

Home news

Objekttyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): **- (1935)**

Heft 724

PDF erstellt am: **05.05.2024**

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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE LONDON COLONY.

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 9595.

Published every Friday at 23, LEONARD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 14—No. 724

LONDON, SEPTEMBER 28, 1935.

PRICE 3d.

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES

UNITED KINGDOM AND COLONIES	3 Months (13 issues, post free) -	3/6
	6 Months (26 issues, post free) -	6/6
SWITZERLAND	3 Months (13 issues, post free) -	12/-
	6 Months (26 issues, post free) -	Fr. 7.50
	12 Months (52 issues, post free) -	14/-

(Swiss subscriptions may be paid into Postcheck-Konto Basle V 5718).



HOME NEWS

(Compiled by courtesy of the following contemporaries: *National Zeitung, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, St. Galler Tagblatt, Vaterland and Tribune de Genève*).

FEDERAL.

A "SWISS MAJOR" IN COMMAND OF AN ABYSSINIAN ARMY CORPS.

Under this heading a leading London evening paper published a supposed dispatch giving the above startling news. No confirmation is obtainable from Swiss sources but it appears that a certain Capt. Alois Wittlin was sentenced to imprisonment a few weeks ago by the third military court for helping himself to the funds of his company; at the same time he was dismissed from the Army. Captain Wittlin appealed without success against the court findings and was supposed to present himself to the prison authorities towards the end of last month. Subsequent enquiries by the police failed to discover his whereabouts.

GETTING BACK TO GOLD.

Proposals for the conclusion of as many bilateral agreements as possible between different countries to reduce tariff barriers were made by Dr. Burgin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, in the Assembly's technical commission at Geneva.

The resolution in which Dr. Burgin embodied his proposal begins by saying that: "One of the ultimate objects of Governments is a return to an international Gold Standard."

In the meantime, it adds, "effective action might be taken to ensure the removal of impediments to the exchange of goods" by as many countries as possible concluding bilateral agreements. Such agreements should as far as possible incorporate the most-favoured-nation clause, so that their benefits might be more wide-spread.

Dr. Burgin also proposed that, if countries held it necessary, there should be included in these agreements clauses which would permit their modification in the event of the currency of one of the parties undergoing a marked variation in value.

The resolution will be discussed at a later meeting of the commission.

Earlier in the debate M. Stucki (Switzerland) had declared that the maintenance of the Gold Standard was in the interests of the whole world.

OSCAR HAUSER †.

The death is reported from Lucerne of M. Oscar Hauser, proprietor of the well-known Hotel "Schweizerhof" in Lucerne. —

M. Hauser was born in 1867 the son of M. Adolf Hauser, proprietor of the Hotel Schweizerhof in Lucerne. After leaving school he spent some time at a preparatory institution in Lausanne, followed later on by a stay in England. He started his hotel career with the Grand Hotel in Paris, and later on he took up a position at the Grand Hotel in Naples. In 1890 he made an extensive tour through America and Egypt, in order to gain a wider experience. The death of his father which occurred in the same year put an end to his travels and together with his brother Willi he took over the management of the "Schweizerhof." Eight years later he married an English woman, Miss Emily, Agnes Tebbitt, who bore him three children, one daughter and two sons, but only his daughter and his wife surviving him.

M. Hauser enjoyed a great reputation in Swiss Hotel and Tourist circles and under his management the "Schweizerhof" became known all over the world, many crowned heads stayed at his Establishment. The deceased also took a great interest in the political affairs of his adopted canton. (M. Hauser was a native of Wädenswil, Ct. of Zurich), from 1892-1921 he was a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Lucerne over which he presided in 1921.

A GOOD VINTAGE YEAR IN SWITZERLAND.

The vintage in Western Switzerland is expected to yield 40 million litres of wine in the canton of Vaud, 9 million litres in the canton of Geneva, 20 million litres in the Canton of Valais, and 9 million litres in the canton of Neuchâtel.

RECEPTION AT THE FEDERAL PALAIS.

M. Minger, President of the Swiss Confederation has received the following foreign diplomats on the occasion of their presenting their credentials to the Swiss Confederation: Monsieur Phra Riem Virabhakaya, Siamese Minister and baron W. von Juge Engerth, Austrian Minister.

LOAN FOR CITY OF GENEVA.

It is rumoured that the City of Geneva has negotiated with a London group a loan of £1,800,000 at 4½ per cent. The loan is repayable at par within 30 years by fixed annuities.

SIMPLON TUNNEL FOR MOTOR TRAFFIC.

At a meeting of representatives of the Cantons of Valais, Vaud, and Geneva at Brigue it was decided to ask the Federal Government to transform the second Simplon tunnel into a road tunnel. It is estimated that one tunnel is sufficient for railway traffic, so that the second could be used for motor-cars. That would make it possible to maintain constant road connection through the Alps between Switzerland and Italy. At present the passes over the Alps are blocked by snow for about seven months of the year.

(The Simplon tunnel consists of two parallel borings 56ft. apart. The first was pierced between 1898 and 1906, the second between 1912 and 1922. The tunnels are 12½ miles long from Brig to Iselle.)

SWISS HOTELKEEPERS ASSOCIATION VERSUS "HOTEL PLAN."

A delegates meeting of the Swiss Hotelkeepers Association, presided over by Dr. H. Seiler (Zermatt), took place in Berne, 253 delegates attended. After a lengthy discussion it was unanimously decided to oppose the efforts of the "Hotel Plan" Association, for cheaper travelling facilities. It was stated that the terms quoted by the above Association did not cover the outlay of the Hotelkeepers.

FAMOUS PSYCHOLOGIST'S VISIT TO LONDON.

Professor C. G. Jung, the famous Swiss psychologist, as the guest of the Institute of Medical Psychology, has agreed to conduct a series of lecture-discussions dealing with his recent research in the field of "fundamental

psychological conceptions." The lectures will be given at the institute's clinic in Malet Place, Bloomsbury, and, beginning next monday, will be continued daily till October 4th.

JAKOB KIDNAPPING CASE.

Herr Jakob, who was kidnapped by German agents in March and was returned to the Swiss authorities, was escorted to the French frontier. The Swiss Government decided to deport him to France because he had tried to enter Switzerland illegally and had then sought to obtain forged passports for himself.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

M. Eduard Röthlisberger, Assistant Librarian at the Federal Technical University in Zurich, was killed on ascending the "Kleine Mythen."

The death is reported from Zurich of M. Albert Saxer a former Manager of the "Basler Handelsbank" at the age of 75. M. Saxer was at one time Sub-Manager of the "Schweizerischen Bankverein" in Zurich.

BERNE.

Federal Councillor Baumann has been unable to attend to his duties owing to an accident, which resulted in a broken arm.

Colonel Alfred Kindler of Zurich has increased his donation to the "Landwirtschaftliche Schule Rütli" from 20,000frs. to 30,000frs. The fund thus created is to be used to enable pupils without means to follow the courses of the institution.

The strange discovery of the dead body of a German tourist standing upright stark naked in the snow was made by Col. Udet, the famous German ace, after a daring flight along the base of the Alps near Grindelwald.

Accompanied by a Swiss guide, Col. Udet made a remarkable flight at a height of only a few yards from the mountain face searching for traces of two Alpine climbers from Munich who had been reported missing for some time.

The dead man was found on the Eiger peak facing the little Scheidegg, with snow up to his knees. No trace could be found of his clothes or of his companion, though it is thought that the latter probably lies buried under the snow. The search is proceeding.

Dr. H. Goldmann, surgeon at the Eye clinic in Berne, has been appointed Professor of Ophthalmology at the University in Berne.

BASLE.

Dr. Albert Oeri, National Councillor and Editor in chief of the "Basler Nachrichten" has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary.

GENEVA.

M. F. L. Fillion, a former manager of the "Schweizerische Depeschén Agentur," and since 1920 its representative at the League of Nations in Geneva has died at the age of 69. The deceased was for many years a member of the committee of the Swiss Press Association.

NEUCHÂTEL.

The Federal Council has agreed to advance 15,000,000frs. to the Banque Cantonale de Neuchâtel to cover the bank's losses. This advance will subsequently be repaid by the canton of Neuchâtel. The bank's finances were re-organised as recently as 1930, when it sustained a loss of some 17,000,000frs.

ST. GALLEN.

M. Walser, Manager of the Branch Office of the National Bank in St. Gall, has retired from his post, his successor is M. Walter Kobelt of Marbach (St. Gall).

FRIBOURG.

M. André Mauroux, a former Prefect of the district of "Glâne" and "Sarine" has died in Fribourg at the age of 70. M. Mauroux has played for many years an important part in the political life of the canton of Fribourg.

VAUD.

The Rev. F. Middleton, vicar of Hounslow, Middlesex, has been appointed to the British Chaplaincy at Lausanne. He expects to take up his duties there at the beginning of December.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

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ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL

at the

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Members of the Committee.

The Swiss Legation wish to notify all Swiss citizens resident within this Consular district that since January 1st, 1934, a new form of passport has been in use. Consequently all the old passports (green covers) will cease to be valid after December 31st, 1935.

Such old passports (green covers) as are still valid for three months or more on December 31st, 1935, will however be exchanged free of charge for a new passport.

For the issue of a new passport it is necessary to remit to the Legation two recent full-face photographs (without a hat and NOT Photomontages), as well as the old passport and the Swiss Registration Card.

Passports can be issued for periods of 1, 3 or 5 years.

Holders of old passports (green covers) are advised to apply for their passports before December 31st, 1935.

GRISONS.

A burglar, who was disturbed when on the premises of the "Co-opérative" in Klosters, fired a shot at his would be capturer and killed him outright. He was then shot at by one of the pursuers and received a wound which has since proved fatal. The dead man, an Austrian subject, was responsible for various burglaries which had occurred in the neighbourhood during the last few months.

SOLOTHURN.

M. Otto Haefeli, a member of the Board of many important industrial concerns in Switzerland, has died at the age of 78.

M. Haefeli was a member of the "Kantonsrat," over which he presided in 1903.

A PROPOS.

Ein englischer Arzt hat neulich in einer medizinischen Zeitschrift berichtet, es sei ihm gelungen, eine unfehlbare Methode zu entdecken, um Flöhe zu fangen. Sobald er sich gebissen fühlt — zufolge einer besonderen Veranlagung, über die er sich zu Beginn seines Artikels wehmütig beschwert, scheint ihm das häufig zu passieren — trinkt er die Stelle seiner Kleider, wo es ihn juckt, mit Chloroform. Dadurch werde der Floh eingeschlafert und lasse sich leicht fangen.

Die Sache ist ein wenig umständlich, aber wenn der Mann Freude daran hat, soll man sie ihm nicht verderben. Nur sollte er noch herausfinden, wie man die lästigen Blutsauger einschlafert, wenn man kein Chloroform zur Hand hat. Wenn ich wieder einmal in den unangenehmen Fall komme, der dem sanftmütigen Medizinemann so oft Beschwerden macht, werde ich versuchen, dem Floh einen schweizerischen Wuhlaufuf vorzulesen. Es kommt nicht so sehr darauf an, von welcher Partei, denn erstens lauten sie alle ziemlich ähnlich, und was zweitens ihre narkotische Kraft betrifft, so ist auch kein grosser Unterschied vorhanden, denn — man darf das ja schon ganz leise sagen —, es gibt wenig Stimmberechtigte, die den Wuhlaufuf selbst der eigenen Par-

tei vom ersten bis zum letzten Wort lesen. Vielleicht hängt es mit dieser einschläfernden Wirkung zusammen, dass so viele in diesen Schriftstücken enthaltene Versprechungen in Vergessenheit geraten.

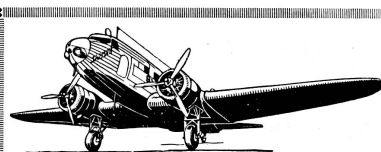
Die Zeitung, der ich den Bericht verdanke, hebt neben der wissenschaftlichen Umsicht des medizinischen Flohfängers die Humanität seines Verfahrens lobend hervor. Ich gestehe, dass meine Humanität gegenüber den heimtückischen Angriffen der Insektenwelt nicht standhält. Da erfüllt mich reine Rachelust, und der Gedanke, etwa einen Floh oder eine Stechmücke erst einschläfern zu wollen, bevor ich sie töte, hat mir tatsächlich bisher gänzlich ferngelegen. Aber vielleicht tötet der sorgsame Erfinder der neuen Methode die erbeuteten Tiere nicht einmal, sondern wirft sie nur in des Nachbarn Garten oder verkauft sie an einen Flohzirkus, wobei man sich freilich fragen müsste, ob das humaner wäre. Es ist mit der Ethik, soweit sie unsere Stellung zur Tierwelt betrifft, fast noch problematischer bestellt, als mit den Regeln über unser Verhalten zu den Mitmenschen. Der berühmte, auch von vielen Europäern fast blind verehrte, Gandhi hat neulich erklärt, lieber würde er selbst in den Tod gehen, als eine Ratte zu töten. Auch ich habe nicht die geringste Lust, eine Ratte zu erschlagen, aber ich kann mir denken, dass es Fälle gibt, wo diese grausige Tat mir geradezu als Pflicht erschiene.

Das Bezeichnende an der Geschichte des englischen Arztes ist das umständliche Phlegma, womit der wackere Mann auf den Stich des Blutsaugers reagiert. Ich fürchte, der Floh wird in den meisten Fällen kaum mehr an der Stelle des Stiches anzutreffen sein, wenn er sich nicht geradezu toll und voll, und vor allem faul gefressen hat an dem Blut seines Opfers. Aber vielleicht wirkt der Genuss so phlegmatischen britischen Blutes an sich schon seelisch ansteckend. Heutzutage wird so viel von der Mystik des Blutes behauptet, dass eine derartige Freismystik schon geradezu alltäglich glaubhaft wirkt. Dann wäre aber das Chloroform am Ende gar nicht mehr notwendig gewesen.

Leider ist die britische Reaktion auch ausserpolitisch ein wenig langsam. Wenn England auf die italienischen Flohstiche etwas früher und mit weniger Chloroform reagiert hätte, ständen wir heute nicht vor einer so bedrohlichen Situation.

Salander.

(National Zeitung).



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THE MATTERHORN.

By JOHN. BARTROPP, Author of *Barbarian*.
(*Chambers's Journal*).

I.

It is probably fair to say that the Matterhorn has for several generations excelled all other mountains in general interest. During the past seventy or eighty years the fame of no other peak has spread in quite the same way beyond the boundaries of its own district and country. What, then, is there about the Matterhorn which gives it such notoriety, such world-wide reputation? Not merely its height, for, though it boasts the very respectable altitude of 14,705 feet, there are at least five loftier summits in its own immediate neighbourhood. It is its unique and stupendous shape — it stands quite alone, and not, like most mountains, as part of a range — combined with the dramatic quality of its history ever since men began to try to climb it, that has caused the Matterhorn to be regarded in general with a mixture of curiosity and awe. And it can be said at once that its reputation rests on no insecure basis. It is undoubtedly the most fascinating of mountains.

Yet there is probably not one amongst the thousands of summits in the Alps, or in the world for that matter, which is the subject of so much ignorance and misunderstanding. One hears the strangest variety of remarks concerning it, from — "That terrible mountain!" "The most difficult peak in the world," "It's very dangerous, isn't it?" down to — "Nowadays it's considered ridiculously easy," "Oh, you know, the Swiss side is called the *Route des Vaches* because you could almost drive a cow up it," and so on. What is the truth?

As regards position, the Matterhorn is situated roughly in the centre of the Pennine range of the Canton Valais in south-western Switzerland. This range is disposed on each side of a number of beautiful parallel valleys leading south from the great Rhone Valley, and contains several of the highest and finest mountains in the Alps. The Matterhorn stands up like a gigantic obelisk at the southernmost end of the Zermatt valley, or *Nikolaital*, so called from St. Niklaus, its capital. The large village of Zermatt, sometimes, and with reason, called the Mecca of mountaineering, lies at its foot, the Swiss-Italian frontier line passes east and west across its wedge-shaped summit, and on its southern side lies the valley of Valtournanche, with the village of Breuil forming the Italian counterpart to Zermatt. It was in a great degree its position on the border of the two countries that gave such dramatic quality to the mountain's history.

In shape the Matterhorn is an immense four-sided pyramid, standing over 14,700 feet above sea-level, of which about 6,000 feet represents the height of the actual rock peak above its supporting base of grassy alps and snowy glaciers. Its

appearance has been variously likened to a rearing horse, a cobra about to strike, and a huge wave curling over to break. None of these descriptions is entirely apt, though there is certainly a strong element, both soaring and intimidating, about the mountain. The truth is that no simile is ever likely to be found to do justice to its immense size, its solitary grandeur, its purity of outline, and a certain character both sinister and menacing. From the final chapter of Edward Whymper's classic *Scrambles amongst the Alps* — the book which tells of his many efforts to climb the peak in the sixties of last century — a paragraph may well be quoted.

"The time may come when the Matterhorn shall have passed away, and nothing, save a heap of shattered fragments, will mark the spot where the great mountain stood; for, atom by atom, inch by inch, and yard by yard, it yields to forces which nothing can withstand. That time is far distant; and ages hence generations unborn will gaze upon its awful precipices and wonder at its unique form. However exalted may be their ideas and however exaggerated their expectations, none will come to return disappointed!" No man loved the mountain more or had more cause to fear its power than the writer of those solemn lines.

II.

Of the four faces which rise to the summit, the East, or Swiss, and the South, or Italian, are the most frequently climbed, and formed the ground on which the great struggle for the honour of the first ascent was fought out seventy years ago. The East face looks down on Zermatt. It seems to tower over the collection of old chalets and modern hotels, and at a distance appears quite smooth and alarmingly steep, though in reality this is something of an illusion, for the angle up to the Shoulder, or for about three-quarters of its height, is not more than forty degrees. Above the Shoulder the mountain steepens sharply, and much of the upper face is nearly as vertical as it looks. The first ascent was by a route upon this side, close to the ridge between the East and North faces, commonly called the Swiss ridge. In a normally hot summer, the mountain shows itself as a pure rock peak, dark-brown or nearly black in colour. But from September to June, or at any time after a serious storm or snowfall, it suddenly becomes white with the ice and snow which cling to its isolated crags. At such times the mountain looks more formidable than ever, and the wise man will admire its beauty but not set foot upon it.

The Italian side is considerably larger and more complicated and cut-up than its smooth-looking Swiss counterpart. At the foot is a subsidiary peak called the *Tête du Lion*, above which a well-defined ridge, usually known as the Italian route, leads upwards to within about eight hundred feet of the summit, where there is a long, narrow, almost horizontal ridge ending in the

final peak, corresponding roughly to the steep part above the Shoulder of the Swiss side. It was this final peak on the Italian route which baffled most of the early explorers of the mountain, and though, for reasons which will be explained later, it was until its final conquest attacked almost entirely from Italy, there is no doubt that greater difficulties are found here than on the Swiss side. For some years after the first ascent there were more expeditions from Italy than from Zermatt, probably because it was on the Swiss side that the famous accident on that first ascent occurred. Later on, ropes were fixed on the steep upper part of the Swiss face, and by far the greater number of ascents are now made by that way, partly because it is easier and shorter, and also because of the superior attractions and ease of access of the Swiss village over its Italian neighbour.

The North face, the least extensive of the four, is exceedingly steep and repellent of aspect. It was down this almost vertical precipice that, in 1865, four of the party of the first ascent fell, and it was until lately regarded, with good reason, as inaccessible and unjustifiable of attempt. Two young Swiss climbers, however, reached the summit from this side about a year ago, after a day and a night of intense danger, but the achievement is not likely to be often repeated.

The West, or Zmutt, side, shows the outline of the mountain at its finest, though it is the least seen or known, facing as it does a great mass of mountains and glaciers, and being out of sight of any village, Swiss or Italian. A route was forced up this side, called the Zmutt-grat or ridge, in 1879 by the two independent English parties of Mummery, the most famous mountaineer of his day, and Penhall, with some of the most enterprising of the Valais guides. This climb was then considered the last word in difficulty, and is even to-day regarded as a very fine expedition, in favourable weather probably the best of the justifiable routes up the mountain. There are no fixed ropes on this side of the mountain, so that the natural difficulties still exist in their original form.

The westerly ridge, called the Furggen-grat, is tremendously steep and contains one long overhanging pitch. It was once attacked in the early days by Whymper and his guides, who did not, however, get very far. Mummery climbed the greater part of it after immense difficulties in 1880, but had to leave it and turn over to the Swiss ridge above the Shoulder. In modern times, several Swiss and Italian parties have made the complete ascent by the Furggen-grat, but the final part has in most cases had to be negotiated by means of fixed ropes or ladders let down from the summit. Like the North face, this is not generally regarded as a straightforward expedition.

(To be continued).