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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The projected Federal Budget for 1924 anticipates a deficit of 38.3 million francs.

With reference to the railway accident on May 2nd last year, near Wabern, when three ladies were killed and 36 other passengers injured, the station-master Richli has been found guilty of culpable negligence and condemned to fifteen days' imprisonment and a fine of Frs. 200.

The heavy deposit of snow was responsible for the collapse of the station roof at Chur (Coire) on Thursday, the 10th inst.; fortunately, the accident happened at two o'clock in the morning, when the station was closed. The early-morning train which was standing ready was completely buried under the debris, and the whole of the station building has been converted into a rubbish heap.

Three workmen, belonging to a party of thirty engaged in clearing snow at "Les Montys" (Fionnay-Valais), were surprised by an avalanche on Thursday, the 10th inst.; their bodies were recovered a few days later.

A new museum has been opened in Frauenfeld in the old building of the cantonal bank, which has been adapted to its new purpose. The museum will classify and exhibit the historical and scientific treasures of the canton of Thurgau.

Being "frozen to death" was the rare experience of a man named Bürgisser, from Dagnersellen (near Buchs), whose body was discovered in a lonely road underneath his cart, the horse still showing signs of life. — A similar fate befell Mr. Karl Graf, a cloth merchant of Herisau; in the darkness he seems to have dropped into a ditch, from which he was unable to extricate himself.

A gruesome crime was committed in Chiasso, when Berto Bernasconi, without any apparent reason, suddenly attacked his brother, inflicting eleven knife wounds, which are likely to prove fatal.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Le chemin de fer le plus élevé du monde.** — Dans quelques jours on inaugurera à Chamonix le chemin de fer le plus élevé du monde. Le nouveau funiculaire aérien transportera les voyageurs à 3843 mètres d'altitude, soit 800 mètres plus haut que la cabane des Grands-Mulets (3050 mètres) et à moins de 1000 mètres de la cime du Mont-Blanc. La ligne part des Pâlerins, non loin de la grande route, un peu au delà du hameau des Bossons, et arrive au pied de l'Aiguille du Midi. Elle se dirige ensuite vers le Col du Midi, où une gare et un important hôtel seront édifiés.

Cette ligne aérienne avait été commencée en 1909 et les travaux, suspendus pendant la guerre, furent repris en 1922 sur l'initiative de M. Joseph Vallot, directeur de l'Observatoire du Mont-Blanc.

**Hommage au travail.** — Le Sentier, 28 décembre. Dans une simple et très-digne cérémonie, la fabrique d'horlogerie Lecoultré et Cie. S.A., à la Golisse, a fêté, samedi dernier 22 décembre, dix-huit de ses plus anciens ouvriers qui avaient quarante ans de services et plus. Un succulent banquet fut servi à l'Hôtel Bellevue, au Rocheray, auquel assistaient M. J. D. Lecoultré, fils du directeur de la fabrique; M. Marc Golay, préfet, et M. le Dr. L. Béguin, directeur de l'Association des industries vaudoises, à Lausanne.

Au dessert, M. J. D. Lecoultré, après avoir retracé l'histoire de la fabrique dès 1833, date de sa fondation, remit à chacun des heureux jubilaires un superbe chronomètre en or, exécuté dans les ateliers Lecoultré, et portant la dédicace suivante: "Offert par la Manufacture d'horlogerie Lecoultré et Cie. à leur fidèle ouvrier (nom du jubilaire), à l'occasion du ... anniversaire de son entrée à la fabrique (avec les dates respectives)."

Parmi les dix-huit jubilaires, quatre ont plus de cinquante années de services, dont M. Auguste

Reymond, qui en a 56; MM. John Reymond et Henri Meylan, chacun 51, etc.

M. le Dr. Béguin, après quelques mots de félicitations, leur remit à chacun le diplôme que la Chambre de commerce et de l'industrie attribue en signe de distinction, aux ouvriers ou employés ayant plus de 25 années de services.

M. Marc Golay, préfet, apporta aussi ses vœux de prospérité aux vieux ouvriers fêtés en ce jour et rendit hommage aux efforts accomplis par les dirigeants de la fabrique Lecoultré et Cie. dans les moments difficiles de la guerre et de la crise horlogère.

Au nom des jubilaires, M. William Nicole remercia la direction de la fabrique, ainsi que M. le Dr. Béguin, et rappela ses souvenirs de 30 à 40 ans en arrière.

Cette charmante manifestation est un signe réjouissant de l'entraide au travail de l'industrie de notre vallée et fait honneur à ses dirigeants autant qu'à ses modestes collaborateurs.

(La Tribune.)

**Rapperswil. Fünfzig Jahre Kirchensängerin.** — Am Weihnachtstage waren es 50 Jahre, seitdem Fräulein Marie Faust in die "Cäcilia"-Musikgesellschaft aufgenommen wurde, in demselben Zeitraum sie stets als eifrige und begeisterte Sängerin, als Solistin und zeitweise sogar als Dirigentin tätig war. Ein halbes Jahrhundert aktive Jüngerin der heiligen Cäcilia! Etwas Alltägliches ist das nicht!

(Ostschweiz.)

**Das Polenmuseum in Rapperswil.** — Eine Meldung, dass das Polenmuseum nun endlich nach Polen übersiedeln werde, hat zu der irrigen Ansicht geführt, diese Sammlung werde schon in aller nächster Zeit Rapperswil verlassen. Wie man nun vernimmt, ist dies jedoch nicht der Fall. Die Anerkennung des polnischen Nationalmuseums als Eigentum des polnischen Staates und der Beschluss der Ueberführung war schon im Jahre 1921 durch das Warschauer Parlament gefasst worden. Die Übersiedlung wird aber frühestens im Jahre 1926 oder 1927 erfolgen, da die Frage des künftigen Aufbewahrungsortes der Sammlungen noch nicht gelöst ist. Die polnische Regierung studiert gegenwärtig die Möglichkeit, ob nicht nach der Fortschaffung des Museums in den Räumlichkeiten des Rapperswiler Schlosses, die Polen vertraglich bis zum Jahre 1969 zur Verfügung stehen, eine ständige polnische Kunst- und Gewerbeausstellung eingerichtet werden solle. Das polnische Parlament hat der Schweiz, dem Kanton St. Gallen und der Stadt Rapperswil seine Dankbarkeit für die gewährte Gastfreundschaft ausgedrückt.

(Neue Zürcher Nachrichten.)

**Trois sports.** — Oron. Un pari intéressant a été fait récemment aux Thioleyres entre un gym, le porte-drapeau des Jeunes Patriotes d'Oron, un dragon et un automobiliste. Il s'agissait de savoir lequel, du piéton, du dragon ou de l'automobiliste arriverait le premier en gare de Palézieux (ligne Berne-Lausanne). Le piéton et le dragon prenaient la voie la plus courte à travers près et champs recouverts de 30 centimètres de neige, traversant deux ruisseaux et sautant quelques clôtures de fil de fer barbelé, trajet de près de 2000 mètres, tandis que l'auto suivait la route, distance: 3 kilomètres; le piéton était en tenue de gymnaste et sans souliers; il a gagné le pari en 9 minutes, le cavalier arriva ensuite à quelques secondes près et l'automobile en dernier lieu.

Pour l'honneur de la cavalerie vaudoise, il faut ajouter que le succès pédestre est dû à deux chutes de cheval qui ont fait perdre 2 à 3 minutes au dragon. Mais l'auto, elle, n'a pas d'excuse...

(La Tribune.)

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

### City Rumours.

I really do not quite remember all the "news" I collected the other day during a quite ordinary luncheon in the City, but will readers please not jump to hasty and, of course, quite erroneous conclusions. My usual beverage is a small lemonade, and if you do not believe it, ask "George," who knows. Well, to come to so-called facts. A friendly reader who writes from the home of the Cheshire Cheese—not the one in Fleet Street, but the real thing—sends me the following cutting from the *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* (5th Jan.):—

We have been horrified at reading the account of a mountaineering plight in Switzerland. But it is a fact not realised in England that only about one-hundredth part of the accidents in winter sports and climbing are published over here. Switzerland is a country of hotelkeepers, and if the real truth were known as to mishaps, sprains and strains, broken legs and broken ribs, there would not be such English crowds spending money over there which could just

as well be spent in Scotland or Wales among our own neglected, but most attractive mountains.

I was discussing this piece of anti-Swiss Winter-sport Propaganda with a few friends the other day during our luncheon interval from our daily herculean labours. I am still wondering whether what they told me was meant seriously or not. One said, "Ah! now I know why the price of black silk is going up"; another chimed in with the remark that he had heard it rumoured that a Swiss Red Cross train had arrived the other evening at Victoria, full of wounded and crippled winter-sport enthusiasts. The third, whose legal training and well-balanced mind prompted an immediate searching after actual evidence, but could find no trace of any, declared the whole matter to be one of sad illusion, and gave us a short sermon on the beneficial effects upon mind and body of pure water taken internally! Not wishing to frighten anybody away from our lovely mountains, I have kept my own counsel since that luncheon party, but now I feel that I must let my readers into the secret. I can do so with a wee bit more confidence, as I have had time to consider the matter meanwhile. It occurs to me now that the same sort of accidents occur every year, and hardly ever to Swiss compatriots. The reason is not far to seek. Accidents happen to those who have little or no experience, and yet want to do more than others and refuse to listen to wiser advice. They cannot see the dangers, because they have not taken the trouble to understand them. They walk, skate, toboggan, ski, and so forth, when conditions are most unsuitable, just because they want to show that they are made of sterner stuff, or, perhaps, often also because they know that to-morrow they have to take the train back to business. And to such people accidents will happen. We have got the same sort of people in London. Yet, who would seriously suggest that Londoners are afraid to go out into the streets, because every day all the year round somebody is killed in them? Besides, would it be any great consolation for those who become victims of their own foolhardiness, if they got killed or maimed in Wales, Cumberland, or Derbyshire, rather than on the Alps? I think the London correspondent of our contemporary cited above must try again. I cannot quite see that hard-headed Lancashire, Yorkshire or Cheshire folk are likely to be taken in by his obviously inspired warnings. My friendly reader need have no fear. It will require more than that to keep Britishers away from our wonderful Swiss winter-sport resorts.

### The Effect of the Conradi Verdict.

Daily Telegraph (4th Jan.):—

During the trial of Conradi at Lausanne the Court was given to understand, by the advocate representing the Soviet Government, that the latter would not take any reprisals, no matter what the result of the trial might be. Despite this promise, not only have Swiss citizens, particularly those of the Canton of Vaud, where the murder of the Russian delegate to the Lausanne Conference and the trial took place, been expelled from Russian territory, but a rigid boycott of all Swiss goods has been proclaimed all over Russia. The Soviet representatives in other countries have received instructions that no Swiss citizen is to get a visa to visit Russia.

Several of the expelled Swiss have just arrived. Some of them were attached to Dr. Nansen's relief work, and others were working in connection with the International Red Cross. They all declare that the boycott of everything Swiss in Russia is complete. This boycott has seriously injured Switzerland, and many leading Swiss citizens, who deplored the ghastly murder, as well as the result of the trial, think that the Soviet Government are not fully informed as to the law in the Canton of Vaud as regards trial by jury. As is known, the jury is composed of nine, and in the case of Conradi five of the jury were for a conviction and four for an acquittal. As the prisoner is entitled to the "benefit of the minority," he was acquitted.

Well, as long as our Government maintains its "superior" attitude—Mr. Ramsey MacDonald, referring to the similar attitude taken up by the British Foreign Office, used a stronger and better term even—in connection with the recognition of the *de facto* Government of All the Russias, I cannot quite see how the Soviet Government could very well be officially informed of laws and customs in Switzerland. Well, well!

### How it works in Switzerland.

Although most of my readers will say, "of course," or something to that effect, I wish to print the following from "The Swiss Parliament" by the *Manchester Guardian* of Jan. 8th:—

This time the election of the four political leaders of Switzerland was specially interesting, because not only the President and Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation, but the Presidents of both Chambers were chosen from a national minority of the Swiss people. M. Chuard, the new Swiss President, M. Jean Musy, his substitute, and MM. Evequoz and Simon, the leaders of the two Chambers, are all "Swiss romands," belonging to the Swiss minority which has

French as its mother language. The German-Swiss majority and the Italian-Swiss minority in Parliament have unanimously agreed to these elections, which, of course, imply no pro-French tendency in Swiss policy, but only indicate that no struggle between the three nationalities exists in Switzerland.

Why should not the very same spirit of political tolerance be possible everywhere? Why not a "Federated States of Europe"?

#### The Effect of Switzerland's Snow on Animal Life—

Daily Telegraph (5th Jan.):—

Much relief is felt throughout Switzerland owing to the cold weather which has set in during the last twenty-four hours, as it is hoped that this will straiten the snow precipices, and thus put an end to the disastrous avalanches. So deep is the snow in the Lower Alps that every patch of dried-up grass is covered several feet, and the chamois are unable to penetrate the snow and get their sustenance. The result is that many animals are perishing from hunger, while others have descended in herds to the valleys in search of food. The authorities are wisely prohibiting the shooting of chamois, as this would almost mean their extermination. Alpine foxes, too, which generally live in winter upon marmots, which they dig out from their burrows, are unable to do so this winter, owing to the thickness of the snow, and are, therefore, coming down in droves to the valleys, where they have made such havoc among the peasants' hens that even English visitors are allowed to use guns freely.

#### —And its Effect on the Winter Sports Girl.

North Star (3rd Jan.):—

They say that St. Moritz is for the gay who don't care much about sports, and the smaller Swiss places for the sporting crowd who don't care much for the decorative side of winter sports. But though St. Moritz simply flares with colour, few are the wearers who are not head long enthusiasts on skates, bob-sleigh, luge, or long yellow ski.

I had this drummed into me so much that I was quite surprised when I went up to the famous Cresta run and there saw brilliant kits on women who took that dangerous course at eighty miles an hour with the verge of the most hardened of male devotees. On the skating rinks, where Mamas curl with ardour, and daughters conquer the intricate "eight," dainty toilettes may be seen which are more reminiscent of the Russian ballet or the beauty chorus in the Alpine sports scene of a popular musical play in town than anything else.

Colours are vivid; the women wear short skirts, high-collared furry coats, but always, always the sensible boots without which broken ankles are likely. Skating boots are the highest of all the footwear of the winter sports kit. For skiing the slenderest feminine foot is encased in a short, very heavy soled boot big enough to hold an extra pair of socks, and often lined around the top with fur. Bob-sleighting demands tremendously strong boots shod with iron, whereas for walking and shopping, rubbers seem to be the favourite wear.

Intensely blue, sky, warm sun, yet crisp, cold, vivifying air, combining with a kaleidoscope of brilliant colour, serve to intensify the tints of coats and hats, sweaters and stockings, but loveliest colour of all is that which glows on the firm, faint tanned cheeks of the sports girls.

What is the secret of her indestructible high spirits? The air charged full with oxygen, the joyous exercise which sends young blood foaming quicker through the veins, a strenuous morning on the Cresta run, an afternoon on the ice with a skilled instructor, or a jolly impromptu hockey team, then tea in the open-luscious cakes, and chocolate, capped with a miniature iceberg of whipped cream.

And then—perhaps most exciting of all—your winter sports girl prepares for the end of the day, when the sun has dipped behind the cold blue mountains, and only indoor fun and frolic are to be thought of.

Where else can one find a dinner, served to diners so ready for the good things the 'maitre d'hotel' puts before them? A softly-lit restaurant, the music of a band, or, maybe, the informal concert of romantic wandering Italian lutanists, then to the dance.

And so, fresh, fit and fragrant, once more in the filmy frocks of remote English ballrooms, gaily fox-trotting or languorously waltzing, occasionally drifting into the exotic movements of the tango, the winter sports girl end her day.

#### Rapid Postal Communication with Home.

Most of my London readers probably know it, but to a few it may be a useful tip, namely, that as long as the direct train through Laon-Basle is running, letters, etc., handed in at the G.P.O. before noon, will be delivered in most parts of Switzerland by the first or second post on the next day! Express letters, (i.e., 6d. extra postage), which I have sent that way to Zurich, were actually delivered over there next day in time for a Marconi-gram to reach my office before 10.30 a.m. in reply.

#### Proposed Seaport for Switzerland.

The Times (Jan. 9th):—

The question of some Mediterranean port, being devoted to the exclusive use of Switzerland, has come up again during the last weeks in consequence of an offer, made by the Chamber of Commerce of the Italian port of Vado.

Under the scheme proposed Switzerland would establish at Vado a free port, and would undertake to improve the port of Vado and to build, at the cost of 31,000,000 lire (about £310,000 at the present rate of exchange), a railway line connecting Vado with Savona and San Giuseppe, so that it would no longer be necessary to use the ever-congested Savona-Genoa line. In making this proposal, the Italians aim at keeping on their railways the traffic of Swiss goods, which were formerly unloaded at Genoa, but which, owing to the transport delays on the Italian lines, are now unloaded at French ports.

This scheme does not meet with much enthusiasm in Switzerland, where it is not considered to be either particularly useful or necessary. During the war it was essential for Switzerland to have a port where her goods could be unloaded; the French port of Cette rendered at that time very important services in the way of assuring the Swiss food supply. But now that foodstuffs and other goods imported to Switzerland can be unloaded at any Mediterranean or Atlantic port, Swiss merchants are able to choose the ports which offer the best railway connections. There is, therefore,

no longer any special need to build a free port at the expense of Switzerland, which can use the accommodation available at other ports, without incurring any extra expenditure.

It seems to me that if the Italians want our business in that connection, they ought to build a port themselves and offer our merchants and importers better facilities than other ports can give them. In that case it might pay them. At least, it would create a healthy competition between various ports which want our business, and it would do us good. But as for spending money on such a scheme, perhaps with the idea that it might come in handy during the next war, my answer would be in the negative. I am through, as the saying goes, with the old Latin proverb that, in order to get peace, you must prepare for war. On the contrary! In order to get peace, you must prepare for Peace.

#### HOME SPUN YARNS.

Gemütsathlet. — Ein junger Mann fällt in den Zürichsee und schreit energisch: "Hülf, hülf, i chaa nüd schwimme!" Ein Passant ruft ihm in aller Seelenruhe zu: "I jo au nüd, aber wegem sebe mach i doch kei so'ne Saulärme!"

Appenzeller Witz. — Zwei Berliner, die auf einer Tour ins Appenzeller-Land kamen, begegneten einem biederem Eingeborenen: "Na, jibt's denn bei euch in der Schweiz auch berühmte Doktoren?" — "Wörsch gad globe: z'Galle unnä hät's äna, wo hät müsses go Berlin usa." — "Na, was hat er denn da gemacht?" — "Amäne prüssische Junker d'Ohre wyter vöri setze hät er müsses, dass er's Muul nümma so wyt uffryssa cha!"

Sport und Kunst. — "Dies, meine Herrschaften," sagte der Führer zu einer Reisegesellschaft, "ist der grösste Wasserfall der Alpen. Ich bitte die Damen, einen Augenblick ihre Unterhaltung zu unterbrechen, damit man das donnernde Getöse der stürzenden Wasser hören kann!"

Im Eifer. — Wahlkandidat (in seiner Agitationsrede): "Wollt ihr eine neue Schule — wählt mich! Wollt ihr eine neue Strasse — wählt mich! Wollt ihr ein rassenreines Rindvieh — wählt mich!"

Der Scheidungsgrund. — "Herr Pfarrer! My Wyb ischt chorsichtig, i cha si nomme brueche, i möcht mi von-ere schääde loo!" — "Jää, Jokeb, Chorsichtigkeit ischt kää Schäädigsgfond." — "Jää, wessid, Herr Pfarrer, ond ehr Here, mi Wyb ischt so chorsichtig, dass si my ond en andere Maa nomme vone-n-and kennt."

Guter Kopf. — Ein Landmann kam mit seinem Sohne nach Bern, um ihn studieren zu lassen, und verfügte sich mit ihm zum Herrn Rektor, um ihn einschreiben zu lassen. Der Rektor fragte den Vater nach den Fähigkeiten seines Sohnes mit den Worten, ob er auch einen guten Kopf habe. — "O ja," erwiderte der Alte, "er isch nadisch schon zweu mol ufe Gring vo der Brügi abegheit u es het ihm nüt tah, gäll Sämel!"

Im Hüttenbuche einer Klubbütte des Bündnerlandes fand sich, wie Thoma in der *Alpina* berichtet, folgender Eintrag: "Jean Rieser, Négociant, Zürich." Darunter stand, von fremder Hand geschrieben:

"Jean heisst der Kerl statt Johann, Négociant statt Kaufmann — Mich wundert, dass der Zwetschgenkopf Noch 'Zürich' schreiben kann."

#### FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The Swiss Federal Railways are likely to be coming upon the market as borrowers in the early part of the present year. They have at present Treasury Bills outstanding with the Swiss National Bank to the amount of some Frs. 100,000,000, and to consolidate this debt and provide further ready funds for the current year, a loan of between 100 and 150 million francs may be expected.

Meanwhile the City of Zurich have to provide funds to meet their Treasury Bills, which mature in March next, and are for this purpose offering conversion rights into a new issue of three and four months 5 per cent. Treasury Bonds. The issue price is to be 99½% and 98¾% for the two classes respectively, and the amount not covered by conversion applications will be available for public subscription.

The City enjoys a good standing as regards its finances. Last summer a loan of Frs. 15 million was redeemed, and the City accounts showed a considerable surplus in 1921 and 1922, while the results in 1923 are expected to be equally satisfactory.

The authorities have at present under consideration three applications for permission to export electrical power to Mulhausen. The companies concerned are the Bernische Kraftwerke, the Kraftwerke Laufenburg and the Nordostschweizerische Kraftwerke. The amount of available power that

these three companies can export differs, and the Federal Authorities are recommending that the three companies should be allowed all to export, in order to avoid unhealthy competition.

The smaller banks begin to issue their preliminary figures of profits for the year 1923. The Bank in Ragaz, with a capital of Frs. 1,000,000, shows a profit of Frs. 63,500 (Frs. 71,907 last year) and is to pay 5% again.

The Volksbank in Hochdorf has increased its profit somewhat, and is again to pay 8 per cent. on its capital of Frs. 2,100,000.

#### STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

	BONDS.			SHARES.		
		Jan. 8	Jan. 15		Jan. 8	Jan. 15
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	...	72.95%	76.00%	Swiss Bank Corporation	...	...
Swiss Confed. 9th Mob. Loan 5%	...	100.85%	100.50%	Crédit Suisse	...	...
Federal Railways A—K 3½%	...	80.65%	79.10%	Union de Banques Suisses	...	...
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921	...	102.62%	102.25%	Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3547
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892	...	72.00%	69.50%	Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2573
				C. F. Bally S.A.	...	1085
				Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon	500	627
				Entreprises Sulzer	...	620
				S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	500	282
				Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mlk. Co.	200	191
				Choc. Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler	100	105
				Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	465

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COMFORTABLE HOME offered, Lady or Gentleman; piano, garden; partial board; full week-ends moderate.—Wells, 10, Lancaster Rd., Stroud Green, N.4.