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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The Federal Council has decided that State control of copper vitriol and sugar shall be abolished on July 15th and September 30th next respectively, from which dates trading in these commodities shall be freed from all restrictions.

\* \* \*

The fiscal accounts for 1921 of the municipality of Lausanne close with a surplus of revenue over expenditure of 303,304 frs., a conspicuous exception to a rule which prevails in most other Swiss towns and communities in these times.

\* \* \*

At the forthcoming elections for the Municipal Council of Zurich 648 candidates will contest the 125 available seats on that body.

\* \* \*

The price which Switzerland still has to pay for imported coal continues to handicap Swiss industry most unfavourably, particularly those trade sections which for their existence depend on export of their manufactured goods. Swiss export manufacturers are not only exposed to serious German competition, which works with much cheaper fuel, but they also suffer acute competition from France and Italy, the industries of which countries derive telling advantages under the Reparation coal clauses of the Peace Treaty, which incidentally also injure British coal exports.

To-day's pit-head prices per ton of coal are as follows:

	Saar Coal	Ruhr Coal	Ruhr Coke
Switzerland pays in Swiss francs ...	66.50	66.00	85.00
Germany pays in Swiss francs ...	15.05	19.80	26.80

The disparity in the above prices also explains why the price for gas per cubic metre in most of the German towns is only 5 to 8 centimes, whereas in Switzerland it costs from 50 to 60 centimes.

\* \* \*

After a break of three weeks the meteorological reports from the Säntis Observatory are again available. Guide Rusch and a volunteer from the Zurich Telegraph Office are attending to the service until a successor to the former attendant Haas, who, with his wife, met such a tragic fate, can be appointed.

\* \* \*

In Aarau and its adjacent villages a vibration of the earth was felt proceeding from east to west. The movement

was so violent in Ruppertsuil that the frightened inhabitants fled from their houses into the open.

\* \* \*

The express train from Zurich to Berne caught the trailer of a motor lorry passing a level crossing near Schinznach. The trailer, loaded with some 2,000 lemonade bottles, was completely smashed, while the three occupants of the lorry miraculously escaped unhurt.

\* \* \*

The "Fauteuill traditionnell," which is decorated with the coat-of-arms of the Neuchâtel Republic, has been presented by the Government of Neuchâtel to the oldest inhabitant of La Chaux-de-Fonds, Mme. Marie Bourquin, née Bonjour, who attained her hundredth birthday on the 15th inst. and still enjoys full possession of all her faculties.

\* \* \*

It is a matter of opinion whether the closing, some years ago, of the only village "pub." of Gsteigwiler above Wilderswil (Berne) has anything to do with the pronounced longevity of its 350 inhabitants, eight of whom are between 80 and 90 and twelve between 70 and 80 years of age. The doyen of the village is Fritz Häsler, who in his 93rd year is still going strong physically as well as mentally.

\* \* \*

The Furka Railway certainly does not seem able to pay its way. The receipts for the past month of February amounted to 8,100 frs., while the running costs totalled 29,500 frs. for the same period.

\* \* \*

The first food train of the Swiss "Save the Russian Children" Society left Basle on the 23rd inst. for Tzaritzyn on the Volga.

The 35 waggons of which the train consists are conveying to Russia 50 tons of rye, 10 tons of flour, 38 tons of beans and peas, 47 tons of soup ingredients, 46 tons of rice, 21 tons of chocolate and cocoa powder, 10 tons of sugar, 35,000 tins of condensed milk, 3 tons of infants' food, 6,000 tins of preserved meat, 11 tons of oatmeal, 2 tons of dried fruit, 3 tons of rusks, 10 tons of lard, 9 tons of various other food commodities, 10 tons of salt, 10 tons of coal, 18,000 articles of wearing apparel, one waggon of kitchen utensils, and one waggon of medical and surgical goods.

The train is accompanied by some twenty Swiss delegates, four of whom are "Russlandschweizer." The erection of the food kitchens in the famished districts and the cooking and distribution of the daily rations will be supervised by these delegates, and it is estimated that 10,000 children can daily be fed from the centres for a period of six months. The cost of feeding a child per month, including the victuals and all expenses of transport, erection and running of kitchens, etc., is calculated to be 4 francs.