

**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:** Subscription rates

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# 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 Rottmanshorn 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