the soldier Saint who was their founder. Moreover, the Geneva Convention was signed at a time when there was still an enormous amount of prejudice against the Religious Orders, so far as the Protestant Powers were concerned; and the Camillians knew that it would do much more harm than good to the cause of wounded soldiers if the work of the Catholic pioneers were harped upon."

### The Uri Landsgemeinde.

The disappearance of this old historic landmark has not passed unnoticed in the English Press. The *Outlook* (May 12th) has the following short note:—

"The news that the canton of Uri is to abolish its annual assembly of its male citizens would have fluttered Victorian doves. I suppose that hardly anyone reads Freeman nowadays, but it was once orthodox to teach Englishmen to look to Uri and, I think, Appenzell, for surviving examples of the tribal moot, from which democracy sprang. Indeed, the doctrine may have helped to found the popularity of Switzerland as a holiday resort, but winter sports and votes for women have proved too much for the Teutonic tradition."

and the *Times* (May 11th) publishes a lament from a correspondent:—

"It is with much regret that I learn from the telegram from your Geneva Correspondent in to-day's issue that in the Canton of Uri the Landsgemeinde, or open-air Legislative Assembly of male citizens, is no longer to be held; a regret which will doubtless be shared by those who have read the account of these historic assemblies in Freeman's "Growth of the English Constitution," or Capper's "Shores and Cities

of the Boden See," and still more by any who have been present on one of these impressive occasions.

This was the privilege of the late Judge Lock and myself in 1886, when, on the first Sunday in May, we followed the procession of officials and others from Altdorf to the green meadow of Bötzingen, where the citizens of Uri met according to immemorial custom, and in the course of four hours passed their Ministers, voted their taxes, and passed new laws. At this assembly progressive taxation was, after an animated debate, adopted for the first time in the Canton. But the occasion was especially memorable in that the year was the 500th anniversary of the battle of Sempach. The Landammann, in his opening speech, referred to this great victory which had secured the independence of the four forest cantons, and continued: "Getreue liebe Landleute, we hold our Landsgemeinde to-day on the same spot where our ancestors decided to fight for their liberties and ours. Let us follow their great example. The character of our warfare has changed; we have peaceful work to perform instead of waging war; but we have our vigour and existence to maintain, and this we can only do through a childlike, devout trust in God. Let future generations speak well of us, too; and though we have not won victory in battle, may they say that we have preserved our religion, and maintained the State, and have handed on to them the same glorious inheritance." Then followed an appeal for God's guidance in their work, and a minute or two of silent prayer."

**Exchange of Electrical Energy.**

A most instructive *exposé* on this subject is contained in *Electrical Industries* (May 9th); it consists of extracts from an article written by a well-known authority, M. Genissieu, chief inspector of bridges and roads in France:—

"Switzerland exported 850 million kw.-h. in 1926. There were no exchanges between the Société Suisse pour le transport et la distribution d'Electricité (S.K.) and the Société de Distribution d'Electricité du pays de Bade (B.W.). These two concerns have connected their networks at Laufenburg on the Rhine. The S.K. delivers in summer 10,000 kw. in the day, 14,000 in the night and Sundays. In winter the B.W. delivers 6,000 kw., proceeding partly from Goldenberg. This station, in the lignite basin of Cologne, is inter-connected with the Bade district by a 270 kilometre line at 110,000 volts. In this exchange, the distance from Goldenberg to Switzerland is more than 500 km., but it is not covered in one step. Goldenberg delivers steam-generated current to Mannheim. The hydro-electric stations of Murg, which supply Mannheim, supply Laufenburg with current, and the Swiss power stations themselves which serve Laufenburg absorb in their own network the energy thus set free. Evidently it may happen that some time or another Goldenberg will transmit power direct to Switzerland; it has already once happened that the Vincay central stations of the Compagnie Lorraine d'Electricité sent a supply across Switzerland to Florence; but these exceptions must not convey any misapprehension as to the actual march of events. We proceed step by step, slowly.

'Between Austria and Germany similar links exist, and developments are proceeding. Politics have entered into the economic aspect of the question, and for certain parties the transmission lines crossing the frontiers are a tangible sign of an Austro-German rapprochement."

M. Genissieu goes on to say that Italy seems to wish to put herself outside these interchanges; she imports from Switzerland about 200 million kw.-h. a year, but in 1927 a tax was imposed which bids fair to hinder, and even to diminish, this development.

Turning to Canada, the writer gives a summary of points with which readers in this country are fairly familiar, and proceeds to another interesting aspect of international exchange of bulk supply.

'So far,' he writes, 'we have been concerned with exchanges interesting two countries. One can imagine more complex conditions where one country is crossed by transmission lines which do not affect it, and where two different countries are linked across the territory of a third.

'An Italian line crosses the salient that our frontier makes in the Roya region; only two countries are here interested. But the German-Swiss station of Laufenburg on the Rhine sends to Fribourg-en-Brisgau current which traverses the French Ile Napoléon, near Mulhouse.

'We have seen enough,' continues M. Genissieu, 'to understand the essential difference between the transport of power and the transport of actual tangible goods. When the Westphalian coal wagons cross Switzerland, the Federal Railways draw a good profit from this transport, and see without regret this foreign product passing; a high-tension line crossing Switzerland to connect the Ruhr with Milan is a different affair altogether. The electric power, whether flowing north or south, could have been produced in her

own mountains, and no dues could compensate for the loss.

'Similarly with Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary, and with all countries producing current, which will never willingly allow other power-lines linking their neighbours with their own potential customers to cross their territory. In fact, of all the European countries, perhaps the only one which has no interest in opposing such transit is Denmark. But the distance between the Scandinavian peninsula and Germany is great. Much time will elapse before this line will exist; many Swiss and Austrian waterfalls will be harnessed, much coal will be mined, before we can envisage this possibility.

'Exchanges of power between countries are yet only at an immature stage. In spite of the hostility of laws, they have already taken an important place in international economy, and their importance will grow, for they answer a need. Countries desirous of pushing the utilisation of their own natural resources will hinder development, but will not suppress it.' The evolution of technique, says M. Genissieu, will gradually solve the problems of transit. Power lines of greater and greater length will be erected; 'perhaps we shall even be able to transmit energy across seas and frontiers by waves.' When on tropical coasts we have built huge generating stations utilising the effect of varying temperature at different sea levels, as has been suggested by MM. Claude and Bouche-rot; when we know how to transmit to Europe the prodigious energy of the Congo cataracts, then we shall be compelled to solve these diplomatic problems. We are not yet at that stage, though it may come sooner than we think.'

**Stein am Rhein.**

A delightful description of this place is published in *The Field* (May 10th): if we remember rightly its inhabitants enjoy the unique distinction of not having to pay any local taxes:—

"Stein-am-Rhein is one of the most satisfactory discoveries I have made in many years' search up and down Europe. It is found in the north-east corner of Switzerland, on the right bank of the Rhine, where that river issues from the Lake of Constance. Near by is the German frontier. A wooden bridge connects the town with Burg, on the opposite side of the Rhine, where are to be seen vestiges of the Helvetic-Roman fortress of Tasgetium. Close by is the island of Weerd, with its great rock from the glacial period, which gave Stein (once written "Staine") its name. Markings of stone-age peoples who perhaps whetted their weapons here are seen on the rock. On this island, too, is an interesting chapel to the memory of St. Otmar, Abbé of St. Gall, who lived in exile and died here.

Stein preserves a large number of beautiful relics of its storied past. There are many buildings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the square in front of the Town Hall is a row of houses, all with quaint bay-windowed chambers on the first floor, and all curiously decorated outside with allegorical wall-paintings. Several of these houses are now inns. In the square, too, is a charming old fountain dating from 1601, with its figure of an ancient Swiss, while at the corner is the house in which the celebrated diplomat Johann Rudolf Smidt, later Baron von Schwarzenhorn, was born in 1590. The interior is Gothic, and it has dwarf Gothic balconies, and wall-paintings of the sixteenth century. Schwarzenhorn is one of the town's honourable memories; sold as prisoner of war in Constantinople in 1624, he became ambassador, and in 1629 Austrian Resident at the Turkish Court; in 1647 he became War Minister and returned to the Fatherland with great honours. A painter and also a poet, he died at Vienna in 1667.

The Rathaus (Town Hall), with Haeblerius's frescoes of the Return of the Victors of Morat, Zwingli preaching at Stein in 1529, etc., is also a gothic building, dating from 1539, and partly restored. On the second floor is the municipal museum, full of arms and armour, paintings on glass, and banners of the middle ages, notably the oldest town flag (fourteenth century), and the banner presented by Pope Julius II. in 1512 to the Stein contingent which took part in the expedition to Italy. The parish church is of the 12th century, and, close at hand, the old Arsenal dates from the sixteenth, with frescoes of 1622. The Steinbock, once the Chapel of St. Agatha, with its Gothic arches and sculptures, is another place worthy of attention, as also is the former Benedictine Monastery of St. George, founded in 1005 by the Emperor Henry the Holy. The present building—fourteenth and sixteenth century—is the best preserved monastery of the middle ages in Central Europe, and its refectory, abbot's chamber, and other fine rooms, with wood carvings and frescoes, exercise a magnetic charm over the visitor.

Just outside the town is the Thief's or Witch's Tower, and on the hill overlooking Stein, only half-an-hour's walk away, is the Castle of Hohenklingen (1457). Down the

river by row-boat or up and down by small steamers which call regularly, one may make many an outing into the country or to other tiny communities, charming in their quiet age and peaceful settings. The surrounding country is agricultural, with vineyards as a prominent feature; there are no industries with ugly modern masses of bricks and mortar to mar the beauty of the landscape, and the population of Stein itself remains practically stationary at under 3,000 souls.

**The Richest Country.**

The following is taken from the *Evening Standard* (May 10th); it would be interesting to know how these figures are arrived at. Perhaps one of our subscribers may be able to supply the tables referred to:—

"Americans have seemingly a never satisfied desire for statistics of all kinds, and the latest to reach me are tables comparing the wealth of all the principal countries of the world which have been prepared by a firm in the United States.

These show that Americans are not, after all, the richest people in the world. The honour belongs to one of our own Dominions, New Zealand, where the average wealth per person is just over £663.

Switzerland comes second, with an average wealth of approximately £599, and America is third with £588.

The average wealth in our own country is £538, while at the other end of the table comes Russia, with an average wealth of only £43, which seems to indicate that the levelling process has depressed the rich without increasing the wealth of the ordinary individual very much."

**QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.**

BONDS.	May 15	May 22
Confederation 3% 1903	82.37	82.25
5% 1917. VIII Mob. Ln	102.25	102.00
Federal Railways 3 1/2% A-K	86.32	86.15
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	102.12	102.37

  

SHARES.	Nom.	May 15	May 22
Swiss Bank Corporation	Fr. 500	Fr. 733	Fr. 825
Crédit Suisse	500	910	945
Union de Banques Suisses	500	725	742
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2735	2720
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	4625	4575
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	3970	3910
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	633	621
C. F. Bally	1000	1615	1570
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	936	921
Entreprises Suizer S.A.	1000	1245	1245
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	522	520
Linolemum A.G. Giubiasco	100	326	324
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	800	830

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