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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

It is with profound regret that we announce the death, at the age of 63, of Dr. GASTON CARLIN, Swiss Minister at Berlin.

Dr. Carlin succumbed suddenly to heart failure on Tuesday last, while out walking in the company of Dr. L. Vogel, Councillor of Legation at Berlin.

We shall publish in our next issue an appreciation of Dr. Carlin from the pen of a member of our London colony, who has for years been in close touch with the distinguished statesman while he was Swiss Minister at the Court of St. James's from 1902 till 1919.

The Swiss electorate had to decide on Sunday last whether amending bills should be introduced in the Swiss Parliament concerning—

1. Naturalization Laws;
2. Extradition Laws;
3. Laws relating to eligibility of State Officials to National Council.

All three initiatives were rejected by the populace with overwhelming majorities, thus: the first bill by 341,600 against 64,600 accepting votes, the second by 254,600 against 156,100, and the third by 251,720 against 157,750.

\* \* \*

The fiscal accounts for 1921 of the city of Geneva show receipts of 19,952,086 francs and expenditure of 35,751,579 frs., leaving a deficit of 15,799,493 frs. to be met.

\* \* \*

The balance sheet of the municipality of Neuchâtel reveals expenditure of 6,653,686 frs., against revenue of 5,476,124 frs.

\* \* \*

In an international competition, which invited architects to submit re-building and extension plans for the city of Belgrade, the fourth prize of 35,000 Dinars was awarded to Mr. A. Bodmer, civil engineer, and Mr. F. Schwarz, architect, of Bienne.

The plans submitted by the architects Messrs. Rittmeyer and Furrer of Winterthur were secured for 20,000 Dinars by the Belgrade authorities, while the Zurich architects Messrs. Witmer and Senn received an award of 10,000 Dinars for plans and projects submitted by them.

\* \* \*

The Swiss National Football Team, composed of Dessibourg, Gottenkieny, Haag, Probst, Schmiedlin, Bielser, Merkt, Sturzenegger, Leiber, Meyer and Ramseyer, was badly beaten in Vienna on Sunday last, when the Austrian National Team scored 7 goals against the Swiss team's one goal.

\* \* \*

*Toll of the Mountains.*

Three young alpinists, who were ascending the 'Dom' of the Mischabel group, lost their footing and slipped over a precipice. Krabenbuhl and Henri Favre from Sion died immediately, and their companion received such serious injuries that his life is despaired of.

\* \* \*

On Whit-Sunday two young men set out from the Maderan valley to climb up to the Hüfi Hut. Instead of pursuing the usual course, Eichmüller suggested a short cut over the Hüfi Glacier, although they were not properly equipped for that purpose, nor sufficiently acquainted with the difficulties and perils to which this deviation from the safer course exposed them.

As the snow bridges covering the numerous crevasses became thinner and thinner as they got higher, the more cautious young man of the two warned his friend and requested him to give up the 'dangerous exploit.' Eichmüller paid no heed to his friend's repeated remonstrances, on the contrary, he told him to return if he lacked sufficient pluck to follow him. Expecting Eichmüller to realise that his attempt was foolhardy, he turned back and waited for some considerable time before descending to the valley alone.

By Whit-Monday the venturesome Eichmüller had not yet returned, and his friend, getting alarmed, gave information, and a rescue party set out to try and find him. After two days' search Eichmüller's body was found in a crevasse of some 15 metres depth into which he had been precipitated, and thus paid the price of his folly with his life.

\* \* \*

## OBITUARY.

The well-known Swiss painter, Mr. Karl Gehri, died at Münchenbuchsee, aged 72. Most of his works of art depict scenes of popular Bernese life. A noteworthy incident to recall is the fact that Mrs. Gehri presented her husband at an early stage of their wedlock with *quadruplets* in perfect health, and all the four children are to-day in the prime of life.

**Die weisse Fahne.**—Frei von Pensionären ist seit kurzem das Bezirksgefängnis in Aarwangen. Seit langer Zeit ist es nie mehr vorgekommen, dass die weisse Fahne auf dem Schloss Aarwangen wehte. (Solothurner Zeitung.)

**Interessanter Fang.**—Ein Fischer von Muntelier by Murren hat im Neuenburgersee einen 32 Kilo schweren Wels gefangen. (National Zeitung, Basel.)

**Die neue Hängebrücke in Freiburg.** die an 109 Meter langen Drahtkabeln schwebt und nur dem Personenverkehr dient ist dem Verkehr übergeben worden.

(Tagblatt für das Birseck, Birsig- und Leimental.)

Owing to pressure on space we regret having to hold over for the next issue the report of the *Secours Mutuels' Annual Banquet and Ball*, and the report on the *Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society*.

## NOTES & GLEANINGS.

Sir Frederick Treves' book on the Lake of Geneva seems to have opened the heart of not a few who have sojourned in this beautiful district, for the English papers still continue to publish correspondence, both in prose and poetry, and one wonders whether anything new can be written about the subject. With the commencement of the summer season no better propaganda could have been conceived, and the way in which the other holiday centres are advertised appears ineffective in comparison. In *The Queen* (June 3rd) Carine Cadby describes the Inner Bernese Oberland than which no other place can offer a more comprehensive summer holiday; you get value for your money, for the charges are reasonable, the food excellent and the accommodation good. According to the *Daily Telegraph* (June 6th) the prospects for alpine climbing are exceptionally promising, for the Alps are now in as good a condition as any time in July in an ordinary summer:—

"Many of the leading guides have gone the length of writing to their 'Herren' in England imploring them to come at once, as the mountains could not be in better condition; and they are greatly distressed to see so many fine, long days speeding by without anyone to employ their services. The hotels in the mountain resorts, which are by now nearly all open, as are all the important mountain railways and mountain passes, are still almost deserted; but a large number of visitors are expected. Indeed, it is claimed that as many tickets for Switzerland have this year been sold in London as in the years immediately before the war. If so, then the Swiss guides will rejoice."

The writer points out the efforts made to attract English tourists and the inducement offered by—

"the mountain resorts, which have cut their prices down almost to pre-war rates. They had perforce to do so, indeed, because during the war certain hotels in the Swiss towns had guests whose expenses were paid by the Governments of the various belligerent Powers. These hotels saw no reason, therefore, why they should not be well paid out of the bottomless purse which, as we all know, every Government possesses. Their other guests were mostly war profiteers—'Schieber,' as they are called in this country—and the hotel keepers naturally did not see why these individuals should not also be made to pay. After the Armistice it was very hard for such hotels to put down their prices, and ordinary persons, who were neither Government officials nor war profiteers, frequently considered themselves 'skinned,' and doubtless in some cases were so. In general, however, I do not think the hotel keepers in mountain resorts can be charged with exploiting their visitors. Climbers, therefore, need not abandon a mountaineering holiday

in Switzerland this year for fear of being presented with hotel bills which they cannot afford to pay. About two years ago the guides raised their fees some thirty per cent., but I am informed now that they are asking only pre-war fees, although the cost of living in Switzerland is still much above what it was before the war. What visitors will find heavy, even this year, will be the railway fares, despite these having been reduced about twenty per cent. as compared with war fares."

\* \* \*

The abnormally high retail prices still ruling in Switzerland form the subject of a recommendation by the Basle correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* (June 1st), who states that—

"Switzerland has an elaborate array of protective tariffs; equally is it true that the cost of transmitting goods by post or other means is heavy. The factor that is none the less ignored is the extraordinary scale of profit which the Swiss retailer expects and demands, with the result that people have to pay through the nose both for imported and even for non-imported articles. There are many things that one may order direct from England and, even after paying carriage and Customs duties, find oneself considerably in pocket as compared with buying them on the spot.

Such things as drugs and patent medicines can be delivered from England to a Swiss customer at far lower prices than he would have to pay to his local chemist. Swiss tailors, again, charge perfectly absurd prices for clothes, and, quite apart from the question of cut, it is vastly cheaper to send to England for one's suits. The price, too, at which books and magazines are sold is considerably in excess of the retail price in England plus duty and carriage. So high, in fact, are the Swiss tradesman's notions of retail profit that it would probably be found on analysis that a very long list could be compiled of articles that could be imported more cheaply than they could be bought on the spot. Obviously, therefore, it is to the advantage of British merchants to endeavour to secure direct orders from Swiss residents.

The field for inquiry is a large one. No greater mistake could be made than to assume that duties and carriage are bound to make an article unsaleable. Not only may there be a difference in the price of manufacture as compared with its locally produced counterpart; not only may the quality of the English article be so superior as to commend it to Swiss buyers on that ground alone; but, in any case, the chances are that the Swiss retail tradesman will put on so high a profit for himself that anyone who can approach customers without a middleman will be certain of a market for English goods."

\* \* \*

*Engineering* (May 26th) reproduces some photographs together with explanatory matter of the electric cranes at the railway shops at Bellinzona; these cranes, which are capable of lifting a complete locomotive, have been constructed by the Oerlikon Company. Another similar device is illustrated in *Motor Transport* (June 5th) and refers to a new equipment attached to Saurer lorries which allows heavy weights to be loaded and unloaded with facility and celerity; one of these special Saurer vehicles has recently been acquired by Messrs. Pickfords, Ltd., who are employing it on cable transport work.

\* \* \*

An interesting law-suit over the sale of some rubber tyres, in which two Swiss firms are concerned, has been argued and decided in the English courts in favour of the latter; the case is fully referred to in the *Journal of Commerce* (June 7th).

\* \* \*

The *Evening Standard* (8th June) and *Alien waiters*:

"A visit to many of the leading West End hotels reveals the fact that the alien waiter is rapidly regaining the position he held before the war. For some time ex-service men held these positions, but they are gradually being ousted by the alien.

In very few clubs, with the exception of those wholly "Service," are British employees found to be in the majority.

The British waiter is a rattling good chap, far superior to any of these aliens who are now crowding hotels, but

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