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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 unflinching 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		Increase
	('000 omitted)		
	1913	1922	1913—22
	Fr.	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	366,394	36.7
Tessin . . . . .	373,400	493,494	32.3
Appenzel 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.

Drink delicious "Ovaltine"  
at every meal—for Health!

## 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 "Berne 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.

M'yes—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 these 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

frenzy. The trees sighed outside, broken glass fell, and at times the old monastery rocked as if in the throes of dissolution.

Sleep was out of the question. After five I carefully unbolted and looked out. It seemed as if nature had broken loose and everything had gone mad. Fierce onslaughts of wind, and then the sound of swaying pines in the distance, like the rumbling and roaring of an oncoming train in a mighty storm. Thuds and bangs of objects against walls, fractured tiles falling, and broken glass flying through the air. Not a light in the valley.

Clouds swept along the sky; the moon shone in subdued splendour; and the morning star glittered over the clear mountains, in the very heart of a sombre patch.

Masses began early, but very few present. All afternoon devotions cancelled, and people warned to be careful. Low Masses at nine in the Capuchin and parish churches instead of the customary Missa Cantata, and no sermons. No central heating, and no electric light. The fire brigade had all in readiness, for there was a subdued fear that the hot wind was meditating fiery vengeance.

At 6.30 I said Mass in a small chapel, overlooking a narrow courtyard, in the centre of the monastery. I shall never forget it. The windows were caught and shaken; the tiles were lifted and torn; and the smashing and crashing was deafening on the hard floor beneath. Trapped in the narrow space, the maddened wind rattled, fought and shrieked like a red-hot demon.

An occasional lull, and then renewed riot. In the midst of all you can imagine, gentle reader, my surprise and fervour when I read the words of the tract: "Thou hast moved the earth, O Lord, and hast troubled it. Heal Thou the breaches thereof, for it has been moved."

About 10 o'clock the storm had reached its height, and I went out into the garden to survey the scene. The frantic wind resented my intrusion, and chucked me about. I looked along the valley. Most of the dwellings had torn roofs, and the out-houses had suffered very badly. Not a trace of smoke was to be seen anywhere, and yet the men of the ever-watchful brigade, fully accoutred, moved about quickly to prohibit fires. Their brass helmets glistened in the bright air, and the people knew their errand from afar. Away in the distance the pines groaned in terrible pain as the fierce wind bent them.

From the mountain-tops it blew the virgin snow that, caught up into the sunshine, shone like Argentine vapour which recalled the inspired words: "He touches the mountains, and they smoke." In the fields the timber palings had been blown down or flown away; and quite near the flapping of wrenched iron sounded like the puffs of a starting engine.

Around lay fruit trees torn from their roots, and in front stood the monastery, church, and college, whose battered mien and gaping roofs and broken windows touched my heart. They had felt the full fury of the awful blast. Still the storm howled and raged, tore and scattered, and the words from Othello occurred to my mind:

"Methinks the wind has spoke aloud at land; A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements." And all the time long banks of luminous cloud floated slowly along a deep-blue sky, and the sun shone down in all his glory on fields of unseasonable green.

Soon after noon the wind began to abate, and between four and five I took a stroll through the town. On every side was wreckage, as if drunken rioters had passed and left evidence of their hate. The streets were littered with broken tiles, fallen chimneys, and remnants of shutters that had been torn from the walls.

Outside the town a prostrate line of splendid plane-trees recalled the destruction of the night of the big wind in the Phoenix Park; and on the slopes above appealed for sympathy the white, open hearts of many and many a noble pine that had been cracked like matchwood in the fury of the storm. Old men remember nothing like it. The wind died about two hours later, and it then began to rain. The night was very quiet.

This morning the peace of God is resting, like a benediction, upon the earth. It is wonderfully calm; a few birds are chirping in the garden trees, and as I write, the snow is falling gently.

#### Dark Side of Diplomacy.

A diplomatic reader in Glasgow, who probably knows more than I do of the many funny sides diplomatic life can show, sends me the following:

"Beachcomber" in the *Daily Express*:—

In those numerous West Indian islands, each of which constitutes officially a political entity, the various European Powers are often hard put to it to find someone suitable for the not arduous, but honorary function of consul. A friend of mine who landed in one such island last month found a row of naked negroes—the

climate makes clothing unnecessary—seated on wooden boxes, each of which contained the consular archives of the States they represented. He was greeted with such cries as "Me Danish Consul, sar," "Sambo, Czech Consul," "You not go dat niggah, he no good consul; me good consul: me Swiss Consul." "Indeed," he wrote, "their willingness to assist me was a model to others in their calling."

#### Artificial Silk—Switzerland's Share in the Business.

*Manchester Guardian Commercial* (March 5th):

Artificial silk was manufactured in Switzerland at the end of last century. There were factories at Glattbrugg and at Spreitenbach, and the process used was based on the Lehner patents. This early attempt was not a success, chiefly because the silk produced was relatively dearer than real silk. In 1906 a French company, the Société Suisse de la Viscose, opened a factory under Swiss management at Emmenbrücke, near Lucerne. This enterprise was a success from the beginning, and was until recently the only artificial silk factory in Switzerland. The Emmenbrücke factory produces, by the viscose process, artificial silk, artificial horsehair, and artificial ribbon straw (visca), the two last being used in the manufacture of braids for hats. A special department exists for the dyeing, winding, twisting, and making up for the retail trade. This factory claims a daily output not far short of six to seven tons, according to the sizes required, which is sold to Swiss and foreign buyers. The cost of Swiss labour being relatively high, the Emmenbrücke factory wisely decided to follow the lead of the English manufacturers (Messrs. Courtaulds) and to concentrate on first-quality artificial silks. The raw material used is the same as that used by the English, French and German firms, as Switzerland is not sufficiently rich in forests to support the manufacture of cellulose, and Emmenbrücke viscose is renowned for its high quality.

In 1921 the French company Société Suisse de la Viscose, in Paris, sold the Emmenbrücke factory to a new Swiss company, the Société de la Viscose Suisse, and retired from the direct management, continuing, however, as holding company, to exercise control upon the new company. The president of the new Swiss company is Mr. de Goumeens, who was manager of the old company from the beginning. In the autumn of 1923 the directors of the new company decided to build a second factory for the purposes of the weaving industry and to produce fine qualities. This factory was erected at Heerbrugg-Widnau, in the valley of the Rhine, between Lake Constance and Coire. Begun in February, 1924, the new works were ready in October. Already very large, the factory has been built with an eye to the future, and new buildings can rapidly be added. The Heerbrugg works will shortly be producing two to three tons a day.

Until 1924 there were no other artificial silk factories in Switzerland, two small Chardonnet establishments in the neighbourhood of Zurich having been closed in 1905-6 and transferred to Kelsterbach, in Germany. Last year some Zurich business men financed a company with the assistance of Mr. B. Borzykivski, president of the Borvisk Company of Delaware. The process will be the same as that already used in Germany at Herzburg in the Harz, and in France at Nevers (the latter begins producing this spring). This Borvisk concern will employ 400 to 500 workmen, and will produce 3,000 pounds a day when operations begin in April.

There are several other factories with smaller outputs. The Swiss embroidery industry of St. Gall have a factory at Rorschach (St. Gall), the Stickerei Feldmühle, which is being arranged to produce artificial silk. This silk will be used for knitting and embroidery in the factory of the same company. Near Basle, at Rheinfelden, there is a small factory, Spinnerei Rheinfelden, which uses the viscose process, and which is connected with the Glanzfaeden Company of Berlin.

In studying the figures of exports and imports, it must be remembered that large quantities of foreign artificial silk are bought by Swiss dealers for re-export. Thus, much German and Italian artificial silk is resold to England in the form of twist for hand-knitting. One should also take into account the fact that artificial silk is used in Switzerland in the weaving of cotton, woollen, and silk goods, ribbons, sewing and embroidery threads, underwear, embroidery, straw and horsehair hats. The exports of stuffs and ribbons of silk and part silk amount to 250 million Swiss francs yearly, and this includes goods made wholly or partly of artificial silk.

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## FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The report on the Federal finances for 1924, submitted to the Federal Council by the Finance Department, shows that the accounts closed with a deficit of Frs. 21,600,000. This result may be considered a satisfactory one in view of the estimated deficit of Frs. 38,000,000, foreseen in the budget, and the fact that during the year supplementary credits of Frs. 25,000,000 were granted.

The Swiss loan of Frs. 50,000,000 recently placed in Holland, on which interest was at 5%, was not fully subscribed, and allotments have been made in full.

The accounts of the Swiss National Bank for 1924 closed with a net profit of Frs. 6,357,620, as compared with Frs. 7,036,929 for 1923. The dividend is again 6 per cent.

The accounts of the Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company are naturally awaited by all circles in this country, which have an interest in Swiss matters, with a considerable amount of eagerness. The directors now announce that for the year 1924 there was a net profit of Frs. 12,505,677, so that, taking into account the carry-over from the preceding year, a total sum of Frs. 18,233,952 is available for distribution. A sum of Frs. 10,000,000 is to be devoted to writing down participations—a very considerable sum in view of the drastic capital reorganisation which has so recently been carried through. A dividend of 8 per cent. is to be paid on May 1st on the preference shares of the London issue in respect of the outstanding dividends for the last half of 1923 and the first half of 1924, and a sufficient sum is to be placed at the disposal of the directors to meet a further half-yearly coupon at the end of 1925. The position at the end of the present year will, therefore, be that only the dividend for 1925 is in arrears. It is further proposed to carry forward Frs. 2,233,952. The detailed report, to be presented at the annual meeting in Cham on the 15th of April, may be expected to contain some very enlightening particulars as to the conditions under which the company is now operating.

It is satisfactory to note that a Swiss engineering firm has secured a contract to the amount of 338,500 rupees in connection with the supply of plant for the Lloyd-Barrage, the gigantic Sukkur dam which is being constructed in India.

#### STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.		Mar. 10	Mar. 17
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	...	74.75%	74.90%
Swiss Confederation 5% 1923	...	99.50%	99.25%
Federal Railways A-K 3½%	...	78.55%	78.67%
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921	...	101.50%	101.00%
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892	...	72.00%	71.00%

  

SHARES.		Nom.	Mar. 10	Mar. 17
		Frs.	Frs.	Frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation	...	500	638	639
Crédit Suisse	...	500	685	687
Union de Banques Suisses	...	500	567	533
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3125	3150	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	1942	1942	
C. F. Bally S.A.	...	1000	1215	1223
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon	...	500	670	670
Entreprises Suizer	...	1000	767	761
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	...	350	340	337
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Milk Co.	200	220	221	
Choc. Suisses Peter-Callier-Kohler	100	178	183	
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	540	545	

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