

GREAT RIVER OF COMMERCE SPOILING THE RHINE FOR NAVIGATION

Scheme that Would Drain off Its Water

WILL THE WORLD'S COMMERCE BE DIVERTED?

By a Special Correspondent

One of our many advantages as islanders is that all our rivers belong to us and nobody else. It is difficult for us to imagine the plight of a nation whose principal river belongs to three or four other countries as well as its own.

Such a case is presented by the famous River Rhine, about which a new trouble has arisen since the war, and a trouble which may possibly have extraordinary consequences for the whole of Europe, including our own British Islands.

The French have now got possession of the left bank of this river, and are desirous of taking up a German scheme to employ Rhine water for electrical power. They wish to run a canal beside the river, filling it from the Rhine, and to build four immense weirs, or barrages, by which the machinery of electrical plant would be set in motion.

River with One Great City

Such a scheme at the first glance seems innocent enough, but in reality it threatens the whole of Europe with changes of the most momentous order.

An English gentleman who has the whole of this business at his fingers' ends, and whose opinions are carrying great weight on the Rhine Commission, has been kind enough to give us his views about this great matter.

Ask your readers, he said, to tell you how many industrial cities stand on the greatest of our English rivers, old Father Thames. They will have to say "only one." That is a very striking fact about the Thames. It is a river of one great city. But how different is the Rhine, which flows through Switzerland, France, Germany, Belgium, and Holland; on its banks stand eight or nine great cities of enormous commercial importance, some of them forming huge industrial districts which are famous throughout the world.

Scheme that Would Ruin the Rhine

No river on the continent of Europe serves so vast a field of commerce. Therefore anything which happens to that river is of international importance; and this proposal to canalise the Rhine means nothing more or less than the ruin of the river for navigation purposes.

The main opposition to the French scheme comes from Switzerland.

Switzerland gets its goods from London, chiefly coal and cotton, by means of the Rhine. Those goods go from London by steamer to Rotterdam, from Rotterdam they proceed in large barges to Cologne, from Cologne in smaller barges to Strasburg, and from Strasburg in smaller barges still to Basle.

The Rhine and the Rhone

The navigation of the Rhine is a difficult business; between Cologne and Strasburg the barges have to steer past the famous Lorelei Rock, and after Strasburg, in smaller barges, the sailors have to make their way with less water to help them up to their destination of Basle.

Now, for 200 days in the year the sailors can rely on finding six or seven feet of water at Basle. But if the Rhine is canalised they will not be sure of even two feet of water, and so all navigation will be impossible.

But not only will Switzerland have to suffer; European history may be changed by this scheme.

The Swiss, the expert says, will not sit idly under this threat to their prosperity.

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NEWS FROM EVERYWHERE

Tinned kangaroo tail soup from Australia is now being sold in London.

The recent census shows the population of Norway to be 2,646,306, about a third the population of London.

Parachute as a Life-Saver

During the war 750 English officers and 800 Frenchmen saved themselves from burning balloons with parachutes.

Summer-Time Coming Round

Summer-time in the United Kingdom is to be introduced on the night of Saturday, April 2, and to go on till Sunday night, October 2.

40,000 Miles of Earthquake

The recent great earthquake in China affected an area of 40,000 square miles. Whole villages were buried, thousands killed, and in many places half the houses have been destroyed.

There are 32,680,000 trade unionists in Europe and the British Empire.

The world's wheat harvest for 1920 amounts to 331,250,000 quarters, an excess of 125 million over that of 1919.

Passengers by Weight

On the New York to Chicago air service passengers are to be charged according to their weight.

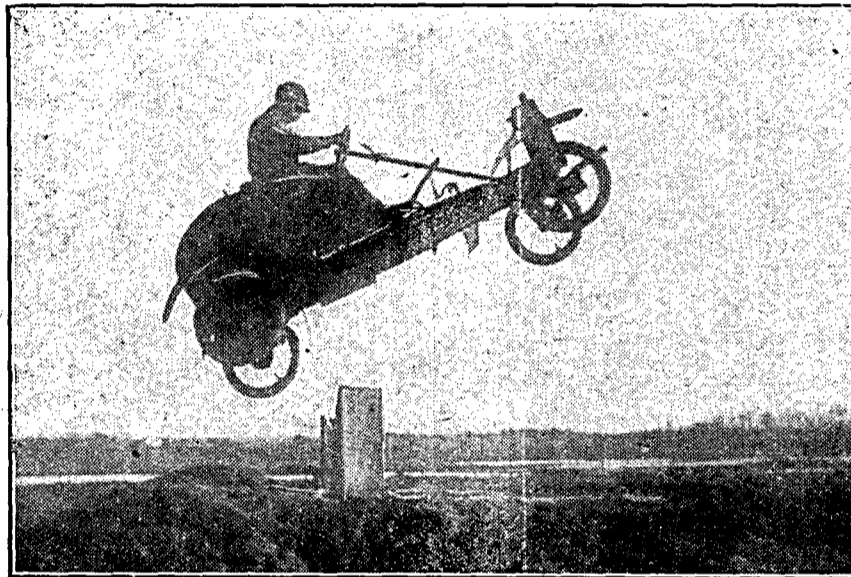
Non-stop Gramophones

A new invention automatically carries back the gramophone needle to the beginning of a record, and starts the music all over again.

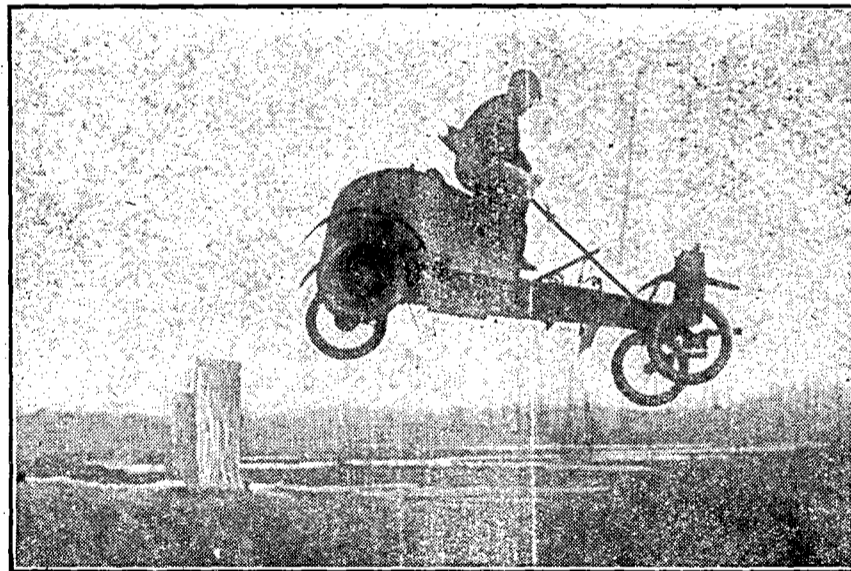
A Woman Professor

For the first time a woman, Miss Anne Mellroy, M.D., a doctor of science, has been appointed by London University as a professor at the School of Medicine for Women.

MOTOR-CAR CLEARS A FENCE



The Car Going Over the Top



Coming Down to Earth Again

A French engineer, Monsieur Georges Gauthier, has invented a motor-car which will jump a fence like a horse, and here we see it in the act of clearing the obstacle

Continued from the previous column

Suppose the seven nations on the Rhine Commission decide that France is to have her way, what will happen? The Swiss will canalise the Rhone. They must have an outlet to the sea. They cannot afford to be landlocked. A waterway is as essential to them as harbours to us. So they will canalise the Rhone—which means that the vast traffic that now comes to London will eventually go to Marseilles.

Marseilles was made by the Suez Canal. It was a place of small importance when the route to India went round the Cape. But look at it now! And think what it will become when Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and France make commercial use of the Rhone. Why, it means that the Mediterranean will become the market of the world. The

history of human civilisation has been determined in no small degree by the course of European rivers, and any change in the navigation of so important a river as the Rhine must permanently affect the commerce of the world.

At present the centre of agitation is the famous city of Basle. The inhabitants feel that the world is falling away from them with the tidal waters of the Rhine. With only two feet of water under their bridges they will be marooned. And so a great cry goes up from this city of three nations, and the experts of European navigation are called in to decide their fate.

But we in England, spectators of a little matter which seems far too remote to touch our daily lives, are seriously, most seriously, involved in this dispute. Such is the romance of rivers.

FORBIDDEN LAND THROWN OPEN TIBET WANTS THE TELEGRAPH

English Engineer Talks With the Grand Lama

NATION TIRED OF SECLUSION

The world is giving up all its mysteries. There will soon be no place on earth where one cannot go.

The most inaccessible of all inhabited lands has been Tibet, perched high on the earth's loftiest bump. Not only because it is so far, and so high, and so mountain-walled, has Tibet preserved its loneliness, but also because strangers have been held off at arm's length.

If anyone has slipped into the lonely land it has been by stealth, and when his whereabouts have become known the daring traveller has been promptly marched out.

But time has brought changes to Tibet, and now the adventurous traveller receives a gentle welcome there. Rather curiously, this unexpected alteration comes to pass just when we might expect the timid reserve of shrinking Tibet to be greater than ever.

For up till quite recent years Tibet has been an outlying province of China, with Chinese governors and a Chinese army to preserve Chinese suzerainty.

Making Friends with the Natives

A suzerain power is one that has a kind of lordship over another country, but does not interfere much with its internal government. So China was a suzerain power over Tibet, and when we last had occasion to send an army into Tibet, because British subjects had been badly treated there, we insisted that China should pay a fine for not having taught her subjects better ways.

Since China has become a republic, however, her troops have withdrawn.

It might be expected that Tibet on being more independent would be prouder. But no. Mr. Fairley, a telegraph engineer from India, has been there by the invitation of the Tibetan Government; and now Mr. Bell, another British agent from India, is there fixing up a closer friendship.

The fact is that the people of Tibet want at last to be linked up with the rest of the world. They want to have a telegraph wire into their land.

Greatly Honoured Guest

Everywhere in Tibet Mr. Fairley was welcomed. He describes the people as the kindest and most inoffensive he has ever met. He was entertained by the State Council called the Kasha and the four Ministers called Shapes, who govern the country apart from its religion; and finally he had twenty minutes' talk with the Grand Lama, who is the head of the Buddhist religion of Tibet and the most honoured personage in the country.

In the past the Grand Lama has been kept in strict seclusion from foreign eyes, and 109 years have elapsed since a holder of this sacred office was seen by a European.

And so Tibet comes of its own accord into the circle of the nations willing to know and help one another, after centuries of seclusion and suspicion.

WHICH CREATURE IS SWIFTEST?

Speedometers for Animals

The rate at which many birds and animals can move has recently been measured by following them in aeroplanes or motor-cars fitted with speedometers.

A wolf was found to travel 38 miles an hour; an elk, 52 miles an hour. Still faster is the antelope, which can travel at the rate of over sixty miles an hour, but when going any distance jogs along at just half its "top speed."

An eagle flew at 46 miles an hour, but was beaten by the wild duck at 50.