

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1925)
Heft: 228

Rubrik: Home news

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ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Telegrams : FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOLUME 5—NO. 228

LONDON, DECEMBER 12, 1925.

PRICE 3d.

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HOME NEWS

The new article in the Swiss Constitution, establishing social State insurance, was accepted last Sunday by the Swiss electorate with a majority of nearly two to one. In the cantonal results which we publish below the *italics* denote those cantons which have rejected the proposal; the figures are preliminary and subject to rectification.

| | Yes | No |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Zürich | 77,533 | 26,948 |
| Bern | 68,382 | 27,679 |
| Lucern | 15,025 | 8,848 |
| Uri | 2,058 | 675 |
| <i>Schweyz</i> | 5,203 | 5,471 |
| <i>Obwalden</i> | 1,190 | 1,284 |
| <i>Nidwalden</i> | 920 | 1,055 |
| Glarus | 3,556 | 2,485 |
| Zug | 2,218 | 2,396 |
| <i>Fribourg</i> | 7,110 | 14,268 |
| Solothurn | 13,972 | 5,476 |
| Basel-Stadt | 11,502 | 3,715 |
| Basel-Land | 7,412 | 3,364 |
| Schaffhausen | 5,253 | 4,968 |
| Appenzel A.-Rh. | 5,538 | 4,056 |
| <i>Appenzel L.-Rh.</i> | 357 | 1,975 |
| St. Gall | 35,690 | 18,400 |
| Graubünden | 10,168 | 5,588 |
| Aargau | 32,757 | 18,217 |
| Thurgau | 16,651 | 10,392 |
| Ticino | 14,107 | 1,104 |
| <i>Vaud</i> | 35,256 | 35,694 |
| Valais | 7,500 | 4,700 |
| Neuchâtel | 13,781 | 2,912 |
| Geneva | 13,035 | 2,876 |
| Total | 406,969 | 213,853 |

It will be remembered that last May the initiative Rothenberger, which sought to anticipate this measure on a considerably wider scale, was turned down by the electors by a majority of over 100,000 votes. The present bill, all the details of which are not yet worked out, may be considered the outcome or consequence of accumulated efforts on the part of social reformers who for the last 35 years have unceasingly advocated this policy in the Swiss Parliament. With the exception of the Communists, all the political parties have given the bill their official support.

As regards the voting, it will be noticed that the inner cantons, with the exception of Glaris, are on the side of the "noes"; in the same company are the two neighbours Vaud and Fribourg and also Appenzell I.Rh., the electors of which latter canton are reputed to negative any proposal likely to overrule local powers. Outstanding majorities in favour, relatively speaking, are recorded by the frontier cantons Basle, Geneva and Ticino, the latter supplying the record figure of 14 to 1, proving in no uncertain way that it means to provide for aged and needy compatriots.

Prof. Gilbert Murray, of Oxford University, has been nominated a member of the permanent commission created under the conciliation treaty, concluded in June, 1924, between Sweden and Switzerland, the interests of the latter country being in the hands of National Councillor Emil Lohner.

Evidence that the local rates and taxes had been paid are a condition *sine qua non* before a passport is issued in the canton of Zurich; the Federal Tribunal in Lausanne has now enacted that such an imposition is unconstitutional.

In the Grand Conseil of Neuchâtel a motion has been approved by a large majority, abrogating the existing law depriving of the franchise those in arrears with the payment of their rates and taxes.

The Grand Conseil of Vaud has without discussion accepted a proposal, establishing female franchise and the right for women to be elected members of industrial courts.

The revenue for 1923 in the canton of Berne from taxes on property and income amounted to nearly 77 million francs; forty years ago the Bernese treasury secured hardly 8 million francs, so that during this period there has been a tenfold increase.

In reply to an interpellation in the Basle Grosse Rat, drawing attention to the enormous local purchases made across the frontier to the detriment of home industries, it was stated that the Government was helpless in the matter. Lower retail prices in Swiss frontier towns was suggested as the best remedy against exchange profiteering.

For the purpose of enlarging the lunatic asylum in Münsterlingen, the canton of Thurgau is spending an amount of 1½ million francs.

A very heated campaign preceded the elections for the Stadtrat in Berne last Sunday. Every two years half of its members retire, and though the Socialists have increased their total poll, the mandates held by the different parties remain the same.

100-franc pieces to the amount of half-a-million francs will be minted in the near future; they will have the same effigies as the present 20-franc pieces.

The concert hall "Rütihof" in Rüti (Rheintal) was totally destroyed by a fire which broke out early on Friday morning (Dec. 4th), the cause being unknown.

A war veteran, G. von Freudenreich-de Sévery, who as an Austrian private took part in the battles of Solferino and Magenta in 1859, died in Monnaz, near Morges; he owned the castle and considerable property at Monnaz, of which place he was made an honorary citizen in 1913.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG,"

Motoring in Switzerland.

For some time past articles have appeared in British motor papers complaining about the unfair treatment meted out to some motorists by the authorities in some of our cantons, especially the Grisons. It could hardly be expected that the British motorist should realise the fact, so obvious to us who know how difficult it is to get our people to swallow new ways and methods, that these exasperating fines, etc., often imposed by bodies who would not be recognised, perhaps, as possessing the requisite authority anywhere else, were very frequently the result of inexperience on the part of some minor official called upon to interpret a new law, and very often, too, the result of a feeling of justifiable revenge for road-hogging perpetrated by some other motorist who had been too quick to be caught. I have heard of racing along the mountain roads, involving great danger to all other users, motorists and pedestrians, and especially also to cattle. Friends of mine, motorists themselves in Switzerland and lovers, ardent lovers of the sport, but still more ardent lovers of our beautiful Alps and the simple, home earth-worshipping population of our mountain districts, have told me that the law breakers ought to be punished much more severely than is now the case, in order to enable the Grisons authorities to keep their beautiful roads open for those who think not only of themselves alone. All the same, I am very pleased that the *Autocar* of Nov. 27th published the following letter from Mr. C. Demmer, the president of the Grisons section of the Swiss Automobile Club:—

For many years past I have subscribed to *The Autocar*, and have followed with much interest the correspondence about motoring in Switzerland.

As President of the Grisons Section of the Swiss Automobile Club I should like to express my deepest regret to all motorists who may have received arbitrary unkind treatment from our police, especially in unjust fines. May I point out to you that the people of this canton are of a typical mountain race, who only very unwillingly accept any introduction of new methods. The motor-car in particular has been most unpopular with them, and the work we had to do for the last seven years to open the canton to automobile traffic is inconceivable to anyone living outside the district. On the Grisons peasant in his mountain solitude the motor-car had at first the effect of a red rag on a bull. But this cannot and must not last. Already next season there will be a change.

The complaints made in your paper have received our careful attention. We have every promise from our Cantonal Government that next year strict orders will be given to the police all over the canton with regard to motor-car traffic, so that I sincerely hope motorists will

not "punish" us by keeping away from our country, but, on the contrary, will come as numerous as possible, and thus show our people how advantageous and important motoring traffic is nowadays, and how foolish and, indeed, suicidal it is to kill this golden goose.

I shall be glad to deal with any complaints that are brought to my notice, and would like to assure all British motorists that they will receive every possible courtesy and assistance from their Swiss motoring colleagues in this canton.—C. Demmer.

By the way, it may be just as well to motor over the Swiss Alpine roads, as long as the mountains still last, for, according to *The Times* of Nov. 30th at least one of our lesser mountains has started to move:—

It has been discovered by the Swiss Federal Topographical Survey that Monte Arbino (6,000 feet), a summit three miles north-east of Bellinzona (Canton Ticino), is moving in the direction of the Arbedo valley at the rate of eight inches a year over a face 1,100 yards wide; 30 years ago the rate of movement was only $\frac{3}{4}$ in. a year. As the strata are vertical, the whole mountain is advancing, but measures have already been taken against accidents.

Railway Electrification in Switzerland

is making great progress. *The Times* (Nov. 28th) says:—

The electrification of the Swiss Federal Railways is making good progress. A sum of £2,037,321 was spent on this work during the present year, and a further £1,461,555 will be spent in 1926. Out of a total of 2,882 kilometres (nearly 1,800 miles) 840 (525 miles) will be completed by the end of the present year, when the Berne-Olten section (40 miles) will be put into service. It is probable that electrically-driven trains will run before the end of 1925 on the Geneva-Lausanne section (39 miles), which was planned to be ready only in January next. At the end of 1926 the Swiss railways will have a network of 1,012 kilometres (632 miles) of electrical lines. The accounts show that the results of electrification are much more satisfactory than was expected, and that the equipment will, on the whole, cost £3,200,000 less than the estimates.

By the way, the Swiss Railways are a Government undertaking!

The *Sunday Chronicle* on Nov. 29th announced that—

A White Scourge Crusade

will be launched within the next few weeks, in order to make the Spahlinger serum available in quantities sufficient for the world's needs:—

It has been reported by work specialists on tuberculosis that the Spahlinger treatment not only accomplishes cures in advanced cases of consumption, but confers immunity from future infection.

The difficulty, in present circumstances, of obtaining State aid or substantial aid in any form to allow Spahlinger to continue his researches has convinced the organisers that the humane task of combating the "white scourge" must be assumed voluntarily by the British people, at first by private help and, if possible, subsequently by national appeal.

The chief worker in this great effort to provide funds for Spahlinger, who, in pursuit of his work for humanity, has exhausted his private fortune, is Mrs. Roscoe Brunner, of Belmont Hall, Northwich. She is the wife of Mr. Roscoe Brunner, chairman of the firm of Brunner, Mond and Co., and is well known for her national work on behalf of charities.

Hodler at the 29th Exhibition

of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers. The *Observer* (29th Nov.):—

The Swiss section is overshadowed by the genius of Hodler, whose noble sense of design and concentrated expressiveness of gesture are seen at their best in the heroic figure, "Lé Guerrier Blessé" (No. 405). Here as well as in the poise of the "Portrait de Mme. Gunzberger" No. 408) and in the manner of painting adopted by him in some of his small landscapes, one cannot but notice a certain kinship between the Swiss master and Mr. Augustus John, though Mr. John seems to have a higher artistic culture which saves him from such occasional lapses into crudeness as Hodler's "Lac et Mont Blanc" (No. 410).

It took me a very long time ere I could appreciate Hodler. His "Retreat from Marignano" in