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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The *Gazette de Lausanne* criticises the action of the State in subsidising the watchmaking industry, which may create a dangerous precedent.

By its recent action of granting the watchmaking industry a credit of five million francs, the Swiss National Council has touched upon a delicate problem and has created a dangerous precedent. As might well be expected, this action has led to similar demands from other industries. The member for St. Gall immediately claimed a subsidy of 25 million francs for the embroidery industry. Another "député" demanded financial help from the State for the cotton industry, and the hotel and footwear industries have put forward similar claims. The movement will soon spread to all Swiss export industries, some of which are in as precarious a position as the watchmaking industry, and there is no reason why the State should refuse some what it has granted to others.

\* \* \*

For the current year the personnel of the Swiss Civil Service numbers 34,457, that of the Federal Railways 37,170, total 71,627, whose pay roll amounts to 476,083,900 francs per annum.

\* \* \*

The Geneva Chamber of Commerce has decided to oppose the ratification by Switzerland of the recently concluded Franco-Swiss Convention modifying the "free zones" round Geneva.

\* \* \*

The election of the Geneva Council of State on November 12th and 13th, which was most hotly contested between the Democratic, Socialist and Radical parties, resulted in a decisive victory of the Democratic Party, all their candidates being elected with an overwhelming majority. Returned are: Boveyron with 17,095 votes, Mussard 16,212, Perrenoud 11,919, Gavard 11,747, Gignoux 10,949, Ruty 10,333, Dusseiller 9,488.

\* \* \*

The French Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques decided in secret session to nominate M. Gustave Ador, formerly President of the Swiss Confederation, for the seat which has become vacant through the death of Lord Ray.

\* \* \*

Dr. F. Calonder, a former Swiss President, has been appointed by the League of Nations Council to preside at

the Polish-German negotiations with regard to the economic régime and protection of minorities in Upper Silesia.

\* \* \*

The Draft Convention on the Weekly Rest Day, which was discussed by the International Labour Conference, passed its first reading by 68 votes to 28.

An amendment proposing the deletion of the paragraph imposing upon certain undertakings the obligation to allow rest compensation to workers who are unavoidably compelled to forgo the privilege of weekly rest was rejected by 51 votes to 48. Another amendment, establishing a 24-hour weekly rest for journalists and prohibiting the publication and sale of newspapers on Sundays, was also rejected.

\* \* \*

In a libel action brought by two editors of a liberal daily against the editor of the Bernese *Tagwacht* the judge found that he could not consider the word "canaille" a punishable insult, its use in journalistic warfare having become fairly frequent.

In commenting upon this judicial decision, the Bernese correspondent of the *Gazette de Lausanne* asks quite pertinently what sort of a face this judge might have made if the two plaintiffs had put to the test this newly-laid-down code of honour on its author by taking leave from him with the following words: "Au revoir, canaille!"

\* \* \*

The big skating rink at Davos was opened on Monday, a week earlier than last winter.

\* \* \*

Professor E. Bovet, who has been reading French and Italian literature at the University of Zurich for two decades, is leaving that post at the end of this year to take up the duties of Secretary-General to the "Schweizerische Vereinigung für den Völkerbund."

In his letter of resignation to the Zurich Board of Education Professor Bovet writes:—

"Schon bei der Berufung, im Jahre 1901, hatte ich mir vorgenommen, mit dem fünfzigsten Jahre zurückzutreten. Als die Stunde schlug, wurde dieser grundsätzliche Entschluss doch nicht ausgeführt; die Liebe zur akademischen Jugend und das herrliche Verhältnis zu den Kollegen Gauchat und Jud hielten mich fest. Seither haben sich aber verschiedene Dinge entwickelt, die mich heute zur Demission führen. Hier kann ich nur den einen Grund, den wichtigsten und zwingenden, erwähnen.

Wenige Jahre nach der Berufung erfolgte in mir ein tiefer Wandel der Weltauffassung, der in der Gründung von "Wissen und Leben" seinen Ausdruck fand. Wenn jemand glauben sollte, dass diese Beschäftigung mit politischen, sozialen und ethischen Fragen die Tätigkeit des Dozenten beeinträchtigte, so würde ich zwar diese Auffassung durchaus begreifen, und weiss doch bestimmt, dass sie irrig wäre. Der innige Kontakt mit dem öffentlichen Leben hat meinen Blick für die Zusammenhänge in der Literaturgeschichte erweitert, hat gewisse Probleme vertieft und meinen Unterricht befruchtet. Von einer Kollision der Interessen und der Pflichten habe ich bis vor ungefähr einem Jahre nichts gemerkt.