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HOME NEWS

Federal Councillor Scheurer, head of the Military Department, in an address delivered at Zurich, expressed the opinion that the Swiss army was in a position to successfully resist an armed attack by any one of the great surrounding Powers.

The Federal Council has granted a three years' leave of absence to Prof. Andreae, of the Federal Polytechnic in Zurich, so as to enable him to take up an educational appointment offered to him by the Egyptian Government.

Dr. Ed. Kellenberger, of the Federal Finance Department, has been offered by the Persian government the post of Director of the Persian Finance Administration.

A request by the Socialists of the canton Aargau that the recent increase in the salaries of the Federal Councillors should be made the subject of a national referendum, has been rejected by the Central Committee of the Party.

Negotiations are said to be proceeding for a complete amalgamation of the chocolate concerns Nestlé, Peter, Cailler and Kohler, though no official statement has yet been issued.

During a ski excursion by lady enthusiasts on the Harder, near Thun, Miss Elsa Selhofer, a schoolteacher from Berne, lost her way, her body being subsequently discovered by a search party at the foot of a rocky declivity.

Mr. Arnold Billwiler, a well-known personality in the Swiss brewing industry and former proprietor of the "Schützengraben" Brewery in St. Gall, died in the latter town after a prolonged illness.

A motor-cycle, in an endeavour to overtake a car on the road near Payerne (Vaud) dashed against a telegraph pole and both the driver and pillion-rider, Mr. Ami Bettex and Mr. Robert Nydegger, living at Granges-Marnand, were seriously injured.

Falling down a "snow board" on the Klingenstein, Mr. Emil Rieter, a Zurich municipal employee, was buried in the deep snow and suffocated before he could be extricated.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

"Unsere Auslandschweizer."—Am dritten staatsbürgerlichen Vortrage sprach Herr Weber-Greminger aus Basel, der bekannte Pionier auf dem Gebiete der staatsbürgerlichen Erziehung, über das Thema "Unsere Auslandschweizer." Als Veranstalter und Leiter von Staatsbürgerkursen in den verschiedenen grossen Schweizerkolonien des Kontinents und aktiver Teilnehmer an allen seit 1919 stattgefundenen Tagungen der Auslandschweizer war Herr Weber-Greminger, wie vielleicht sonst kaum jemand, in der Lage, über die Lebensbedingungen, die Gesinnung, speziell die Einstellung zur Heimat und die grosse Bedeutung der Erhaltung des nationalen Gedankens bei denselben zu sprechen. Die Frage, wieviele Schweizer im Auslande leben, ist schwer zu beantworten, weil manche sich erst den Konsulaten melden, wenn Not an den Mann kommt. Nach ziemlich zuverlässigen Schätzungen dürften in den europäischen Staaten 240,000 und überseesisch gegen 160,000 Schweizer leben, was im Vergleich zur Einwohnerzahl des Landes sagt, dass jeder zehnte Mann seine Existenz im Auslande sucht. Nicht uninteressant ist die Feststellung, dass die Zahl der Ausländer mit rund 400,000 in unserem Lande der Zahl der Auslandschweizer ziemlich gleichkommt. Die Grosszahl unserer Auswanderer lebt in Frankreich, nämlich 150,000, und von diesen in Paris 50,000 - 60,000, dann folgen Deutschland mit 50,000, Italien 15,000, England 10,000, Oesterreich 6,000 usw. Ueberseesisch sind nach den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika 130,000 - 140,000, nach Brasilien 10,000, Kanada 8,000, Argentinien 12,000 usw. ausgewandert. Weniger gross ist die Zahl der Schweizer in Afrika, Asien und Australien, nach welchem letzterem Lande sich aber gegenwärtig eine vermehrte Abwanderung fühlbar macht. Als

höchst erfreulicher Beweis für die patriotische Gesinnung ist die Tatsache erwähnt worden, dass am 1. August 1914 25,000 wehrfähige Auslandschweizer heimgeilt sind, um dem Vaterland zu dienen. Unter den Auslandschweizern sind alle Berufsstände vertreten. Heute ist in der Abwanderung ein kleiner Rückgang zu verzeichnen, aber dennoch ist dieselbe noch so bedeutungsvoll, dass ihr die grösste Aufmerksamkeit zu schenken ist. Der Referent verbreitete sich über eine Reihe von Fragen, die sich der junge Mann vorlegen muss, bevor er den wichtigen Schritt unternimmt, und wies besonders auf die Gratis-Auskunft des Eidg. Auswanderungsamtes in Bern hin.

Es ist nun eine der vornehmsten Aufgaben, die Ausgewanderten, die oft in der zweiten und dritten Generation noch eine rührende Anhänglichkeit an die angestammte Heimat zeigen, dem Schweizertum zu erhalten, und in dieser Beziehung hat Herr Weber-Greminger, in fesselnden Ausführungen dargetan, wie dies geschehen kann. Da gilt es in erster Linie, zwischen den Auslandschweizern und unserem Lande geistige Brücken zu schlagen, ihnen geographische, geschichtliche, wirtschaftliche und verfassungsrechtliche Kenntnisse zukommen zu lassen, mit einem Worte, sie Land und Leute kennen zu lehren, denn nur was man kennt, kann man lieben. Die Auslandschweizer verfolgen mit grossem Interesse die Vorgänge der Heimat und sind über manche Fragen oft weit besser orientiert als manche im Lande. Daher dürfte in Anbetracht ihrer grossen Zahl (400,000) die Frage der Gewährung von Nationalratssitzen nicht unbesuchen von der Hand zu weisen sein. Als segensreich haben sich die in der Nachkriegszeit in den grösseren Zentren der Auslandschweizer durchgeführten Staatsbürgerkurse erwiesen. Der Referent, der selbst in zwölf Städten solche geleitet hat, wusste viel Interessantes davon zu erzählen. Grundpfeiler für die Erhaltung des Schweizertums im Ausland sind aber insbesondere die Schweizerschulen. Sie alle kämpfen mit grossen finanziellen Schwierigkeiten und können nur mit grüssen persönlichen Opfern der Beteiligten aufrecht erhalten werden. Es war für den Berichterstatter und gewiss alle Anwesenden bemühend, erfahren zu müssen, dass unsere eidgenössischen Behörden für die nationale Bedeutung derselben so geringes Verständnis besitzen, dass sie ihnen insgesamt nur 15,000 Fr. aus dem grossen Bundesbudget zukommen lassen. Es ist Wunsch aller Staatsbürger, dass hierfür bedeutend mehr Mittel flüssig gemacht werden und auch dass, im Sinne des Referenten, der Ertrag der Bundesfeierkarte 1930 den Auslandschweizerschulen zugute kommt.

St. Galler Tagblatt.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Switzerland and the League.

The last issue of the *Fortnightly Review* deals with the recent disarmament proposals of the Russian delegate in Geneva and has the following reference to Switzerland:—

"Unfortunately, the British Labour Party has never sufficiently applied its mind to considering a quite different example—that of Switzerland, which is an armed Power, and a well-armed Power, but is not the cause of any uneasiness to its neighbours. That is not because Switzerland is small. Europe is kept awake at nights thinking about the intentions of States smaller and less well equipped. It is because armament in Switzerland is really defensive and because everybody in Europe knows that Switzerland has no aggressive designs. Probably the Swiss spend more than they like on war machinery and would gladly lighten the burden if they felt safe to do so; but it is not in the least probable that they would relinquish effective armament of the community. Four or five years ago a wave of the Russian movement affected one of their great manufacturing towns and Communists proposed to take charge. Down came the soldier peasants with the rifles that every man of them had been taught to use, and they asserted the power of government in a democratic country. Artillery was in that case not needed; but when it comes to fighting in a town, the use of artillery may prevent a great sacrifice of valuable life. The affair in Dublin in 1916 would have been over in twenty-four hours had even one eighteen-pounder been available at once—and the results, morally and politically, would have been no different.

One cannot, of course, argue unreservedly from the case of Switzerland to that of countries like Great Britain or France with many outlying contacts, but the Swiss model is far better worth bearing in mind to build ideas about than the

protestations of M. Litvinoff. It presents two special features, and the first is that Switzerland, more definitely than any other State in Europe, has acquired the will to peace, though Sweden is a strong competitor in this excellence. But the second feature is that Switzerland's frontiers are internationally guaranteed. We are, I think, beginning to see that there will be no stable peace in Europe till every European frontier is under a similar joint guarantee of the European Powers."

We are not much impressed with the suggested joint guarantee of European Powers, but we recommend the above extract for perusal and digestion to those Genevese school teachers who clamour for the abolition of the Swiss Army. It seems nothing short of a scandal that the instruction of our boyhood should be entrusted to irresponsible faddists. Concluding his critical remarks, the writer referred to says, "We have got this benefit at least from the League of Nations, that Europe as a community is far more conscious of the danger points and makes more effort to prevent a threatened conflagration."

The Co-operative Movement.

The phenomenal development of the co-operative movement in Switzerland is illustrated in the following article from the *Co-operative News* (Jan. 7th). Many of our readers will probably remember one of the original founders, the genial "Papa Schäribus," who taught book-keeping and arithmetic at the Basle Commercial College. At that time many budding politicians joined the ranks of this movement, it being considered the shortest way to promotion and distinction.

"Swiss co-operators are always watching with great interest the advance of our movement in other countries, and it was with a feeling of real delight that they learned from the English co-operative Press of the striking success the movement has again achieved in the British Isles. But they themselves have no reason to be discontented with their own progress, for, taken as a whole, the co-operative movement in Switzerland has made good headway since the last report was issued.

The Union of Swiss Consumers' Societies (Verband Schweizerischer Konsumvereine), which embraces practically four-fifths of the distributive co-operative membership of the country, has in the course of 1927, increased its turnover by about 12,000,000 francs (£480,000). The total sales, which amounted to 126,000,000 francs in 1926, rose to 138,000,000 (£5,520,000) in this year.

In all its departments the Union has had a busy time. The productive activities of our movement are mainly carried on by special societies. So far as reports of these societies are already to hand, they also indicate a good state of affairs. The shoe manufactory, till 1925 managed by the board of directors of the Union but then converted into a separate co-operative undertaking, was fully occupied, and the goods produced were promptly taken over by the members. The same can be said of the two co-operative corn mills, especially that of Zurich, which is the most important of all similar establishments in the country. The Popular Insurance Society (La Prévoyance Populaire Suisse) increased the amount of its insured capital by nearly 3,000,000 francs, which brought the total up to 25,000,000 francs.

A new undertaking, worth while mentioning, is the establishment of a co-operative and trade unions bank, which began its activity on January 1st, 1928. Of the initial capital of this bank, amounting to 3,500,000 (£140,000) 2,000,000 were subscribed by the Union, 1,000,000 by the trade unions, and the rest by other bodies. There is every reason to hope that this collective enterprise will help to create a better understanding between the two movements, which, just as in other countries, were hitherto not always on sufficiently friendly terms.

In these last days the Swiss Union of Consumers' Societies, together with some other co-operative organisations, have acquired a beautiful new building at Basle for the sum of 800,000 francs (£32,000). The Co-operative House, as the new property has already been named, is well fitted for lodging the new bank, but several other departments will find shelter under its roof.

The Co-operative Union there intends to open a first-class bookselling store. This will contribute to give a wider range to the activities of the publishing department of the Union, which, in the course of the year, has made greater