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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

To stop the torrential flooding of the Swiss market with so-called "valuta-pianos," i.e., pianos of Austrian and German origin, the wholesale importation of which threatened to completely paralyse the manufacture of pianos in Switzerland, the Federal Council has decreed that future import of these instruments, the quality of which the purchasers found to be on a level with the low exchange rates, shall be subjected to special import licence.

\* \* \*

At the suggestion of interested circles and Chambers of Commerce of the French eastern regions and of Alsace, a meeting was held in Paris under the presidency of Minister Le Trocquer. The object of the meeting was discussion and investigation of the means necessary for the exploitation of the Rhine between the Swiss frontier and Strasbourg, for which the project advanced at the meeting favours the construction of a canal running parallel to the Rhine, with locks permitting simultaneous passage of two barges of 1,000 and 1,200 tons each.

The French minister pointed out that agreement must be unanimous among all those closely interested in the scheme to allow for its being carried through efficiently and for proceeding later to the exploitation of the available water-power for the benefit of industry and agriculture. A resolution was adopted at the meeting to appoint a commission to study the technical and financial questions involved and to prepare a definite plan for the vast scheme.

\* \* \*

The Federal Supreme Court dismissed an appeal directed against the decision of the Government of Schaffhouse which prohibited the son of a fully qualified local dentist to act as dentist's assistant and to advertise himself as Dr. J. Strittmatter, jun. The evidence before the court proved the appellant to have never studied at any university nor to have passed any examinations qualifying him as assistant, he having simply purchased his doctor degree from the official representative in Switzerland of one of those notorious American sham universities, in this case the "Oriental University" of Washington, whose extensive sale of these worthless certificates was being carried on from Geneva by the self-styled "Professor Dr." Aloys Demole. In consequence of the strong press campaign that followed the trial, the activity of this sham university agent has come under the limelight so much that the "learned

professor" will now have to answer charges of fraud in the courts of Geneva, brought by a good many dupes whose vanity he has lucratively exploited.

\* \* \*

At the festival of the Federation of French Gymnastic Societies in Lille the "Bürgerturnverein Basel" secured three first prizes in the following events: 100 metres race, 100 metres relay race, and a hurdle race.

\* \* \*

The regulation of the motor, aerial and cycle traffic, which up till now has been in the hands of cantonal and municipal bodies, has now become a matter for Federal legislation, the plebiscite taken on Sunday, May 22nd, sanctioning by an overwhelming majority the necessary amendments to the Constitution.

\* \* \*

The following cantonal deficits were incurred during the past fiscal year: Zurich frs. 7,474,118, Berne frs. 3,328,334, and Neuchâtel frs. 693,000.

\* \* \*

For the Canton of Appenzell Dr. Hofstetter, from Gais, has been returned as National Councillor in place of Mr. Arthur Eugster, who has retired.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Federal Railways have placed orders for 32 electric locomotives at a cost of about 24 million francs, which is to be distributed over the budgets for 1921 to 1923.

\* \* \*

For the period of January 1st to April 30th the Swiss Customs show receipts of frs. 33,721,745, whilst the expenses amounted to frs. 44,153,632, so that it would appear that the cost of administration and collection has exceeded the proceeds from the Customs by frs. 10,432,887.

\* \* \*

The figures of total unemployment for the fortnight to May 23rd record a slight decrease of 4,338, the unemployed at the date mentioned numbering 146,143. The metal, machinery and clothing industries are faring a little better, whilst the conditions in the watch industry have become worse.

\* \* \*

The preliminary sittings in connection with the settlement of the Savoy Zone dispute show very little progress: the original French attitude having been only slightly modified.

\* \* \*

A unique distinction has been bestowed upon Prof. Dr. J. F. Schär, who in younger years was a well-known commercial teacher in Basle and who about two years ago retired from a similar position at the Handels-Hochschule in Berlin. On the occasion of his 75th anniversary his former colleagues propose to erect his bust in marble in the Aula of the Berlin University.