

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1922)
Heft: 37

Rubrik: Home news

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Download PDF: 10.07.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

The Swiss Observer

Telegrams : FREPRINCO, LONDON.

Published weekly at
21, GARLICK HILL, E.C. 4.

Telephone : CITY 4603.

No. 37

LONDON, FEBRUARY 18, 1922.

PRICE 3D.

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HOME NEWS

The Swiss Federal Council have intimated to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations that a request for reducing postal rates for the League could not be acceded to, in view of the fact that the total abolishment of exemption for payment of postal fees on official communications is under consideration.

* * *

M. H. Schrafl, who is a native of Bellinzona, has been appointed Director-General of the Swiss Federal Railways by the Federal Council.

The son of a former Director of the Gotthard Railway, M. Schrafl was born at Lugano in 1873, studied at Lucerne and gained the diploma of the Federal Polytechnic as constructing-engineer in 1896.

He has held various important appointments in Zurich and Lucerne, entering the service of the Federal Railways as First Engineer in 1911, and being promoted Director of District V in 1921.

Director-General Schrafl has merited great credit for his masterly supervision of the electrification of the Federal Railways, and he is also largely responsible for the proposals for reform contained in the Re-organisation Bill of the Federal Railways.

* * *

Minister Dr. Alfred de Claparède celebrated his 80th birthday on February 10th in his native city of Geneva.

In the year 1869 Dr. de Claparède entered the Swiss Diplomatic Service as Attaché of Legation in Berlin. From 1888 till 1894 he held the post of Swiss Minister in Washington, then in Vienna, returning in 1914 to Berlin as Swiss Minister in that capital, where he remained until his retirement on his 75th birthday in 1917.

It is unreservedly recognised that Minister de Claparède has rendered to his country loyal and most valuable services, while at the same time he gained the highest esteem of those colonies abroad, by his untiring efforts to assist his countrymen, without distinction of class, with the perfect tact and devotion of a diplomat of the old school.

* * *

The constitutional law of Geneva decrees that the voters shall decide every 15 years whether a total revision of the Statute is called for. Accordingly, the citizens of the Canton of Geneva will have to express their opinion on May 21st next whether their constitutional code requires modification and amendment.

Credits amounting to 227 million francs have been granted by the Federal Council during the years 1920 and 1921 for the direct support of unemployed and for the purpose of creating emergency employment.

* * *

The municipality of Lausanne has submitted to the Council an agreement for ratification which proposes to put the Blécherette aerodrome and its installations for one year at the free disposal of the Compagnie Française des Grands Express Aériens. At the same time Lausanne is to grant to the said company a subvention of 60,000 French francs for the exploitation of air traffic between Lausanne and Paris, for which consideration the company is bound to carry out at least one regular journey weekly from and to Paris.

For the purpose of enlarging and improving the aerodrome, for erection of new hangars, signalling installations, wireless station, etc., a credit of 225,000 frs. is demanded by the municipality.

* * *

The Grand Council of Fribourg has voted a preliminary credit of 1,687,000 frs. for the construction of the new "Zähringen" bridge, which is to replace the old suspension bridge. The total cost of the new bridge is estimated at four million francs.

* * *

The extraordinary meeting of delegates of the Swiss Hotel Proprietors Association held in Berne under the presidency of Major Anton Bon (St. Moritz) decided that in view of the falling food prices a reduction of 10% shall take effect from the 1st of March on the minimum hotel tariffs for pension and for restaurant meals.

* * *

Of the salaries due to the Swiss Civil Servants by the end of this month, 17 million francs will be paid out in gold.

* * *

After having been closed for some time, the cigar factory of Ormond Frères at Vevey will be re-opened for a period of two months.

* * *

32,124 railway trucks have crossed the Lake of Constance by ferry from or to Romanshorn during 1921, i.e., 11,444 trucks less than during the year 1920. The falling off commenced from July, 1921, owing to the increased Swiss customs tariff and the import restrictions having entered into operation from that date.

Before the war this traffic amounted to about 80,000 wagons annually.

* * *

The population of the city of Zurich numbered 200,873 in January of the present year, against 206,273 in the same month of 1921.

* * *

Mr. Heuberger, a partner in the biscuit factory of Heuberger & Gautschi, and Mr. Karl Steiner, caterer, both

from Boniswil (Aargau), paid no heed to repeated warnings and ventured on skates on the newly frozen Lake of Hallwil. When a good distance out, the ice gave way, both skaters sank under it and were drowned.

* * *

Michael Maissen, of Disentis, is Switzerland's oldest active teacher and also holds the record for scholastic service. This venerable pedagogue is 90 years of age, looks back on 70 years of service, 65 years of which he has devoted to the juvenile scholars of Disentis.

* * *

The Belgian Football Association has informed the Swiss Football and Athletic Union that the Belgians will only take part in the International Match Belgium versus Switzerland, due for decision in May next at Lausanne, if Swiss teams do not beforehand enter into competition with German teams. As the next meeting between Swiss and German footballers has already been fixed to take place at Francfort on March 12th, the Central Committee of the Swiss Union has addressed a communication to the Belgian Association, emphasizing the necessity for the Swiss Union to observe absolute neutrality in the pure interest of sport, under which limitation of international intercourse could not be accepted. The Belgian reply is awaited with considerable interest in Swiss sporting circles.

* * *

OBITUARY.

Dr. Theophile Studer died in Berne at the age of 77 on Sunday, February 12th.

For 45 years Dr. Studer was Professor of Zoology at the Berne University. He was well known abroad, having participated in English and German expeditions of research in the tropics and attended many international congresses for zoology. He was also author of a number of scientific books and other publications.

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The death is recorded from Lausanne of the popular Dr. Lucien Jeannerat, at the early age of 35. Deceased was member for Lausanne in the Grand Council, has published numerous works on infantile tuberculosis, and took a leading part in the furtherance of sea and air bathing. To Dr. Jeannerat's initiative is due the creation of the Vidy-Plage family beach baths, which afford great benefit and recreation to the Lausannois in the summer months—an aid to health which is being increasingly emulated on the shores of other Swiss lakes.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE SWISS LEGATION

Il arrive constamment que des parents de personnes se trouvant en Suisse, en villégature, demandent à la Légation s'ils peuvent expédier, en franchise de douane, des vêtements (fourrures, manteaux, chandails [sweaters] etc.) articles de sport, qui leur sont réclamés par un des leurs, soit que les objets aient été oubliés, soit qu'il s'agisse d'une prolongation de séjour nécessitant une plus grande garde-robe.

Nous recevons à ce sujet de la Direction Générale des Douanes, à Berne, les indications suivantes: Les colis contenant des effets usagés jouissent de l'admission en franchise par analogie avec les effets de voyageurs, importés par ceux-ci à leur entrée en Suisse, et cela même dans les cas où ils s'y trouveraient joints quelques articles neufs.—En revanche les vêtements, etc. neufs, envoyés séparément, sont passibles des droits d'entrée.

PASSPORT VISA.—The visum between *France* and *Switzerland* has been mutually *abolished* for visitors as from the 15th instant. Only Swiss citizens desirous of taking up an occupation or employment in France, and French citizens contemplating to penetrate Swiss territory for the same purpose, are bound to secure, before starting on their journey, a visum from the competent Consular Office. Such visa will, however, be granted free of charge.

The procedure to obtain a visum in order to be allowed to proceed to France to take up work in that country is the following:—

The prospective employer is to apply on behalf of his future employee to the "Service de la main d'oeuvre étrangère" in Paris. If the requisite permit be granted, the employer in France is to send the same to the Swiss citizen for whom the permission has been sought. Any French Consulate will on production of an authorisation of the said "Service de la main d'oeuvre étrangère" grant a visum, free of charge, without further queries.

Persons to whom the aforesaid regulations apply, but neglect or purposely avoid to comply with them, will be sent back at the frontier, or, should they succeed to penetrate on French soil under false pretences, their stay in that country could not be justified.

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