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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

Dr. Maurer, director of the Swiss Meteorological Institute in Zurich, has been appointed an honorary member of the Royal Meteorological Society in London.

It is stated that the whole of the space available for exhibits at the Basle Fair has been booked. The electricity and machinery industries are especially well represented; the textile trade has also secured a larger share than in previous years.

National Councillor Anton Cafilisch died on Tuesday, March 10th, in Chur at the age of 65 after a short illness. He rendered his native canton conspicuous services by his unfailing and outspoken defence of agricultural interests. Several prosperous cantonal institutions, benefiting the farmer, are due to his initiative and personal leadership.

The Federal accounts for the year 1924 close with a deficit of 21.6 million francs, that is to say, 16.4 million less than was originally anticipated in the budget.

The Association of Swiss Authors is protesting against the article in the new Swiss customs tariff which increases the duty on imported books (bound) by 400 per cent., the proposed rate being Frs. 20 per 100 kilos.

140 boys, representing the Young Australian League, were officially received in Berne on Thursday, March 12th, and presented on behalf of the Federal Council with a Swiss flag.

An international shooting competition will take place from Aug. 8th to 13th at St. Gall on the occasion of the cantonal shoot.

According to statistics published in the *Schweiz. Finanzjahrbuch*, the value of the taxable property throughout Switzerland shows an appreciable increase during the last decade, though this increase in some instances is partly due to a stricter control in the individual assessments. The only notable exceptions are supplied by the cantons of Basle and Geneva, which both record a comparatively heavy depreciation in the value of the rateable property. The following extract will be of interest:—

	Taxable Capital ('000 omitted)		Increase 1913—22 %
	1913 Fr.	1922 Fr.	
Zurich ... ..	1,793,571	5,118,547	350.4
Aargau ... ..	952,516	1,601,199	69.2
Thurgau ... ..	390,545	650,150	66.5
Wallis ... ..	325,454	536,677	64.9
Luzern ... ..	526,758	791,314	50.3
Freiburg ... ..	433,474	650,382	50.1
Zug ... ..	114,647	166,571	45.2
Bern ... ..	2,686,938	3,886,624	44.9
Baselland ... ..	261,375	378,576	44.8
Schwyz ... ..	109,352	155,511	42.3
St. Gallen ... ..	853,858	1,197,750	40.3
Glarus ... ..	200,448	270,517	34.4
Schaffhausen ... ..	268,015	366,294	36.7
Tessin ... ..	373,400	493,494	32.3
Appenzell A.-Rh. ... ..	135,022	174,954	29.7
Waadt ... ..	1,877,550	2,369,128	24.9
Neuenburg ... ..	686,093	801,950	17.0

A complaint by the Zurich cinema proprietors against the severity of the cantonal restrictions was lodged with the Federal Tribunal in Lausanne, and has now been rejected. With the exception of special shows for juveniles, nobody under 18 is allowed to visit cinemas throughout the canton of Zurich.

## AUSLANDSCHWEIZERTAG AT BASLE, April 20th, 1925.

In connection with the Basle Fair, the traditional meeting of delegates from Swiss societies abroad will be held on Monday, April 20th, 1925. Apart from the lectures and discussion, a most attractive social entertainment has been arranged, as will be seen from the official invitation and programme, which we are posting with the present issue to all our subscribers resident in this country.

## BASLE FAIR PARTY.

In answer to several correspondents, we wish to point out again that the party breaks up on arrival in Basle, and that the return journey will have to be made independently within the validity of the ticket (33 days). As the hotel accommodation in Basle during the time of the Fair is naturally at a premium, we have certainly no objection to any participant making his own arrangements in this respect. As regards the identity cards entitling the bearer to a 50% reduction, for a limited time, on Swiss railway tickets, the concession has not yet been officially granted, but there is little doubt that this privilege will again be extended on the same lines as in previous years. It only refers to those travelling with a Swiss passport, and the cards, for which application has to be made beforehand, are delivered personally in Basle at the exhibition offices of the Swiss Federal Railways.

## UNIONE TICINESE.

We shall publish in our next issue a full report on the Annual Banquet and Ball which took place last Tuesday, March 17, at the Monaco Restaurant.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

### To-day's Great Thought.

"A man ought not to put on his best trousers when he goes out to defend truth and justice." —Ibsen.

Not bad, is it? when you think it over!

### Proposal in an Aeroplane.

The dauntless spirit so superbly given expression to in the "Bernese March" lives on: Vide the following from the *Daily Express* (9th March):—

Mme. Pauline Rudolf, of Berne, a wealthy young widow, who is the first and only Swiss woman to obtain an air pilot's certificate, has agreed to remarry under romantic circumstances.

She had many admirers and proposals of marriage, and finally decided to accept a young officer, who, however, was too shy to propose.

"Come with me for a trip over the Alps in my aeroplane, and then you can tell me all your troubles without people listening," the widow suggested.

The flight over the mountains lasted half an hour, and the two came down from the air an engaged couple. The marriage will take place shortly.

Myes—but is it not, perhaps, a trifle embarrassing for the young and shy officer? However, I hope that their story henceforth will be "and they lived happily ever afterwards."

### New Alps Observatory.

If I remember rightly, I have, a few numbers back, drawn attention to this Observatory, the erection of which, I think, has become possible by some public-spirited act of private munificence. Let us hope that by the aid of this wonderfully powerful installation the sum of human knowledge will be enriched considerably, so that with an increase in our knowledge there may be a decrease in our self-importance.

*Daily Mail* (5th March):—

The construction of what is claimed will be the world's largest observatory has been started on the crest of Mount Salève, near Geneva.

The building, which will be 4,000 feet above sea-level, will contain a meteorological observatory, a seismological (earthquake recording) observatory, and a research laboratory. A powerful wireless station, permitting communication with practically all parts of the world, will also be constructed.

One of the telescopes will have a lens larger than that of the Mount Wilson (California) reflector telescope, which is 100-in. in diameter and is the largest telescope to-day. This instrument, it is stated, will render possible the computation of the size of certain remote stars.

It is estimated that the observatory, which will take four years to build, will cost £400,000.

### Give us Peace in our time, O Lord!

Mr. Baldwin's now famous prayer at the end of his recent speech in the House has been welcomed by all who have still some hope of political sanity. His more recent utterance at Leeds, where he addressed the Free Churches Assembly, again centred in the earnest exhortation that an atmosphere of good-will should first of all be created between the classes. Critics of the Baldwin Administration may rightly point out its own shortcomings in that respect, before and during election time especially, and may say, "physician, heal thyself," but it is, strange, to say the least of it, to read the following by a regular contributor, "A. A. B.," of the Conservative *Evening Standard* (March 16):

It is impossible to follow Mr. Baldwin in his approval of the Bishop of Manchester's view that the Christian message should be applied to social conditions, and that the influence of the Churches should be exercised on public life. The New Testament is not concerned with this world, but the next. Politics are concerned with this world, and with no other. The art of government is based on expediency, of which the New Testament knows nothing; its ethics are founded upon Divine command.

If that were the general political philosophy of British Conservatives, well might Europe tremble, well might Great Britain fear new devastating wars, well might we despair of the future!

And how does all this affect Switzerland? many readers will perhaps ask. The answer is perfectly simple: As long as international dealings and relationship are not placed upon theses as are contained in the New Testament, as long as such relationship remains at the mercy of expediency, with thought only for immediate advantage of transitory importance, so long will our poor struggling humanity remain in the slough of despond where it is now. And this after nearly twenty centuries of the Christian Era! The Hohenzollerns tried expediency. Remember!!

### Föhn.

The mere mention of "Föhn" conjures up memories of great fire-calamities of many years ago; Glaris and Weesen, to mention two only. But "Föhn" also awakens memories of Spring days at home, when it was a joy to wander over the hills at night, to listen to the mighty roar in the forest, and to see in the morning the earth clean and free from snow, and the first spring flowers trembling and timidly peeping up from the wet earth. The *Irish Independent* (March 6th) has the following good description of the famous wind:

Those that live for any length of time in Switzerland are sure to hear of what is called the Föhn. During three prolonged stays in this country, I have heard the word on thousands of occasions, and the constant repetition drove me to make astudy of the subject. I had often seen and felt its malign power, but not till now did I think it capable of such destructive fury.

Over two-and-thirty years ago I used to hear a good deal of the Föhn. Most people then maintained that it was the "sirocco" of the Mediterranean, coming heated from the African deserts.

But this theory has long since been exploded, and now the best authorities assert that it is a purely local wind. It comes from the south, and is generated in the upper regions of the atmosphere under certain special meteorological conditions.

It is hot and dry in character, and in winter melts the snow with wonderful rapidity. Hence it is generally known as the "Schneefresser," or the devourer of the snow. It affects the nerves of most people, induces heaviness and headaches, and, in the case of lung trouble, often causes hæmorrhage. Even to those in good health it often brings depression of spirits, while in others it excites restless longings and vague desires for the impossible.

I knew it could lash the water to destructive fury, but, after several years' residence in Switzerland, this is my first real experience of its terrible power on land. It awoke me some time after 12 o'clock, springing out of the bosom of a tranquil night.

At first it blew gently as usual, but later waxed stronger and stronger. It dashed itself against the windows, shaking them in fearful rage, and then sped away moaning. On it came again with renewed force, gripping everything it could lay hold of, and tearing wildly in its awful

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