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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The State Council of the canton of Ticino has forwarded to the Federal Council a new memorandum, containing the following demands:—

1. Suppression intégrale des surtaxes de montagne.
2. Octroi de tarifs exceptionnels pour le transport des matières premières nécessaires pour les industries du canton ainsi que pour le transport des produits de l'industrie, de l'agriculture et du bétail pour le pâturage.
3. Réduction des frais de transport pour le bétail d'abattage lorsque, pour des raisons sanitaires, les importations d'Italie sont interdites.
4. Pas de tarif spécial pour le transport dans le Tessin des marchandises en provenance d'au delà du Gothard ou qui se trouvent déjà en abondance sur le territoire du canton.
5. Suppression des taxes accessoires à la gare de Chiasso et application immédiate des tarifs de transit.
6. Tarif unique pour les colis postaux de 25 kg. Le tarif unique est actuellement limité aux colis de 15 kg.
7. Abonnements de chemin de fer pour la Suisse italienne, Tessin et Grisons, afin de faciliter les relations entre le Tessin et la partie italienne des Grisons.
8. Subvention extraordinaire pour les relevés topographiques prévus par le plan de regroupement parcellaire.
9. Revision de la loi fédérale de 1893 sur le développement de l'agriculture. Le mémoire demande à ce sujet de nombreuses facilités et subventions.
10. Exécution rapide des constructions fédérales déjà prévues pour le Tessin, par exemple construction d'hôtels des postes à Bellinzona, Locarno, Chiasso, etc., de bâtiments pour les douanes, de chemins de fer, gare internationale de Chiasso, électrification des lignes Bellinzona-Locarno et Bellinzona-Luino; mise sur pied d'égalité de la langue italienne avec les deux autres langues nationales, égalité de traitement pour les concoures et les emplois fédéraux.

Several financial proposals have been endorsed by the Zurich electorate: the salaries of school teachers in the town are to be subjected to reductions varying from 2 to 8%; two million francs are to be spent for the erection of cheap housing accommodation for large families of small means, and the building of houses is to be encouraged generally and subsidised in different ways. The emoluments of the members of the Regierungsrat are to be reduced by Frs. 500 to Frs. 14,500, and those of the Oberrichter similarly to Frs. 13,500.

As a result of the wage dispute with the unskilled workers, the engineering firm of Escher, Wyss & Co. has locked out about 1,600 workmen.

In the Zurich Stadtrat a proposal, made by a Communist member, was carried by a majority of two to one to the effect that the workmen so locked out should be adequately assisted and looked after at the expense of the ratepayers.

During the filming of the "Battle of Morgarten" by an American firm, a company of horsemen had to be "dispersed" into the lake. The horse of Joseph Zemp, from Isenbergschwil, evidently misinterpreting the purpose of the scene, got frightened and threw his rider, the latter being drowned in the lake.

Several persons, including the president of the commune of Fleurier, were sentenced to fines ranging from 200 frs. to 1,000 frs. for the manufacture of, and illicit trading in, absinthe.

A cruel murder, said to be out of revenge against the authorities, was committed on Sunday (Aug. 31st) by an incorrigible criminal who the day before was discharged from the cantonal prison in Schwyz. Whilst people were in church, he murdered the 15-year-old daughter of the orphan-guardian Scheiber in Schattdorf (Uri) and decamped with the little money he was able to lay his hands on. He was arrested a day or two later.

Dr. Joseph Scherrer-Füllemann died in Mammern (Thurgau) at the age of 77 after a protracted illness. Domiciled at St. Gall, where he was an authority on legal matters, he was the recognised leader of the Democratic Labour Party. He took a keen interest in cantonal and federal politics and, for thirty years, was a member of the National Council. An enthusiastic supporter of international movements to promote Peace, he founded in 1902 the Swiss section of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Prof. Paul Moriaud, who lectured at the Geneva University on Roman Law, died at the age of 59 from the consequences of a recent operation. He acted on several occasions as an international judge and enjoyed a world reputation in juridical matters.

## "PEASANT ART IN SWITZERLAND."

Few modern reference books have been welcomed with such a unanimous verdict of approval and admiration as the Studio publication "*Peasant Art in Switzerland*"; it deals with, and studies, its subject in a comprehensive and exhaustive manner that has never been attempted before and has been stated by critics faithfully to portray the soul of Switzerland.

The work was published in May last, and we hear that a few copies of the English edition (cloth-bound) are still available, these being the small surplus left after supplying the demand from the Swiss colonies in foreign parts for whom a certain number of volumes had been reserved. The price is 10s. 6d., taken at the Swiss Legation, 32, Queen Anne St., W.1, or 11.6 per post. In addition, there are six copies of the *Edition de Luxe*, superbly bound, which will undoubtedly and at no distant date take rank as a collector's treasure, the number of de luxe volumes printed having been strictly limited to one hundred. Enquiries should be addressed to Monsieur Henri Martin, 32, Queen Anne St., W.1.

## M. MOTTA'S PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

*(In response to the wishes of several subscribers, we give below the full text of the speech delivered on Monday, Sept. 1st, by Federal Councillor Motta on taking the presidency of this year's session of the League of Nations.)*

Laissez-moi vous remercier très cordialement pour le très précieux témoignage de votre bienveillance et de votre sympathie. Je sais trop bien qu'il dépasse tous mes très faibles mérites. Aussi ma reconnaissance n'en est-elle que plus grande. Votre unanimité me touche au delà de tout ce que ma parole pourrait exprimer. Merci M. le président du Conseil, des paroles si généreuses que vous avez prononcées à mon adresse et à l'adresse de mon pays. Il m'a été profondément agréable que ces paroles fussent prononcées par le représentant si éminent de la noble et héroïque Belgique.

Je sais que c'est mon pays que vous avez voulu honorer dans l'un de ses magistrats. C'est à la Suisse, fière d'être devenue le siège de la Société des nations et d'avoir offert à l'institution naissante le calme et la sérénité de son atmosphère politique que sont allées vos sympathies. Au nom de ma patrie que l'aine du même amour que j'ai aimé ma mère, je vous exprime ma plus profonde gratitude.

Je n'ignore pas quelles sont les responsabilités qui s'attachent à la haute magistrature internationale ni le prestige et l'éclat dont l'ont entouré tous ceux qui m'ont précédé à cette place. Je tâcherai de suivre leur exemple. Je vous demande de m'accorder libéralement votre indulgence et votre appui.

S'il m'est permis de croire que ma personne soit pour une part, d'ailleurs très minime, dans votre choix, veuillez ne pas m'empêcher de penser que ce que vous avez retenu c'est en moi la fidélité dans l'idée et la foi dans l'avenir de la S.d.N. Les événements semblent d'ailleurs justifier cette fidélité et cette foi. Si je compare les incertitudes qui ont enveloppé la première Assemblée, celle de 1920, avec les espérances qui se développent autour de la cinquième Assemblée, la nôtre, nous avons tous des raisons de nous réjouir.

La première Assemblée avait consacré un progrès décisif dans le droit des gens en instituant la Cour internationale de justice. C'est pourquoi cette assemblée demeurera gravée dans le souvenir des hommes et dans l'histoire de l'humanité.

Mais beaucoup de problèmes très compliqués et angoissants issus de la guerre semblaient encore éloignés d'un règlement qui satisfît les vainqueurs

et les vaincus. Depuis lors, cette année surtout, ces problèmes se sont éclaircis et en quelque sorte ouverts. L'oeuvre de la Société des nations a contribué, dans une large mesure, à fortifier chez tous la volonté de paix et à indiquer et fournir les moyens techniques des solutions nécessaires.

Permettez-moi, au début de cette Assemblée, de saluer avec une émotion joyeuse l'essor que la récente conférence de Londres a imprimé au principe de l'arbitrage obligatoire. C'est à ce principe, un des plus féconds qui soient et dont dépend si intimement la question même du désarmement militaire, que sont suspendues les destinées de la paix par le droit.

Permettez-moi aussi de saluer comme un signe de bon augure la présence ici de tant de membres de gouvernements en fonctions et de tant d'autres hommes illustres et représentatifs à plusieurs titres. Si leur présence grandit le prestige de la S.d.N., elle prouve en même temps que celle-ci s'est développée et qu'elle s'impose désormais aux méditations et aux préoccupations de tous les hommes d'Etat.

Permettez-moi enfin de saluer l'évolution qui se dessine dans les masses profondes des travailleurs et des humbles, même dans les pays qui semblaient les plus réfractaires à l'appel de la grande idée. Cette évolution, c'est le souffle qui vient du large. Il n'est pas téméraire de lui appliquer l'image grandiose de la Bible: "L'esprit de Dieu planait sur les eaux."

Il n'est pas téméraire non plus d'espérer que si nous n'apercevons que les lueurs encore voilées de l'aube, nos enfants et les enfants de nos enfants contempleront un jour la S.d.N. organe des discussions publiques, centre de coopération solidaire, garantie contre la violence brutale, et étant devenue universelle, parvenue à la pleine lumière de son midi.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

The League of Nations meeting in Geneva and articles recording the experiences of English holiday makers in Switzerland are practically the only references which appeared during the last few days in the English press, as far as our country is concerned.

### A Bicycle Tour.

An entertaining report is published in the *Daily News* (Sept. 4th) by "Kuklos" of a tour through the Ticino; the writer seems to be surprised at the smartness and cleanliness of the towns. Here it is:—

... Roughly we descended to Chiasso, a considerable town divided asunder by the twin Customs stations of Italy and Switzerland. The Italians looked at our passport, removed the lead seals from our bicycles, took back our "permesso"; the Swiss glanced at our special Customs ticket of the C.T.C., and we were free of both in five minutes. Shall I reveal that we passed out of Italy into Suisse again with something like a sigh of relief? It was so. In Suisse the roads have less limestone, the motorist is not allowed to be a public nuisance, the people are more used to foreigners and are more polite.

I could no longer call the gathering hills Helveticus: they were too big and fantastic. Some of them were even sinister and menacing under a thunderous sky as we ran swiftly down, our pace tempering the volcanic heat into something quite pleasant: until we touched the half-Swiss and half-Italian lake of Lugano. We rode on two shores of that octopus-shaped water, and across its waist on a bridge; and its great and unspoiled beauty had already resolved us to linger in Lugano overnight, when, 400 yards from the town, an outside in thunderstorms broke suddenly. The first house reached was the Hotel du Lac, and we rushed in without ceremony. It has its feet in the lake, it was half-full of English pensionnaires, it is a really comfortable and well-managed little place; six francs for our room, 3½ each for dinner, 1½ each for breakfast—Swiss francs at 24 to the £.

From the quick haven of our latest bedroom we watched the storm develop, and how the encircling mountains disappeared wholly behind a hissing avalanche of water that shrouded the lake in white sheets. Even the continuous lighting could reveal no boundary to the ocean in front of us.

Later we strolled out to introduce ourselves to Lugano Town. Though I could see little of the hoary antiquity of Vicenza and Ivrea, the town's plan is very old and its streets are heavily arched in the old Italian way. Yet it is clean

and bright and smart in the Swiss way. Lugano strikes me as an improvement on Como and Montreux and Lausanne and Vevey all put together, because more native and dignified, and the glorious mountains less measled and pock-marked with freak villas and hotels.

Magically the storm cleaned up the weather. Instead of streams and vapours and midge-laden heat-mists, majestic cumulus floated far above Alps of maplike sharpness. For the first time a strong head wind opposed us, cooling and welcome out of the north. When the last villas of Lugano and the blue cascades of hydrangea overflowing their garden walls were behind us, we climbed the Monte Generi Pass, about 2,000 ft. Except that the trees were mostly Spanish chestnuts, it might have been Cumberland or Argyllshire at its best. For lunch on the river bank my pannier bags produced rolls and Swiss cheese, chocolate, peaches, and big ripe figs.

The summit instantly revealed a vast and profound valley, with bird's-eye views of Lake Maggiore, of Locarno on the shore of it, and of Bellinzona to the north of it, in such an amphitheatre of blue and vivid Alps as the whole journey had not yet shown us. Even the snow on the tops was blue.

The descent into the Ticino valley involved seven or eight hairpin corners as fearsome as any on the major passes. You can only crawl round on a bicycle, and each one is an adventure. Bellinzona, an aged Italian town greatly improved by being in Switzerland, fortified us with tea, and then we did a dozen rough and hilly miles—a wholly-delightful ride, and quite out of our way—down to Locarno, a pleasing and not overdone resort on the shore of Lake Maggiore. We abode at an inn which called itself Hotel de la Gare, Bahnhof Schweizerhof, and Alberg della Stazione. There is no Swiss language.

Lake "Maggie" dressed herself in royal blue next morning to bid us Godspeed from the "Italian" Lakes. In Bellinzona I filled a pannier bag again with provisions, and after high noon we set off to attack the Pass of St. Gothard.

#### The Best Tourist.

Another equally entertaining article appeared under this heading in the *Westminster Gazette* (Sept. 5th): it proves that the English people find themselves at home in Switzerland, where amongst all the visitors they are the most popular.

"Looter Engländer!"

There was nothing censorious in the phrase, however sinister it seemed at first. In fact, it was a compliment, the first word being the Swiss dialect of German, the whole meaning "Nothing but English people."

It was literally true. The famous wooden bridge at Lucerne had been invaded by English parties, who, oblivious of all else, were absorbing the legends on which the quaint roof paintings were based, as rattled off by their guides.

The English tourist of to-day is more popular than ever in Switzerland, and deserves to be. He no longer inspires the Continental caricaturist. He does not behave as if he were surrounded by foreigners; he carries his atmosphere with him, in the safe and tactful keeping of his touring-agency; he enjoys himself to the extent of one hundred per cent. of possibility, and—above all—he dresses sensibly.

It is the Continental tourist who makes a comic-paper figure of himself in flamboyant negligé, a riot of colour and bizarre contours. The stout German or Austrian, looking like an exaggerated wood-carving, with more bare leg than knicker or stocking, a jacket that might fit a juvenile, his head surmounted by a ridiculous tiny Alpine hat, is not the real Tyrolean peasant. More likely he is a prosperous city merchant who deems it a duty thus to disport himself on holiday.

The new English tourist commands respect, has gained in popularity, and in attention. I stepped into a modest estaminet at the foot of a mountain pass for refreshment, prior to commencing my climb. The proprietor prided himself on his English.

"I was tree year in a West End restaurant," he explained.

Before leaving, I asked him to fill my flask with cognac. To my amazement he shook his head. "No, sir," he said, "I have not ze veritable cognac."

In a West End restaurant he had learned such honesty! We shook hands in mutual admiration. It is the same all over Switzerland. The Switzer, realising that the English make the best tourists, and that their needs are not exacting, has studied our habits and peculiarities. He does not, in the words of the psycho-analyst, insinuate himself into the awkward vacuum between an Englishman and his individuality. Both client and caterer profit thereby.

In the Swiss *poste restante* your letters are not denied you if "Esq." is tacked on to your name, and the Swiss postal officials know also that "Mrs." is English for "Madam." Trivialities, may be, but they make all the difference between convenience and irritation.

I have seen in an Allied country a letter withheld because: "Sare, your card say me your name is Jones, and zis letter is addressed to Monsieur Jonesesq." Or: "No, miladi, zis card is for Madam R. S. Smit, and your initials are Marie Jane. You must bring me legitimation." The jazz of indignation in each case was not British but cosmopolitan, but that did no help.

#### "Life without Frills."

Under this heading the *Daily Chronicle* (Sept. 8th) publishes the following article which appears to bear out the remark we make above regarding the popularity of English visitors to Switzerland, as evidenced by the obvious care of our hoteliers that even when "full up" they will make, to the best of their ability, arrangements of some sort or other for their guests.

When M. le Propriétaire, with much politeness and profound regret, informed me that his hotel was filled to overflowing, my heart missed a beat. When he said he had arranged for me to stay at a chalet—a real Swiss chalet high up in the Alps—almost I fell upon his neck and kissed him. Being English, with a leavening from the Land of the Thistle thrown in, I refrained, and trudged through the darkness, behind the diminutive child who wheeled my luggage, to the wooden dwelling where Frau — was waiting up to greet me.

Boards, everywhere boards—the verandah, the walls, the ceilings, the floors, all were made of them.

Primitive simplicity, stark, and with the characteristics of a people ingrained in all the planks that were the chalet, and a dazzling light flooding it, made a contrast that startled. So did the electric ironer on the deal table, till I realised that the power of water is comprehended and appreciated by mountain dwellers.

A life without frills—hours at the heart of things—nights close to nature—these, and other things also, I found at the chalet.

Frau — lived up beneath the roof, up wooden steps from the verandah outside. Here the housewife slept, and cooked, and ate. Soon after dawn smoke issues from the pipe that jutted out above my window. Frau — never locked a door. Night and day the chalet was open to the world; and the world passed by, and did not enter.

The Swiss love flowers, and each morning saw my hostess tending her window boxes with careful hands. I read her story in her face, and in a little black book set amid the classics on the shelf. I found the pages were in manuscript, and fearing I had trespassed, turned to the title page. I understood then. Frau — is a widow. Her husband was a guide—there had been an accident. . . .

Stories . . . they were written all about that chalet. And dreams flitted to and fro. I wondered whose the books might be. Frau — has a daughter, a certificated teacher of English, and they are hers. The mother speaks no language but her own.

How did this daughter of an Alpine guide study in that fastness of the hills? What dreams had been hers? What stories used her father to tell?

There was a stove that filled a corner of my room. I used the top for a table and laid my brushes, and stood my teapot there, and felt no thing was lacking as I did so. Essentials are all that matter—these you get, and nothing more in a chalet such as mine.

Something else, at least. The Frau kissed me when we said good-bye.

#### New Zealand Butter for Switzerland.

We wonder whether the following lines, printed by the *Daily Telegraph* (Sept. 3rd), correspond with facts; anyhow, the concluding remarks with reference to Swiss cheese are not very complimentary:—

Much satisfaction is felt that butter from New Zealand is to be imported into Switzerland. A Genevese wholesale butter merchant who has just returned from Wembley, where he inspected the Dominion pavilions, has arranged with the director of the New Zealand Produce Association and with the Co-operative Wholesale Society for the delivery of New Zealand butter, which could be sold in Switzerland cheaper than the native product. At present a pound of butter costs in Switzerland 3s., whereas New Zealand butter, which is considered the best in the world, could be sold here at 2s. 2d. a pound or even 2s. Canadian cheese has also been imported into Switzerland during the war, but this import has ceased, because Swiss cheesemakers are able to compete as regards price if not as regards quality.

#### The Swiss Niagara.

A correspondent sends us the following cutting from a local paper, the *Acton Gazette* (Aug. 22), which is, of course, misleading in so far that the Barberine works are only one of the many power stations already in existence or in course of construction for the purpose of supplying electric current for the Swiss railway system:—

A gigantic waterfall, which will rival Niagara, is being constructed in the Swiss Alps near

Martigny. At an altitude of over 6,200 ft., it is designed to supply electric power for the Federal Railways of Switzerland. The scheme also includes a huge dam across the noted Barberine cascade, thus forming a vast artificial lake of about forty million cubic yards. The height of the dam will be the same as that of Niagara (262 ft.), and it will have a length of 818 ft. The total cost of the undertaking is estimated at nearly £2,500,000. The benefits to be derived from the power generated by the falls will, it is calculated, repay the sum in a few months. It is hoped to complete the scheme within three years. The installation will then be capable of supplying sufficient electric power to run the entire Swiss railway system, which at present is largely dependent on foreign coal!

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