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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The new article 69<sup>ter</sup> of the Constitution, investing the Confederation with powers to regularise the immigration and right of domicile of foreigners, has been accepted by a large majority, i.e., 374,291 "ayes" against 224,533 "noes." The few cantons (Valais, Fribourg, Ticino and Appenzell I.R.) who voted against the measure did so mainly from a disinclination of increasing the powers and authority of the central administration in Berne. The only party which objected to the new article were the Communists, who in every country oppose the introduction of measures likely to stem or check the free entry of foreigners.

The canton of Vaud is to have a new penitentiary, for the construction of which an extraordinary credit of 2.3 million francs is being demanded.

The canton of Schwyz has asked the Federal Military Department for an official enquiry into the serious allegations made by privates of Bataillons 86 and 72 as to their treatment and cantonnement whilst on service south of the St. Gothard.

"Sonnenberg," a Swiss national institute for the education of blind children of the Catholic faith, was officially inaugurated last Sunday week at Fribourg.

A monument, the cost of which is defrayed by a public collection, is to be unveiled in Lausanne on Nov. 7th in order to perpetuate the memory of Col. Edouard Secretan, who died in 1917.

A novel claim is being made against the French aviation company "Cidua" by a St. Gall sportsman, who has rented the fishing rights of some rivulets flowing into the Sitter. During the recent forced landing of one of their aeroplanes the benzine tank got damaged, and the oil escaped into a ditch which communicated with a little tributary of the Sitter. This particular tributary is reputed to be exceptionally rich in trout, and it is asserted that for a stretch of 700 to 800 metres the whole of the fish has been destroyed. A statement of damages is to be presented to the aviation company.

Col. Keller of Pfungen (near Winterthur) has, on the occasion of his 60th birthday, made a donation of Frs. 20,000 for the benefit of deserving invalids of his commune.

Considerable damage has been caused by a fire which broke out on a farmstead in Grange-Marnaud (Vaud) belonging to M. Aug. Estoppey. No human life was lost, but ten persons were rendered homeless.

A dramatic hold-up was attempted by a carpenter, E. Sonnenhalder from Burg (Aargau), in one of the busiest streets of Basle. During the luncheon hour he entered the shop of a money changer and ordered the lady clerk in charge to hold up her hands whilst he helped himself to a bundle of notes. The lady was able to withdraw into a private office, and when the robber departed with his booty followed him into the street, alarming the passers-by. A policeman was soon on the scene, and after freely brandishing his revolver and realising that escape was hopeless, the man shot himself in the temple; he died the same afternoon in hospital.

One month's imprisonment and a fine of Frs. 200 has been inflicted by the Basle courts on the widely-known Appenzell quack, Mr. J. Gyr of Gais, for affecting to cure a local woman of cancer.

What is reputed as being the oldest maple-tree (Ahorn) in Switzerland was set fire to by some mischievous lads at the Storegg-pass near Melchtal. The tree had a circumference of over 10 metres and was locally believed to be as old as the Confederation.

Col. F. Bühler met with a bad accident during the manoeuvres whilst inspecting an artillery position near Mennau: his horse suddenly shied and threw him off; he had to undergo a serious operation at the cantonal hospital, and is reported to have since died. Col. Bühler was editor of the "Vaterland" in Lucerne.

The district forester, Mr. R. Neeser from Frutigen, sustained serious injuries through slipping and falling down a cliff; he was picked up unconscious.

The following table shows the present constitution of the National Council, elected during the last week-end.

There is little change to be recorded as far as the relative strength of the different parties is concerned. The parties of the Left have slightly increased their representation, being on balance five seats to the good; the Socialists won a seat each in Zurich and Berne from the Peasants, one each in Schwyz and St. Gall from Catholic-Conservatives, and one in Neuchâtel from the Liberal Conservatives, whilst they lost their only mandate in the Grisons to the Catholic Conservatives. The Communists increased their strength to three mem-

Canton	No. of Seats	Radicals	Socialists	Catholic Conservatives	Peasants & Citizens	Liberal Catholics	Communists	Social Political
Zurich	27	8 (8)	10 (9)	1 (1)	6 (7)	—	1 (1)	—
Berne	34	6 (5)	11 (10)	2 (2)	15 (17)	—	—	—
Lucerne	9	3 (3)	1 (1)	5 (5)	—	—	—	—
Uri	1	1 (1)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Schwyz	3	—	1 (0)	1 (2)	1 (1)	—	—	—
Obwalden	1	—	—	1 (1)	—	—	—	—
Nidwalden	1	—	—	1 (1)	—	—	—	—
Glarus	2	1 (1)	—	1 (1)	—	—	—	1 (1)
Zug	2	1 (1)	—	1 (1)	—	—	—	—
Fribourg	7	2 (2)	—	5 (5)	—	—	—	—
Solothurn	7	3 (3)	2 (2)	2 (2)	—	—	—	—
Basel-Stadt	7	1 (0)	2 (2)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0 (1)
Basel-Land	4	2 (3)	1 (1)	—	1 (0)	—	—	—
Schaffhausen	3	1 (1)	—	—	1 (2)	—	1 (0)	—
Appenzell A.-Rh.	3	2 (2)	1 (1)	—	—	—	—	—
Appenzell I.-Rh.	1	—	—	1 (1)	—	—	—	—
St. Gall	15	5 (5)	3 (2)	6 (7)	—	—	—	1 (1)
Graubünden	6	3 (3)	0 (1)	3 (2)	—	—	—	—
Aargau	12	2 (2)	4 (4)	3 (3)	3 (3)	—	—	—
Thurgau	7	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	3 (3)	—	—	1 (1)
Ticino	8	4 (4)	1 (1)	3 (3)	—	—	—	—
Vaud	16	8 (8)	3 (3)	—	1 (1)	4 (4)	—	—
Valais	6	2 (1)	—	4 (5)	—	—	—	—
Neuchâtel	7	2 (2)	3 (2)	—	—	1 (2)	—	—
Geneva	9	2 (2)	3 (3)	1 (1)	3 (3)	—	—	1 (1)
Total	198	69 (58)	47 (43)	44 (44)	32 (35)	9 (10)	3 (2)	4 (5)

The figures in brackets denote the position of parties at the dissolution.

Dr. Louis Emile Alfred Bonson died in a nursing home near Territet after a short illness at the age of 53. Most of his life was spent in the service of the Swiss Federal Railways; from 1910 to 1915 he was Vice-Chancellor of the Confederation. Since 1922 he carried out, as representative of the League of Nations, several missions, notably in the Saar district and Greece.

C. Schulthess, the elder brother of Federal Councillor Schulthess, died in Zurich at the age of 64. He was a retired engineer and previously director of the Borsigbahn in Basle and afterwards on one of the district boards of the Swiss Federal Railways.

Albert Wyler, one of the founders of the Swiss "Blue Cross," died in Geneva at the age of 68; at the time of his death he was a director of the Havas Agency.

Run over by a cyclist in a Zurich street, Miss Elsa Herzig, a music teacher, has succumbed to her injuries.

Simon Simonett, a partner in the Zurich engineering contractors concern of the same name, died at the age of 53. He designed and superintended the construction of the narrow-gauge lines Asti-Chivasso and Cento-Valli, the large power station in the Aosta valley, electrical works in Klosters-Küblis and in the Wäggi valley and recently the reconstruction of the great railway viaduct near Grandsey (Fribourg). He was born in the village of Zillis (Grisons).

The well-known organ builder Theodor Kuhn died in Männedorf at the age of 61 after a protracted illness.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

Well? Last week's steady downpour, accompanied by a heat-wave sending the mercury to over 60 in the shade and turning the City into a regular Turkish bath, coincided happily with a plethora of "copy," so that our Editor was able to give me a week's holiday, from which I return refreshed to my labour of entertaining you, dear readers, by endeavouring to give you the very best of the news found in the British Press as far as Switzerland is concerned. Phew! What a long sentence all at once!—(interval for the purpose of another sip of refreshment to stimulate further efforts!)—My yes, soda water is so, so, so—now what

on earth is it? Bracing? Not quite. Refreshing? Yes and no! As a matter of fact, soda water is like a bachelor, bubbling over with its own exuberance, but requiring a partner to make it really palatable! Rather good that, and all my own!

Well, well, it looks as if we were going to have a good time this week. We have started well. *W/e!* There is something which it is not easy to express in words, when one writes of oneself as *We*. Megalomania, some rude persons would say. Wrong! Rather is it the feeling of responsibility in addressing such a distinguished circle as the readers of our *S.O.* One feels that only the very best effort is good enough for them; one feels that one is hardly able to fulfil the task adequately, and in an endeavour to make up for one's own shortcomings, one resorts to the *We*, which leaves a regal feeling behind it.

But to come to our business. We will start with the lighter side first, putting you in a good frame of mind, as it were, evoking your chuckles. Is it not said that laughter is the finest 'trait d'union' the human race has ever known? It has been said so. I have just said it.

The Locarno Conference has focussed English public opinion anew on our country, and, strangely enough, the Yodel of Switzerland has been written of more than at any time since I remember. The latest effusion of this kind appeared in the *Sunday Chronicle* of the 18th inst.:

**The Yodel Young Man.**  
[The Swiss practice of yodelling, says a newspaper correspondent, is becoming a common practice in some parts of England.]

Polite conversations I've stifled astutely  
With murmured agreement, as anyone would,  
Exclaiming in timorous tones, "Absolutely!"  
"That's certain!" "Oh, quite!" "Bless my soul!" or "Dashed good!"

But now I may stagger assembled Society,  
Bowing and smiling, with hand upon heart,  
With a "tra-la-la-la" and a "tra-la-la-liety!"  
Silencing duchesses, earls and a Bart.

Each day at the office a marvellous minion  
Will shy like a mustang to hear me dictate,  
Not "Sir (or else Madam): We are of opinion—"  
Or "Thanks for your favours of yesterday's date."

Oh no! I'll aspire to the spice of variety—  
"Sir: Yours to hand. We would state in reply  
"To complaints, you can jolly well tra-la-la-liety!"  
"Yours to a yodel, Spick, Span, Sons and Spry."

In future, when I've been determinedly drowning

The sorrows of business in joys of the 'binge,'  
Though met by my wife with a face that is  
frowning,

Not then, as of yore, shall I cower and cringe:  
But rather with placid appearance of piety

I shall observe, with the usual kiss,  
"My dear, I have simply been tra-la-la—hic!—  
liety—"

Keeping important appointments in—Swiss!"  
Slightly better than the "Swiss Miss" recently  
mentioned, I think.

#### Snow.

Then we have our inimitable "Beachcomber" of the *Daily Express* on the 16th inst. discoursing on Snow, etc.:—

*Vides at Soracte stet nive candida.*

They tell me that snow is on its way. May it come!—but not while I am in London. In London snow becomes mud before you can see it. Let it come rather when I am striding along some lane or high on the ridge of the downs; at first a few small flakes appearing from nowhere, like thistledown, and then the larger flakes, eddying and scudding, until all the landscape is misty with a driving white storm.

Then I would have the weather very cold for a long time, so that the snow does not melt, but remains in great drifts. The overloaded branches of trees discharge puffs of snow like smoke, and all the familiar hills are like mountains.

And was it not of snow that it was written:—  
"White and cold and remote are you?"

No. Of course not. That is the first and last line of Roland Milk's "Invocation to A Lady Who Refused to Sup with him in Oakley-street."

And talking of snow, there are the winter sports ahead. Mrs. Bolton is already getting together her party. Mürren, I understand, will be her objective. Captain "Dab" Screaming will, of course, be of the number, as also will the Yargle girls, young "Stag" Fauncewaters, Dalmatia Narke, Lord Bexhill-on-Sea, "Faddy" Nickle, Ursula Claymarket, Dame Frash, and Ninnie Doubleways.

They will not allow me to publish their photographs, because their Swiss kit has not arrived yet. But Mrs. Bolton tells me she has no objection to my publishing an impromptu epigram of the younger Yargle girl. She said it at lunch the other day, and it goes like this:—

"Ursula in her Swiss kit  
Fairly takes the biscuit."

She hopes, before this is published, to work in yet another rhyme, such as "risk it."

Which I think quite good indeed, as are most of the brilliant daily comments by that writer. Where he gets all his extremely funny ideas from I should like to know. I should indeed!

In the *Wide World Magazine* I come across an illustrated article dealing with—

#### The "Smoke Men" of Lötschenthal.

The two fearsome-looking beings are not visitors from another world, although the district to which they belong is certainly one of the least known and most inaccessible in Europe. They are known as the Roitscheggen, or "Smoke Men," of the Lötschenthal, a valley in Switzerland which, for about six months in the year, is snow-bound and to all intents and purposes cut off from the rest of the country by continual avalanches. The "Smoke Men" appear in the valley once a year, generally at the time of the vernal equinox, and it is supposed to be one of their tasks to search out the bad children in the various families and carry them off into the mountains—a Swiss version of the "bogey-man," in fact.

Their main function, however, is to chase away the winter season and to herald the welcome approach of spring. The "Roitscheggen" are generally represented by young men who, clothed in sheepskins, wearing grotesque masks, and making a great noise with cowbells, go from village to village in twos and threes, collecting largesse and generally enjoying themselves. The custom is undoubtedly of great antiquity—probably a survival from pagan times—and it is believed that the "Smoke Men" have appeared regularly in this remote valley for over a thousand years.

Does it not remind you, dear reader, of your own particular "bogey-man" of your youth?

Turning to more serious matters, the Locarno Conference has, of course, filled pages and pages in the British newspapers. Advantage has been taken of it by many to write very nice things about Switzerland in general and our beloved Ticino and its true-hearted Swiss population in particular, and we of Northern Switzerland, who have, moreover, the privilege of knowing the Ticino well, know that the eulogies in the British Press were, if anything, short of the truth.

#### Swiss Electrical Industries.

are mentioned almost daily in the British Press now that similar industries here are forging ahead so successfully. A rather interesting bit appeared in the *New Statesman* in its City article on the 17th inst.:—

When a financial house makes an issue of Bonds or shares on behalf of a business undertaking, it does not usually understate the merits of the latter; but a rather unusual note is sounded in the literature relating to the issue in America a few days ago of participating stock of the American Brown, Boveri Electric Corporation. The particulars placed before the American public state that Mr. C. E. L. Brown, a Swiss (despite the name) was the first to make possible the transmission of electricity over long distances. The first long-distance transmission of power, made from Lauffen to Frankfort in Germany, was a milestone in engineering progress, and is a living monument to this scientist. The generator designed by Brown for the epoch-making Niagara Falls plant is a model to-day throughout the world for all similar developments. The famous Swiss firm is stated to be the largest maker of electrical equipment in Europe, and the largest manufacturer of electric locomotives in the world. The interesting fact is given that while there are only 495 electric locomotives in operation in the United States, there are 1,792 in Europe, and the Swiss firm has actually under construction, in its European plants, over 200 more. Other specialities of the firm are named, but to me the most interesting thing—and the first of its kind I have seen in an offer for sale—is the following paragraph:

It can readily be seen that research laboratories are of the highest importance. In this, Brown, Boveri has, without question, led the world. The main laboratory of the Company at Baden, Switzerland, employs over two thousand research engineers. Swiss scientists are noted for being the greatest mechanicians in the world. They are more interested in the honours received from scientific achievements than in money, and their salaries are considerably smaller than those received by American scientists. There is no single corporation in the world that could afford to sustain such an organisation. Brown, Boveri is only able to do so through the unified support of its fifteen very large manufacturing subsidiaries. The cost of this organisation, which is only a fraction of what the same thing would cost in this country, is borne in proportionate amounts by their companies and is, therefore, not a burden to any one of them.

And in the *Engineer* of the 16th inst. I read:

According to "Power," Sulzer Brothers, of Winterthur, Switzerland, are at present engaged in the construction of a boiler to work under fifteen hundred pounds pressure, the steam to be used in a unafow engine. The boiler is made up of two sections, a low-pressure and a high-pressure element. The high-pressure drum is made from a pierced forging, and all tube connections to headers and drum are placed outside of the boiler walls and away from all high-temperature zones.

#### Hodler Pictures at the Royal Academy.

According to the *Glasgow Herald* of the 10th inst. November 7th will probably see the opening of an international or rather multinational art exhibition at Burlington House, and pictures by Hodler and Segantini, to mention our two foremost painters, will be seen there. The *Glasgow Herald* goes on to say:—

Following close upon Mr. Roger Fry's suggestion that a multinational art exhibition should be held in London comes the news that the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers, true to its title, is in considerable measure to supply the need. Probably on November 7th it will open at Burlington House a show which promises to be of signal importance, and more genuinely international than any held by the society, at any rate since its now famous inaugural gathering of 1898. Sir William Orpen, third president of the International—he was elected on the death of Rodin in 1917, the French sculptor having, of course, succeeded Whistler—has taken an active interest in the organisation, and no doubt was instrumental in overcoming the hesitancy of certain of his fellow R.A.'s as to the propriety of extending hospitality to such an exhibition. I have reason to believe that the project has been brought forward on several occasions without success, but enlightenment triumphed in the long run. The exhibition will probably occupy the eastern galleries of Burlington House, including the sculpture hall. Unfortunately, the Salle d'Honneur is not available, maybe because of contemplated redecorations, which are urgently needed. The brunt of the onerous organising work has fallen upon the active and enterprising hon. secretary, Mr. Francis Howard. Of late he has visited various countries in Europe and examined innumerable works with a view to their suitability. In Paris alone, I believe, he saw between six and seven thousand. In the result we may hope and expect an assemblage which, besides British art of various schools, will include representative examples of 'current art' in France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Czecho-Slovakia, Switzerland, Russia, and possibly Italy. Spain, it seems likely, will go unrepresented.

Again there will for the first time be put on view in Britain some pictures by Ferdinand Hodler, born at Berne in 1853, who died in 1913. For some years Hodler has on the Continent been accepted as the greatest of modern Swiss painters—at any rate, with the exception of the Italian-Swiss Segantini. Many examples of his art have been sold for large sums to public galleries and private collectors. His output was enormous. It is said to aggregate three thousand paintings, many of them on a large scale—portraits, landscapes, allegorical compositions treated with free-going decorative force. In 1913 a room in the autumn salon was allocated to Hodler, and at Berne in 1921 a memorial exhibition of no fewer than nine hundred works attracted a maximum, not of respect only, but of enthusiasm. Enough has been said to indicate the importance that attaches to the forthcoming venture.

I feel pretty certain that the Swiss Colony of London will make it a point of honour, not to say pleasure to go to see this exhibition.

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