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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The Federal Council are inviting the two Chambers to vote a credit of 2,100,000 frs. for the acquisition of property in Paris, Rome and Berlin for the housing of the Swiss Legations in those cities.

\* \* \*

The January accounts of the Federal Posts show a working loss of 1,428,000 frs. The staff has been reduced by 688 to 16,145 employees.

Telegraphs and telephones also show a loss for the same month of 53,000 frs. The personnel of these services has also been reduced by 601 to 6,295 employees. 421,769 telegrams and 9,991,121 telephone calls were dealt with during January, 1922.

The Swiss Postal Authorities have concluded an agreement with the British Post Office for aerial transit of letters to Cairo and Mesopotamia.

\* \* \*

The Canton of Uri has 23,963 inhabitants, of whom only 1,668 are foreigners. The sturdiness of this hard-working mountain population is evidenced by the fact that 3 per cent. of it are over 70 years of age.

\* \* \*

America has now also entered three balloons for this year's Gordon-Bennett Cup, the start for which will take place from Geneva.

America has won the Cup four times, Switzerland twice, Germany twice, France once, and Belgium once.

\* \* \*

King Albert of Belgium is taking a short holiday in Switzerland.

\* \* \*

Although police and game-keepers had conducted for days a thorough search of all alpine huts and other likely places of refuge in the regions of the Säntis, they did not succeed in capturing alive Kreuzpointner, the murderer of the Säntis Observatory attendant and his wife.

Only his lifeless body was recovered, hanging in a hut at the foot of the Säntis which the day previous had been found empty by the searchers. As the population of the Canton of Appenzell refused to have the murderer buried in any of their graveyards, the body was taken to St. Gall, where it will be cremated.

\* \* \*

Physicians and teachers in Holland have for some time

been considering a proposal to found a special school in the Upper Engadine, which would be attached to the "Lyceum Alpinum" in Zuoz, where during the past twenty years many ailing Dutch scholars have received private education and incidentally regained perfect health and strength.

The Dutch Government now also intends to despatch annually a number of students from secondary schools whose physical development is impaired and is likely to benefit by a prolonged stay at Zuoz, where they can pursue their studies and education either at the gymnasium, the secondary school, or the commercial college, the staffs of which will be supplemented by special Dutch teachers.

\* \* \*  
The directors of the Zurich International Festival Plays, which take place in Zurich in May next, have succeeded in making arrangements with Mr. Norman Macdermott, the manager of the London "Everyman's Theatre," for the stock company of that theatre to give a number of performances during the season.

\* \* \*  
At the forthcoming Swiss Samples Fair at Basle the innovation of a special group will be devoted to Swiss patents and inventions, giving Swiss inventors and patentees an opportunity to bring before the public their new ideas and improvements.

\* \* \*

## OBITUARY

Minister Dr. Alfred von Planta, Swiss Ambassador in Berlin, died under tragic circumstances on March 2nd at the age of 65.

Called from Berlin to the deathbed of his only son at Davos, the Minister contracted pneumonia, succumbing to the acute attack two days after his son's death.

A descendant of an old aristocratic Grison family, von Planta studied law in Zurich, Freiburg i.Br. and Leipzig. Dr. von Planta entered the Swiss Diplomatic Service as Secretary of Legation in Vienna, where he remained from 1884 to 1885, afterwards returning to his native canton to practise as a barrister.

He took a great interest in home affairs, and was a leading figure in the creation and development of the Raetic Railways, the Electric Power Works of Brusio, and the Bernina Railway. For many years he was a member of the Grisons Grand Council, and in 1896 the electors of the Grisons returned Dr. von Planta as their representative in the National Council, which body he presided over in the eventful year of 1914, gaining admiration as a politician of distinction and great talent. In the following year the Federal Council appointed him Ambassador to Italy. Minister von Planta remained in Rome till 1918, going to Berlin as Ambassador in 1919.

His native Canton, Switzerland, and particularly the Swiss Colonies in Germany mourn in the departed diplomatist a most distinguished compatriot of great learning and capabilities.