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HOME NEWS

The third meeting at Geneva of the League of Nations came to an end last Saturday after four weeks of deliberations. The general consensus of opinion seems to be that some useful work has been accomplished, although no great decisions have been taken.

The outstanding feature is the agreement with reference to the financial reconstruction of Austria; the scheme provides for a credit of 520 million gold Kronen, in which Switzerland would participate to the extent of 10 per cent. Another question upon which the League deliberated was the settlement of the Near Eastern problem, but the precipitated pace of military events in Asia Minor have rendered further discussion abortive.

On the question of universal disarmament useful work has been done in preparing the ground, but present conditions are not propitious for unanimous action.

* * *

The commercial treaty with Spain has been ratified in the face of considerable opposition in the National Council by Swiss vine growers.

* * *

A new commercial treaty with Italy is under debate, and the Federal Council has delegated the following three gentlemen to represent Swiss interests: Dr. Alfred Frey, will represent commercial and industrial interests; Dr. Laur, agriculture; Dr. Wetter, political economy; and M. Gassmann, the Customs.

* * *

The recent arrangement with France as regards the Savoy Zones has been challenged, sufficient signatures for a referendum having been lodged. The popular vote will not be taken until the French Chambers have ratified the agreement.

* * *

The Association of Navigation on the Upper Rhine held, on September 30th, its annual meeting at Basle in the presence of official representatives of the neighbouring States and also of Great Britain and the United States. The accounts and reports were duly adopted, and Mr. W. Stauffacher was re-elected president. In his address he stated that the agreement arrived at by the International Rhine Commission was an unsatisfactory solution, and laid stress upon the necessity of free navigation on the natural bed of the Rhine as the only means of safeguarding Swiss interests.

Records are being registered of the tonnage handled in the Rhine Harbour at Basle. Up to the end of September 154,369 tons were dealt with, as against 96,653 tons recorded in 1913 (the previous highest total on record).

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Towards the end of last month the bodies of seventeen Belgian soldiers, who died in Switzerland during their internment, were exhumed and entrained to Namur in Belgium, where they will be given up to their families to find their last resting place in their native soil.

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Some interesting figures came to light at a sitting of the Town Council of Berne, when the administration of municipal enterprises (tramways, electric works, etc.) came under discussion. It was stated that during last year about 55 per cent. of the employees had reported themselves ill, and taken advantage of the benefits under the State Insurance Act.

* * *

The fourth centenary of the death of Cardinal Mathaeus, Schinner was celebrated on the 1st of October in his native village of Ernen in the canton of Valais.

No more stimulating example exists in the annals of history than that of the boy who, from singing on the roads for bread, rose to pass on as a Cardinal to the Vatican, from where he led the destinies of his country.

In glorious sunshine, the scenery fired with rich autumnal colouring, a large gathering met to honour the memory of this great son of Switzerland on the market place of the picturesque old village. Representatives of the Confederation and historians joined the clergy to listen to the speeches and to hear Bishop Bieler of Sitten dispense the special benediction of the Pope on this historical anniversary.

* * *

A monument, erected in memory of the Zurich citizens who lost their lives in the service of their country during the Great War, was unveiled, on September 24th, at Küssnacht, at which ceremony Federal President Haab gave a stirring address, from which we extract the following:—

Als im Hochsommer 1914 der Weltenbrand ausbrach und Land um Land ergriff und unser Volksheer aufgerufen wurde, die Grenzen zu besetzen, und dem Uebergreifen der Flammen zu wehren, damals schlugen die Herzen aller Eidgenossen, derer vom Rheine, derer von der Rhone und derer vom Tessin zusammen in dem einheitlichen Willen, Gut und Blut für den Schutz unseres Landes einzusetzen. Und aus den Augen der Männer jeglichen Alters und jeglichen Standes, die ihre Heimwesen, Werkstätten, Fabriksäle und Schreibstuben verlassend, Bataillon auf Bataillon, Batterie auf Batterie, Schwadron auf Schwadron der Grenze zu marschierten, leuchtete die ernste, heilige Liebe zum Vaterlande. Trotz aller Sorge, die uns damals ob einer ungewissen Zukunft bedrückte, waren es Tage hoher, edler, alle Stämme einigender Begeisterung, die jeden, der sie erleben durfte, zu einem bessern Menschen machte.

Die nachfolgenden Jahre harten, strengen, entsagungsreichen Grenzdienstes stellten an unsere Armees, vom General, den Zürich stolz war, stellen zu dürfen, bis hinunter zum einfachen Füsilier moralische Anforderungen, wie sie selbst für die Kriegführenden