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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The parliamentary commission, sitting at Montreux, decided to allocate the revenue from the tobacco duty (from January 1st, 1923) exclusively for defraying the cost of old-age pensions.

A demand for an audience has been addressed to the Federal Council by the National Committee for Maintaining the Savoy Free Zones, as, in opposition to the delegations received up till now, this committee claims to represent the bulk of the people who have voted against the Convention. Representatives of this committee have since been officially received by the Federal Council.

The State Council of Fribourg, having refused to admit to the bar a woman lawyer who was associated with a local practitioner, the Federal Tribunal reversed the decision, stating that such an exclusion on account of sex would be contrary to the equality of right guaranteed by the Swiss Constitution.

The Federal Tribunal has dismissed the appeal of the Catholic curate Vogel, of Wald (Zurich), who sought to overthrow the decree of the local council prohibiting processions on the public highways. The Tribunal, however, stated that permission for a limited and defined procession on Corpus Christi (Fronleichnam) Sunday should not be refused.

In response to repeated representations of civil servants for a free Saturday afternoon, the Federal Council has expressed its agreement, if the time is made up by commencing work every morning at 7.30. This offer has been rejected.

According to official statistics, issued by the Agricultural Department of the canton of Vaud, over 10 million litres of wine of the 1922 vintage remain unsold out of a total of 40 million litres.

Zurich proposes to establish a tailoring school, for which subsidies are being demanded from both the municipality and the canton.

A craze for hypnotizing, the outcome of a lecture recently delivered on this subject, has smitten a number of schoolboys in Weinfelden, who have somewhat freely indulged in this dangerous art.

A memorial tablet was erected and dedicated, on March 2nd, at Grenchen (Solothurn) to commemorate the sacrifice of Maria Schürer and Elisabeth Frey, who heroically fought on March 2nd, 1738, in repelling the French invasion.

The newly electrified line Zurich-Zug was opened to traffic on March 5th.

Several great avalanches have, these last few days, caused considerable damage to property: the "Guppenlawine" near Schwändi (Glarus) demolished two bridges, just missing by a miracle a number of houses, and another one, falling from Beloiscau down the Emosson plain (near Martigny), partly destroyed the local power station.

Working on a central heating installation in Brigue, several workmen were overcome by escaping gas, with the result that two, Albert Bär and Robert Grether, died from gas poisoning.

Trial runs on a new car, which went over the edge of the road near Carona (Lugano), resulted in the death of the driver and owner, Mr. Bossia, and in serious injuries to the other two occupants, Messrs. Knoll and Balmelli.

Prof. Guido Hauser, music teacher at the cantonal school in Lucerne for the last thirty years, succumbed to injuries caused by a fall from the third floor of his private residence.

Charles Georg, the president of the S.A. Publications (formerly Haasenstein & Vogler), died last Monday in Lugano at the age of 72.

## AUSLANDSCHWEIZERTAG AT THE BASLE FAIR.

The full programme of this, the sixth, annual meeting, which takes place on Monday, April 16th, has now been published. Preceded by a short report on the progress of the movement by Dr. Edgar Steuri, two lectures, followed by a discussion, will be delivered, entitled "Die Pflichten der Auslandschweizer gegenüber der Heimat" by Mr. E. Suter, Swiss Consul at Stuttgart, and "Comment conserver le sentiment national de la jeunesse suisse vivant à l'étranger" by National Councillor Horace Micheli, of the *Journal de Genève*. The day's labour will be concluded by a banquet at the Casino, accompanied by patriotic entertainments.

## BASLE FAIR PARTY.

Those of our readers who wish to join this party should make early application, as the number is strictly limited. Particulars will be found in the leaflet enclosed herewith. In addition to the reduced railway fare to Basle, visitors enjoy unique privileges in Switzerland. For the time from April 16th to April 20th the Swiss Federal Railways and most of the privately owned systems have granted a 50% reduction on the ordinary fares to every Swiss from abroad who visits the Basle Fair, that is to say, a special identity card will be handed to them personally at the office of the Basle Fair which entitles the holder to travel all over Switzerland during these five days at half fare. In order to secure these reductions, applications, stating name, address and occupation, should be made not later than 29th March, 1923. Applications from the provinces should be certified by the respective Swiss Consul.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### Swiss Sculler for Henley.

*The Evening News* (Feb. 17th) reports:—"Dr. Bosshard, a Swiss sculler, has arrived at Richmond to train for the Diamond Sculls. He was a member of the 'Grasshopper' crew which took part in last year's racing at Henley."

### A Loss to the Swiss National Museum.

We read in *The Morning Post* (Feb. 23rd):—"The Victoria and Albert Museum has acquired out of the funds of the Murray Bequest four panels of stained glass from the recent sale of the Engel-Gros Collection in Paris. Three of these are Swiss and belong to the period of highest accomplishment: the fourth is South German. The panels are as follows:—The Assumption of St. Mary Magdalene; Basle School, early Sixteenth Century. The vivid effect produced by the process of scratching a design through a film of dark paint is here seen in its full force. The composition closely resembles the engraving of the same subject by Dürer.

The arms of the town of Porrentruy, supported by angels; Sixteenth Century—a panel showing extreme skill in the arrangement of colours.

The arms of the Counts of Kyburg, supported by a wild man and woman; Zurich School, end of the Fifteenth Century. This was formerly in the collection of the Baron de Trétaigne.

Adam and Eve; South German School, Fifteenth Century.

The panels are temporarily exhibited in Room 139. Our consolation is that these panels may bear witness of our forefathers' artistic skill.

### Zurich School Children and Jewish Sabbath.

According to the *Jewish World* (Feb. 8th):—"In Zurich the question of Sabbath observance has arisen in a very ominous form. Jewish children attending school in the town, have up till now been permitted to be absent on the Sabbath. But the Central School Organisation, at its last meeting, decided that with the Spring term, beginning in April, the exception granted hitherto should be withdrawn. The Organisation declares that the exceptional treatment of the Jewish pupils, permitting them to observe the Jewish Sabbath, is derogatory to school discipline, and that Jews at school must in future submit to general conditions, such as occurs in the army. Needless to say, the Zurich Community is greatly perturbed, and sees that the only way out of the difficulty is to establish a denominational Jewish school. There are, however, great difficulties in regard to the foundation of such a school, and no means seem available for carrying the scheme into effect. Thus it is to be feared that the Jewish children in Zurich will be condemned to a permanent abrogation of the Sabbath, unless the decision of the Central Organisation can be reversed or overruled."

Toucing religion, we cannot refrain from mentioning that, at a gathering of Primitive Methodists at Holborn Hall, the Rev. J. T. Barkby stated, according to *The Westminster Gazette* (Feb. 24):—"The Russian Government had recently given special facilities for the extension of Methodist 'Evangelism in that country.'"

We think that our readers may like to read the



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above, as it may help them to digest other "news" the papers are dishing up daily as to the state of affairs in Russia.

### Furka Railway.

We read in *Modern Transport* (Feb. 17th):—"The Swiss Federal Council has been investigating the question of the Furka railway, which, as is known, has not been completed. The works, finished up to the present, represent a cost of 30 million francs; 7 million more are needed for the termination of the line. In view of the strategic importance of the railway, the Federal Council would not object in principle to the granting of a subsidy, but it would do this only on the condition that the Valais and Grisons cantons also contributed towards the scheme."

### Italy and Switzerland.

According to the Milan correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* (Feb. 15th), the signing of the commercial treaty between the two countries has given general satisfaction:—

"The Italian commodities of which the entry into Switzerland is facilitated are principally of an agricultural nature—wines, cheese meat and fruits. For common wines, oranges and fruits in general the special tariff recently accorded to Spain is confirmed to Italy, who will thus no longer be dependent on most-favoured nation treatment in respect of these products.

The facilities granted by Italy to Switzerland include numerous manufactured goods, such as embroideries, laces, silks, watches, agricultural machinery, textile machinery, fertilisers, dyes and chemicals, as well as certain food products."

### Contracts sent Abroad.

In a timely and well thought-out letter, to *The Electric Times and Lighting* (Feb. 8th) Mr. G. Wüthrich, General Manager and Chief Engineer of Oerlikon, Ltd., points out the harm done by British firms confining their purchases in times of acute unemployment to manufacturers in Great Britain. We quote some of his arguments, as they may help others of our compatriots when confronted with the same attitude. Mr. Wüthrich states that the harm done is twofold:—

"(a) The British consumer loses money directly as the consequence of the enhanced prices, by letting it be known that he places his orders only within the borders of his own country; and

"(b) He harms the other industries by taking away from the foreign buyers the ground upon which they alone are justified and enabled to place the orders with the British manufacturers.

The writer appreciates that these arguments against placing British orders with countries having a depreciated exchange have a real 'raison d'être, as these countries, due to the low value of their currency and the consequently low wages they pay to their workmen, are unfair competitors.

Switzerland has up to now, and for some years past, however suffered from the fact that its currency has appreciated also, as compared with that of Great Britain; consequently, Swiss manufacturers find it extremely difficult to sell their goods to neighbouring countries, including Great Britain.

When it is further considered that Switzerland has no raw materials of its own, that its manufacturers have to import raw materials and semi-manufactured parts from abroad, and to an increasingly large extent from Great Britain, these imports entailing very heavy freight and railage expenses; when it is also appreciated that the finished goods cause similarly large outlays until they reach their destination, it will be understood what a severe fight that country has to encounter against adversity."

**Fifteen Thousand Volt Electric Heating Wagon,** made by Brown, Boveri & Co. and Sulzer Brothers, Winterthur, for the Swiss Federal Railways, is described, with illustrations, diagrams and results of tests, in a long and highly interesting article in the *Engineer* (Feb. 23rd).

Under the same date the *Engineer* publishes details of "Improvements in Couplings for Machines of the High-Voltage Direct-Current Series System" by Charles Joseph Belli, of Secheron-Geneva.

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#### Piano Recital by Mr. Edwin Fischer.

We are very pleased to read in *The Times* (Feb. 23rd):—

"Mr. Edwin Fischer, a Swiss pianist who gave recitals in London a couple of years ago, returned on Tuesday, when he gave the first of two programmes at Steinway Hall. We heard Brahms's Sonata Op. 1 in C, and Beethoven's Op. 110 in A flat, and found the latter by far the finer performance. Brahms was in the period of explosive youth when he wrote the C major, and Mr. Fischer makes free with the dynamite. The pianists who convince us of the bigness of the music, underneath the clumsy alternations of big chords with plaintive folk-like tunes, are those who sweep the episodes together into one broad outline. Mr. Fischer seemed to separate rather than join, which is what dynamite is apt to do. His performance of Beethoven, on the other hand, was finely controlled, though the sforzandos of the scherzo recalled the manner of his Brahms. But the first movement was extraordinarily well knit, and the fugue built up to a majestic climax."

Mr. E. Fischer has reason to be proud of this friendly and appreciative critique. He is one of the very few Swiss artists favourably commented upon by the Musical Critic of *The Times*.

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#### Newspaper Postal Rates in Switzerland.

The *Newspaper World* (Feb. 10th) says:—

"The consideration last week in the Swiss National Council of the new legislation in regard to domestic postal laws gave rise to some interesting debates. Some members sought to reduce the proposed rate for newspapers (1½ centime up to 75 grammes and for every 75 grammes above) to 1 centime up to 50 grammes and 1½ centime up to 75 grammes. It must be remembered that many Continental countries have a special system of delivering newspapers direct from the office of the paper to the subscriber, sometimes in bundles, unaddressed, the paper postman having a list of addresses and slipping the papers in the letter boxes. Subscriptions to any paper, too, may be paid in any post-office. M. Graber, one of these members, stated that the Press was of indispensable public service, and that the day would come when citizens would receive their newspaper gratuitously from the State."

Other members supported the amendment, among them M. Micheli, director of the 'Journal de Genève,' who, however, took objection to the idea of a State newspaper, as it was desirable they should retain their freedom of opinion. The Press was passing through a period of great stress, and publicity, which was so necessary, flew with only one wing, such was the stagnation of business. Furthermore, it had the burden of higher salaries and augmented prices of paper and other materials. If now the Post Office increased rates there would be no cure for the disease. He pointed out that the Government was the first to appreciate the value of the Press, for they were flooded with official communications to such a degree that they had to take steps to reduce their number.

M. Haab, who was President of the Swiss Confederation last year, defended the Government proposal, making technical points for the postal administration. He urged members not to be too much afraid of the Press, but to vote courageously for the increased rate, and was supported by M. Meyer, of the 'Zürcher Zeitung.' Nevertheless, M. Graber's amendment was carried by 73 votes to 62."

Mr. Graber must have felt quite surprised, for it does not happen often that he is in the winning lobby of the Swiss Parliament!

#### Democracies and their Education.

From a letter by Mr. W. Stanley Anderton in the *Manchester Guardian* (Feb. 19th) we quote the following passages:—

"If public opinion in democracies is really to become the determining factor of future policy, how criminal it is to put off our youth with the detailed study of one or two distant or detached periods of our own particular history, and not to present them with a comprehensive scheme of work suitable to fit them for the world in co-operation that is to be."

We know ourselves that it is untrue to say, as many of our foreign critics do, that England is aggressively imperialist, although in the times of Chatham, or Palmerston, or Disraeli, the imperial spirit did actuate the policy of the Government for the time being. So also in France and, perhaps, Germany at the present moment the commercial magnates may be controlling the destinies of the nations (as ours did when we embarked on the Transvaal adventure); but in those countries, as in our own, there are enormous masses of people, especially of the agricultural, industrial and trading class, who have no desire for militarist excursions or methods; and they are quite as truly 'France' and 'Germany' and 'England' as the comparatively few men and interests that stand as such in the eyes of the world. And as democracies become more truly democratic as the fundamental masses of the people become, through right education and political enlightenment, more conscious of their corporate strength (they are so in large measure in Switzerland, Sweden, England, America and our colonies), it will become less possible for a small number of outstanding men to arrogate to themselves the name of the country which they very partially represent. A world really 'safe for democracies' will be a world of peace."

What most people forget so easily is that *Democracy* implies a stern duty on all members of the community, i.e., the duty to exercise the rights of discussing problems of public importance, of formulating plans leading to new legislation, and, above all, of voting. How often do we hear eminently respectable citizens exclaim: "I have

no use for politics!" But these citizens, entirely and selfishly absorbed in their money-making activities, capable only of devising means for furthering their own relatively unimportant schemes, do not realise that, by their un-democratic attitude, they leave the door wide open to those place hunters, demagogues and other undesirable creatures, whose existence they abhor.

A man may think he is doing his duty to his family, etc., but he does it only half, or less, if he forgets the duty he owes to the community! "KYBURG."

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**Die Passionsspiele in Selzach.**— Nach zehnjähriger Pause soll uns der nächste Sommer wieder zirka 25 Aufführungen der längst bekannten Selzacher Passionsspiele bringen. Ueber 400 Mitwirkende sind schon eifrig an der Vorbereitungsarbeit, darunter solche, die schon seit 30 Jahren ihre Rollen innehaben, aber auch das Jungvolk, das unterdessen herangewachsen ist und zum Teil noch gar nie mit dabei war. Adolf Schaad, der Sohn des Bürgermeisters, folgt in der Rolle des Messias dem bekannten "Christus Kocher" nach, den Alter und Gesundheitszustand zwingen, sich der einfacheren Rolle des Chorführers zu widmen. Die neue Maria, eine Bauerntochter, Pauline Gisiger, verspricht sehr viel. Der verdienstvolle Begründer und Förderer der "Selzacher Passion," Fabrikant Adolf Schlöfli, behält auch dieses Jahr die Gesamtleitung; ihm zur Seite steht als Regisseur Gottfried Dobler und als musikalischer Leiter Lehrer Widmer. Das Spielhaus mit seinen 1200 Sitzplätzen genügt noch durchaus, soll aber, wenn der Sommer den erwünschten Erfolg bringt, durch einen Steinbau ersetzt werden. Die Eröffnungsvorstellung findet am 10. Juni statt. (Seeländer Bote.)

#### STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

| BONDS.                              |      | Feb. 27      | Mar. 6  |
|-------------------------------------|------|--------------|---------|
| Swiss Confederation 3% 1903         | ...  | 79.65%       | 80.12%  |
| Swiss Confed. 9th Mob. Loan 5%      | ...  | 102.25%      | 102.97% |
| Federal Railways A—K 3½%            | ...  | 84.75%       | 84.90%  |
| Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921         | ...  | 105.25%      | 105.50% |
| Canton Fribourg 3% 1892             | ...  | 77.00%       | 76.75%  |
| Zurich (Stadt) 4% 1909              | ...  | 100.50%      | 100.75% |
| SHARES.                             |      | Nom. Feb. 20 | Mar. 6  |
|                                     |      | Fr.          | Fr.     |
| Swiss Bank Corporation              | ...  | 500          | 661     |
| Crédit Suisse                       | ...  | 500          | 696     |
| Union de Banques Suisses            | ...  | 500          | 556     |
| Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz    | 1000 | 1710         | 1810    |
| Société pour l'Industrie Chimique   | 1000 | 1365         | 1525    |
| C. F. Bally S.A.                    | ...  | 1000         | 1002    |
| Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon       | ...  | 500          | 623     |
| Entreprises Sulzer                  | ...  | 1000         | 622     |
| S.A. Brown Boveri (new)             | ...  | 500          | 332     |
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