

# Notes & gleanings

Objekttyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1922)**

Heft 34

PDF erstellt am: **01.05.2024**

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his wife, escaped practically unharmed and was able to proceed to his hotel on his ski unaided, after having been brought out of the crevasse.

The three British officers were all experienced skiers. Major Keep especially was an enthusiastic and able mountaineer, who, after his distinguished service in the war, spent much of his time in the Swiss mountains during both the summer and winter seasons.

The guide also had a reputation for being cautious and efficient, but treacherous avalanches will demand their toll of those who have the misfortune to come within their deadly reach.

\* \* \*

The Geneva correspondent of *The Times* writes:—

Peter Baumann, the doyen of Swiss Alpine guides, died at Grindelwald, his native village, on December 17.

He was born in 1833, and from 1861 up to 1903 "Old Peter" guided hundreds of tourists, most of whom were British. In 1861 he helped Jacki in his survey work for the Dufour map, and made with him the second ascent of the Eiger. Next year he made the first crossing of the Jungfrauoch and of the Fiescherjoch. In 1869, with Phillips, he was witness of the accident which befell Elliott and tried in vain to find his corpse. In 1873 he succeeded in ascending the Schreckhorn by the Lauteraarsattel, and later he ascended the central peak of La Meige.

Baumann was very proud of having been the guide of famous climbers, such as Leslie Stephen, Moore, Tyndall, and the Pendlebury brothers.

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From February 1st the retail prices in Switzerland for milk, cheese and butter will be reduced as follows:—Milk, 5 centimes per litre; cheese, 80 centimes per kilo; butter, 1 franc per kilo. Milk will be more abundant and cheaper, as the Nestlé Company has cancelled its contracts with some 80 dairies from which they received their milk for condensing.

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### STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

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Swiss Confederation 3% 1903 ... ..	67.25%	66.63%
Swiss Confederation 9th Mob. Loan 5% ... ..	99.75%	100.02%
Federal Railways A—K 3½% ... ..	69.85%	70.02%
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921 ... ..	97.65%	98.63%
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892... ..	62.25%	63.17%
Zurich (Stadt) 4% 1909 ... ..	98.75%	99.12%
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Union de Banques Suisses... ..	510 frs.	512 frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation ... ..	552 frs.	553 frs.
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C. F. Bally S.A. ... ..	720 frs.	705 frs.
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon... ..	425 frs.	405 frs.
Enterprises Sulzer ... ..	450 frs.	462 frs.
S.A. Brown Boveri (new) ... ..	203 frs.	204 frs.
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Co. ... ..	213 frs.	198 frs.
Chocolats Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler... ..	135 frs.	138 frs.
Compagnie de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman ... ..	*410 frs.	*341 frs.

\* Ex carte and ex coupon 28.

### NOTES & GLEANINGS.

Some of the dailies, notably *The Times*, publish now regular lists giving the names of the visitors staying at the principal Swiss winter resorts. Britain and America seem to supply by far the largest proportion, and at St. Moritz their number constitutes a record, being well over a thousand. Several championships and cups—both Swiss and international—will be competed for during the coming month, and the conditions for all these events seem to be ideal.

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The *Morning Post* (Jan. 16th), in a long article, draws some comparisons between winter holidays in Switzerland and the Austrian Tyrol. A stay in the latter country presents, on account of the exchange fluctuations, some of the elements of a lottery, but the cost of living has been advancing by leaps and bounds. Hotels are inclined to be run on the cheap, the fare is monotonous, and, the writer says, visitors must not look for the Swiss standard of comfort. Little sport is offered, and the construction of rinks and their upkeep is practically unknown; even natural ice surfaces are never swept free from snow for skaters.

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The re-appearance of gold in Switzerland is being commented upon in the English press with no little envy. "Alas!" the *Evening News* (Jan. 19th) laments, "that the days when sovereigns will again jingle in John Citizen's pocket seem as far off as ever." The *Daily News* (Jan. 17) has the following:—

"A curious phenomenon has arisen in Switzerland since Christmas. The post office and the railway booking offices and other public institutions are quite anxious to put gold into circulation—and the public are very loth to accept it. They have got used to notes, and are afraid that in a bad light they may mistake the gold piece for a nickel piece of 20 centimes. So instead of taking the gold and hoarding it, as the experts foretold, the public fight shy of it.

During the past three weeks the legal value of gold coinage in Switzerland has been higher than the world market value of the metal, and by paying in gold bankers must have made a profit of 1½ per cent.

Switzerland is a member of the Latin monetary union, and, though entitled to mint her own gold, has never done so, for which reason the gold cover of the National Bank consists chiefly of French, Italian, English, and other gold coins. Hence the flood of gold of all kinds, and at the end of December many Swiss firms made their payments in gold. But people do not want it, and, curiously enough, by virtue of a decree of Aug. 3, 1914 the Swiss National Bank refuses to give bank-notes in exchange."

Several aeroplanes of the bombing type, modified and converted into three-seater machines, have recently been acquired from the English Disposal Board by a Swiss company. Four of these machines are already being flown regularly on aerial alpine tours and are giving every satisfaction. Before leaving this country the machines chosen are tested and subjected to trial flights at the Croydon Aerodrome; the Aviation Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* (Jan. 20th), taking part in one of these ascents, reports as follows:—

'There was more than half a gale of wind, and, at 800ft., one was in the clouds. The trial flights, however, demonstrated the good qualities of the machines, which can climb steeply, and land and get away with facility. They are a modified D.H. 9 type fitted with the 240 h.p. Siddeley 'Puma' engine. They have a speed of 115 miles per hour at 4,000 feet, can climb to 10,000 feet in twenty minutes, and can land at a speed of fifty-seven miles per hour. The wind yesterday brought the landing speed down to about twenty miles per hour. These performances are with full load, and it should be stated that the machines are equipped for passenger-carrying, having two tandem seats behind the pilot. The passengers are well protected, and their luggage is stowed elsewhere. On occasion a complete cover can be attached, converting the machine into a limousine.

This consignment is the second of the kind sent to the Swiss company, which is making a great feature of aerial Alpine tours. The pilots will be Germans, who have hitherto been flying German machines, but have expressed a decided preference for British aircraft. The passengers are provided with easy access to their seats, and although the machine is adapted for a fighting craft, it is a 'good job' from the passenger-carrying point of view, and will even be preferred by many passengers to the totally enclosed cabined aeroplane."

The two pilots are, of course, in the employ of the Swiss company, and it is to be hoped that they do not mistake their destination; the last time we read about a German pilot and a Swiss aeroplane the passengers carried were finally landed in Madeira.

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So much has been said and written about the problem of the Navigation of the Rhine, in spite—or perhaps on account—of the many explicit international agreements, that we begin to feel disgusted with old Father Rhine. "Too many cooks spoil the broth," and the latest French recipe is the subject of an instructive exposé in the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* (Jan. 19th):—

"There are the makings of an international quarrel in the present position of the Rhine navigation problem. France has formulated a scheme which is patently opposed to the interests of Switzerland.

Representatives of British commerce in Switzerland are seriously concerned lest the home Government should fail to realise the importance of the issues. Nor is the question one for the British in Switzerland alone; the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of British Industries, and other bodies have definitely pronounced in favour of the Swiss project during the past year. Yet the fact remains that at the last meeting of the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine, on December 17th, the French proposals gained some measure of headway. Adverse comment is made in Switzerland on the fact that only one British Commissioner was present at the meeting instead of the two to which Great Britain is entitled.

It is desirable that the opposing schemes should be duly explained without further preamble. For some time past Switzerland has desired, and British commercial interests have endorsed the aspiration, that the Rhine should be made navigable for sea-going barges the whole way from Rotterdam to Basle. At present the only practicable procedure is to ship the goods to Mannheim or Strasbourg, and then convey them to Basle by rail. Now France has come forward with a new scheme for the building of a canal, parallel with the Rhine, but wholly on French territory—i.e., in Alsace—from Strasbourg to Kembs as an alternative to improving the river bed between Strasbourg and Basle.

Why? it will naturally be asked. The answer is simple. France does not covet the canal for its own sake, but very emphatically desires to erect a power station at Kembs. The effect of this power station would be to drain the river dry;

indeed, according to a leading Swiss expert whom I have interviewed, no less than 800 cubic metres of water per second would be drawn as an absolute minimum from the Rhine to the canal.

The French admit that the erection of the power station would be detrimental to Rhine navigation, and they offer to build the canal as a sop to Cerberus. They contend that shipments could be transferred at Strasbourg and conveyed by the canal to Basle at less cost than by the existing method of carrying them by rail, and that Switzerland would virtually be as favourably situated in the matter as if Basle were in verity a seaport.

Even if it be granted that ship plus canal be cheaper than ship plus railway, it cannot for a moment be contended that either is as cheap as direct transport by river the whole way. And what the measure of gain is that the river itself has to offer may be gauged by the following figures:—In 1913 the total shipments from the sea to the Rhine ports amounted to a tonnage of 6,712,502. If the proportion of that which was carried to Basle were estimated at 50 per cent., the saving in cost of transport would be no less than 7,056,100 Swiss francs if the river were utilised instead of the railway.

It is not even admitted, however, by the British and Swiss advocates of a free Rhine that the cost of transport must be materially reduced by the proposed canal as compared with the railway. So many locks are projected that the journey would be much more prolonged than was anticipated in the first instance, and what with lock fees and the hire of tugs and lighters, it is estimated that the cost would ultimately be brought nearly up to the level of rail transport.

Incidentally it may be mentioned that the arguments against the canal on technical grounds are many, and it is even urged that the cost of constructing huge turning basins, as proposed by France, would be so colossal as even to engender doubts on the score of her ability to carry the project into practical effect.

Be that as it may, however, the main objections to the canal are political. The freedom of the Rhine as an international waterway was declared in the Treaty of Vienna in 1815, was confirmed in the Peace of Paris Treaty of 1840, while at the Convention of Mannheim, in 1868, it was agreed that navigation to Basle was to be free from all taxes, and that every riparian State was under obligation to keep the channel navigable.

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On the other hand, the proposed canal would not be an inter-State construction, but would be entirely on French soil. It is believed by the British in Switzerland and by the Swiss to be absolutely impossible for any guarantee to be given not to levy taxes on ships or goods passing through the locks of a canal or through harbours situated on French territory. Equally it is feared that the canal would be utilised for statistical purposes, and that no safeguard can be provided for international traffic against taxes, dues, Custom-house formalities, and inland legislative measures affecting import, export, and transit.

I may add that the British Chamber of Commerce in Basle will consider the whole question on February 4, but meanwhile its Rhine Sub-Committee has reported definitely against the new project of the French Government and recommended that the technical objections of the Swiss Government to any project which may prevent or hinder free navigation on the Rhine be backed by the British Government through their delegates on the International Rhine Commission."

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*The Engineer* (Jan. 20th) contains an article illustrated by half-tones on the Electrification of the St. Gothard Railway, similar to the one recently reviewed (*vide* "S. O." Jan. 7th).

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A new Swiss Magneto, which as regards its design is a breakaway from accepted practice, is described in detail in *The Motor Cycle and Cycle Trader* (Jan. 13th). "A 'production of considerable merit,' the writer says, 'and not withstanding its unorthodox 'lay-out' of undoubted 'electrical efficiency. To the casual observer, perhaps, 'the most outstanding features of the machine are its compactness, clean external outline, and the excellent workmanship and finish of all component parts. In addition 'to the foregoing commendable points there are, as has 'been indicated, a number of departures from accepted 'practice which, in the aggregate, make the Scintilla a 'magneto worthy of the closest attention on the part of 'all motor-cycle manufacturers and traders.'"

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Both the *Musical Standard* and the *Musical News* (Jan. 14th) give the following appreciation of Hans Huber, the eminent Swiss composer, who was laid to rest on Dec. 28th last (*vide* "S. O." Jan. 7th):—

"Hans Huber died at Lucano, where he had retired on account of his health, in his sixty-ninth year. He is considered the most representative of Swiss composers, and has written interesting works of all kinds. For a long time he was Director of the Basle Conservatoire. He first became famous by the music he wrote for the Basle Festspiel of 1891, for which he was made doctor honoris causa of Basle University. He also wrote the music for a second Festspiel in 1901, but his really great works consist of the eight symphonies which he has composed during the last forty years. The Tell Symphony, the Boecklin Symphony, his Heroic Symphony, and his Seventh in A major are not only the most characteristic amongst them, but are, moreover, considered to express most distinctly the genuine Swiss character of their creator. They all prove him a master of a very rich, often subtle, often humorous, always interesting musical imagination—a great romantic! Some of his symphonies have been played with great success in Germany. They have, of course, all been produced in the big musical centres of Switzerland. His Eighth Symphony was performed for the first time only a few months ago in Basle. Hans Huber also wrote not less than five operas, amongst which "Simplicius" and "Die Schöne Belinda" were the most successful. Of late he took more and more to religious composition. He recently wrote three masses, an oratorio, and was preparing another oratorio called "Mors et Vita," when he died on Christmas evening. Hans Huber was an exceedingly interesting man, of a powerful temperament and a very hard-working disposition. His death is a serious loss to the musical life in Switzerland, as he has raised it to a standard hitherto unknown."

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Under the title "Schools for Housewifery" the Geneva correspondent of *The Westminster Gazette* (Jan. 20) reports

on visits which he has recently paid to several housekeeping schools in Switzerland:—

"The curriculum is very comprehensive, and the subjects taught include not only all branches of housework, from dusting to silver-cleaning, but mending, washing and ironing, cookery (simple and more elaborate), preserving fruit and vegetables for winter use, and something about gardening, principally growing vegetables. There is usually a doctor to lecture upon hygiene of the home, and even sometimes upon the elements of nursing and the care of infants. Girls are also taught how to keep household account books, how to avoid waste of food, gas, coal or electricity, and how to lay a table and serve dishes.

In one school which I visited, about twenty miles from Berne, the order of the day is somewhat as follows: In winter everyone gets up at seven. After breakfast the menu for the day is decided, the rooms are put in order, and the housework is done. From 10 to 12.30 everyone is either preparing luncheon or doing housework. At 12.30, luncheon, and afterwards the clearing away and washing up. In the afternoon there are various lectures and instruction in ironing and mending linen. At 4 o'clock comes afternoon tea or coffee, after which preparation must be made for the evening meal. Every day different students are allowed to lay the table, and the girls take it in turn to wait. The principal is always at the head of the table and sees that the girls on waitress duty do their work properly.

In the kitchen the girls take it in turn to cook different dishes. Great attention is paid to the cooking of vegetables, and the teacher is always present to give directions. Thus a cookery teacher will point out how much waste there generally is in peeling potatoes or in cutting up fruit for stewing or puddings. Even washing up is done so as to avoid needless waste of hot water, and above all, so as not to break or chip the crockery. The cleaning of knives is sometimes done by machinery, sometimes by the old-fashioned cork and knife-powder.

The fees paid in one of these schools by a boarder student generally amount to about Frs.1,250 per term (one year). In summer the teaching is necessarily somewhat different, and includes more gardening, fruit-picking and preserving. Most housekeeping schools being in the country, the girls can acquire some knowledge of poultry-keeping and dairy work, if they wish."

Although jazz dancing and the tango are not yet on the pensum, "92 per cent. of the girls get married after "leaving schools, married to lawyers, doctors, officials, bank "clerks or factory managers; and occasionally letters are "received from well-to-do men asking whether there are "any girls in the schools who would make good wives—in "short, whether they have any potential wives in stock."

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One of our correspondents draws our attention to a picture in *The Daily Mirror* (Jan. 24th) representing "Colonel Repond, Commander of the Swiss Vatican Guards, "and his son guarding the Pope's death-chamber." The likeness of Col. Repond is certainly there, but this officer has retired and left the pontifical service years ago; however, the photo of "his son" in full armour will, we hope, appeal to him as an intelligent anticipation.

#### SWISS TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICE.

We have received from the above an assortment of literature appertaining to winter sports in Switzerland, including the Swiss Tourist Almanac. The latter contains original high-class illustrations of life in the Alpine world and articles by well-known writers. "The Sports Guide" gives in detail the fixtures of the many sporting events which will take place during this season at all the winter resorts in our country.

A few volumes of last year's "Swiss Observer," containing Nos. 1—29, bound in dark cloth with gilt lettered back, are now ready and can be obtained for the price of 10/6 (11/3 by post).