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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The committee of the Swiss League of Nations Union suggests that the private manufacture and sale abroad of war munitions should be prohibited, and that such manufacture should be a monopoly of the Confederation.

\* \* \*

The voters of the canton Basel-Stadt rejected last Sunday an initiative which sought to abolish the annual Labour holiday on the 1st of May.

\* \* \*

The professors teaching in the cantonal schools have presented a petition to the Lucerne Grand Council, stating that their remuneration is too low a basis. The council, after discussion, has fixed a new minimum of Frs. 6,500, with a maximum of Frs. 8,500 per annum.

\* \* \*

Sued for defamation of character, the *Tribune de Genève* has won a law suit which will help to expose a nefarious traffic that has been carried on by a "Prof. Demole." This gentleman has done a lucrative business in selling foreign decorations, doctor titles and degrees of a sham university in America to whomsoever was willing to remit the necessary fee.

\* \* \*

The height of the enlarged and reinforced railway bridge at Olten has been successfully raised 40 centimetres, with the aid of twelve pumps, each of a capacity of 100 tons.

\* \* \*

A strike, lasting about eight weeks, in consequence of the Sauer Company in Arbon insisting on a reduction of wages, has now been called off; work has been restarted on the terms offered by the company.

\* \* \*

A large number of people had congregated near the Roc Double (Sion) in order to watch blasting operations; the first charge, after much delay, went off with terrific force, throwing missiles to unexpected distances and thereby seriously injuring ten of the spectators.

\* \* \*

Fissures in rocks having appeared for some time, a considerable transformation of the ground has now taken place at Münchenstein (Basle), where a quarry is being worked by the Portland Cement Company.

\* \* \*

A serious motor accident occurred near Hurden (Zurich Lake) when the driver lost his way and the car fell down a steep road bank. Of the five occupants, Friedrich Lutz, from Zurich, was killed on the spot, whilst two ladies were gravely injured.

\* \* \*

For sheer personal endurance the feat of a Romanian ought to appeal to those who complain about the discomforts in travelling. When the Bucarest-Paris express arrived at Basle, a youth of 21 was discovered on the axle of one of the coaches; he had "entrained" at Bucarest, and if it had not been for a stroke of undeserved bad luck, would probably have been able to complete his journey to Paris.

\* \* \*

## OBITUARY.

Charles Edouard Lardy, formerly Swiss Minister in Paris, died on Wednesday, June 27th, at Châtel-sous-Bévaix (Neuchâtel) at the age of 76. Born in Neuchâtel as the son of a lawyer, he followed the profession of his father, and at an early age entered the service of the Political Department. He became attached to the Swiss Legation in Paris, where the whole of his diplomatic career was spent; he was Swiss Minister from 1883 to 1917, when he retired into private life. Well known and highly respected in international politics, M. Lardy was one of the most successful Swiss diplomats (see also special article).

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KVBURG."

## Cost of Living in Switzerland.

In view of the summer holiday plans which are being made by, let us hope, a great many, it is more than ever important that absurd statements concerning the price of things in Switzerland

should be contradicted. In the *Pall Mall & Globe* (June 2th), in an article by C. H. Charles, Ph.D., the writer states:—

The extraordinary topsy-turvydom of German prices came home to me first when boarding the German boat from Switzerland to Lindau, on the Lake of Constance, where I paid 10 centimes for a cup of coffee and a roll (a penny) for what had cost me 3 francs (2s. 6d.) at the fashionable pastrycooks in Zurich the day before. Prices in Switzerland rule exorbitantly high, about three times pre-war, and ten times the corresponding German prices. A sandwich and a bottle of beer cost 3 francs 50 centimes (say 3s.) in Zurich, and its equivalent in Munich 3 1-8d.

Lunch at a respectable middle-class restaurant in Munich, consisting of soup, hard-boiled eggs in mayonnaise, stewed veal in casserole, cake in lemon sauce, and a bottle of beer, cost, inclusive of tip, 7,000 marks—sevenpence!

The price of the same meal either in Switzerland or France (where prices are considerably cheaper than in Switzerland) would not have been less than 4s. to 5s.

A cup of coffee and a roll costing Three Swiss Francs! My dear Doctor, either you misrepresent facts intentionally, or you are guilty of a *suppresseo veri*, which is simply a more subtle form of giving out false news! It is just possible that this Doctor stayed at one of the smart hotels at Zurich, where they charge 3 francs for breakfast, and that, owing perhaps to having lived too well in his younger days, and therefore being on a strict diet at present, the Doctor could eat only one solitary roll and drink one cup of coffee. But to state in cold print as if it was the usual price that at Zurich one has to pay 3 francs for a cup of coffee and a roll, is simply absurd, and, although the Doctor's article is, of course, written with a definite end in view, I think his case would not have suffered if he had not tried to embellish it with ridiculous statements of the kind referred to. What would an Englishman say if I wrote to a Swiss paper, complaining that for a single small Italian Vermouth I had to pay 4s. (5 Swiss Francs) in London, and yet I would be speaking or writing the strict truth!

I find in *The Evening News* of June 22nd in an article, entitled "10,000 Passports in a Week," that, according to Messrs. Cook's representative, a week's travel and hotel expenses in Switzerland now cost £8 7s. 6d., instead of £10 8s. 6d. last year, i.e., a reduction of £2 1s., or 20 per cent! Messrs. Cook's ought to know, seeing that, even by changing the price mentioned, they have still got to make a decent profit out of it! Now, my dear Doctor, go and repeat!

## The Grisons.

Now that at least and at last one road in the Grisons has been opened for motor traffic, I am pleased to find several illustrated articles in the British Press dealing with the delights of a summer holiday in that delectable part of Switzerland. In the *Graphic* (June 23rd) Mrs. Will Cadby has a really charming article dealing with the contrasts a trip through the Grisons provides, and from which I quote the following:—

Another traffic contrast is the Rhætian Railway, that work of most daring engineers, which finds its way to most beautiful and remote places. It certainly has nothing old-world about it; but is the very last word in electrical construction. There is a network of it, and however alarming its conjuring tricks may seem at first, we soon become reassured, and sit quite calmly while it executes a double spiral underground, looping the loop twice, so to speak, crawling round giddy heights, and crossing bridges that look more decorative than solid and strong.

Another curious contrast is the Grisons centres. At St. Moritz, Davos, Arosa, Pontresina, Flims we are in a world of fashion, entertainment and social activities. The Suvretta Haus at St. Moritz is of international fame: the "hotel of the Xes," as it has been called since its dignified hospitality has been enjoyed by ex-princes and ex-ministers. It has all the atmosphere of courts and big cities, and yet it is in the heart of this pastoral old-world canton. The Bélydère, too, at Davos offers its visitors the same kind of entertainment as they would get at Monte Carlo or Biarritz.

Although it detracts from the idea of contrast, those villages must be mentioned which offer the tourist the advantages of both worlds, such as Klosters, an attractive untouristy old village, which yet has its tennis tournaments, its water festivals, and its entertainments and dances. Others of this kind are Maloya, Sils Maria, Baeglia, Bergün and Andeer.

And before the contrast theory wears too thin, there is just the one of the fishing to mention. Innumerable rivers and lakes, teeming with fish, and no fishermen! In a canton like the Grisons there is practically a river or lake everywhere.

With regard to climbing, it is no good attempting any contrasts at all for there is good climbing in most centres and first-class mountaineering in many: even at Klosters, a place practically unknown to English climbers, there are three huts within a walk, and four more within reach for big tours. It is to be the centre this summer for climbing courses by the Swiss Alpine Club. There will be ten days of lectures and instruction, and ten days of touring to put the theory into practice. Perhaps this will prove yet another contrast!

## Swiss Forests.

The *Northern Daily Telegraph* of Blackburn, writes on June 23rd:—

Switzerland to-day reaps the benefit of her wise



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policy of forestry pursued for hundreds of years. Out of every 100 square miles of territory, 17 are covered with forests. The municipal forest of Zurich, famous throughout the world, has been producing timber continuously during the last 600 years. Crop after crop has been grown and marketed and new crops started.

It is a common saying in Europe that "Switzerland holds her mountains up and her taxes down" with her forests. These forests, largely municipal, protect farms and towns by preventing landslides. In addition they pay dividends which materially reduce tax levies. Moreover, it is her forests, as well as her mountains, which make the men of Switzerland strong and self-reliant. It is her forests, too, which help to attract and charm tourists.

## A New Composition by Othmar Schoeck.

*Musical Standard* (June 16th):—

The famous Swiss composer, Othmar Schoeck, whose opera, "Venus," which was produced for the first time at the International Musical Festival of Zurich, and aroused great interest amongst British visitors, has had another great success in Switzerland. On March 19th a chamber orchestra produced at Zurich a set of songs with orchestral accompaniment, called "Elegy." Felix Löffel of Berne, was the soloist, and made this new composition an enormous success. All the critics agree that Schoeck has surpassed himself. With his Swiss music at last is sure to find international recognition.

## Navigation on the Lakes of Switzerland.

*Engineering* (June 22nd):—

Within ten years of Fulton's first Hudson River steamer trips on the Clermont, in 1807, the Zurich engineer Bodmer placed the Stephanie on the Lake of Constance; but the engine, which was to come from England—as in the case of the Clermont—never arrived for some reason, and the paddle boat Wilhelm Tell was the first Swiss steamer. This in 1823, took 4½ hours for the journey Geneva-Ouchy, now done in 2½ hours. Other routes were soon opened, also on the Swiss-Italian lakes. At present the largest boats on the Swiss lakes have a length of 70 m. (230 feet), and carry 1,600 passengers; they are propelled by 1,500-h.p. engines at speeds reaching 32 km. (20 miles) per hour. Altogether 131 steamers and motor boats, aggregating 37,000 h.p., are in service, 100 of which serve for passenger traffic. The first all-Swiss boat was launched by Messrs. Escher Wyss & Co., of Zürich, in 1837; later Messrs. Sulzer Brothers, of Winterthur, became powerful competitors in this specialty, and the two firms have also built ships and engines for other waters. The first Swiss Diesel motor boat was constructed by Messrs. Sulzer in 1909.

From the Educational Supplement of *The Times* (June 23rd):—

It is reported that three tourists from Basel, members of the Swiss Alpine Club, and the guide Alexandre Perren, of Zermatt, succeeded in making last month the first ascent on ski of Mount Castor (13,848 feet).

## Swiss Dyestuff Makers—An Important Statement.

*Manchester Guardian* (June 22nd):—

In reference to the note here on Tuesday, headed "Dyestuff Combination: Swiss joining Germans and French," the Geigy Colour Co. write:—Only one of the Swiss dyemakers—namely, the firm of Durand and Huguenin, S.A.—is concerned in the combination mentioned. The other Swiss dyemakers—namely, the Society of Chemical Industry, Messrs. J. R. Geigy, S.A., and Messrs. the Sandoz Chemical Works—have no connection whatever with the German I.G., nor with Messrs. Durand and Huguenin, and have no intention of joining the same. We are making this statement authoritatively also on behalf of the other two Swiss firms.

## Russian Trade Boycott.

*The Times* (June 26th):—

The intention of the Soviet Government to carry out an economic boycott of Switzerland has not been officially communicated to the Swiss Federal Council, who only heard of the decision through the newspapers. This measure is causing no sensation whatever in