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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

At the suggestion of the two Federal Houses, a special commission is to be created in order to study ways and means of preventing the growing depopulation of our mountain valleys.

The fusion of the town of Geneva, for administrative purposes, with some of the outlying districts of the Canton, i.e., Plainpalais, Eaux-Vives and Petit Saconnex, has been agreed to in principle by the different Councils. The Grand Council has decreed a ten per cent. reduction of the salaries of civil servants for the next three years, and further decided that university lecturers and professors with fixed full-time emoluments should suffer a corresponding reduction where they derive additional income from outside activity.

In the elections for the Municipal Council of Zug last Sunday, the Liberal party captured a seat from the Conservatives, they holding two mandates each, the remaining one being retained by the Socialists.

A special tax is under discussion in St. Gall, which affects people who obtain their living in the Canton, but permanently reside across the frontier; it is directed specially against workmen regularly entering from the Vorarlberg and finding employment in the many factories of the Rhine valley.

Subject to the approval of the Basle Grosse Rat, the subsidy to the municipal theatre is to be increased by Frs. 50,000 to Frs. 400,000.

It is stated officially that M. Henri Martin, Conseiller de Légation, who has been on a special mission to Angora (Turkey), is shortly returning to Switzerland on leave, when he will personally report to the Federal Council on the state of the negotiations in progress.

At a meeting of the Swiss Association for Female Suffrage held at Berne, it was decided to intensify the propaganda for extending the right of voting in all Federal and Cantonal matters to women.

In a motor accident caused through bad vision in foggy weather, on the road from Lausanne to Geneva, a bank clerk, Erwin Braendli, aged 44, lost his life. The car was driven by M. Devegney, a Geneva business man, who along with the other occupants suffered serious injuries.

Dazzling headlights of a car coming in the opposite direction are stated to be the cause of another fatal accident on the road between Schlieren and Altstetten (Zurich), when Frau Fanny Gygax-Steinmann from Altstetten, who was wheeling her baby in a perambulator, was run into; mother and child died subsequently in the local hospital. The driver of the offending car, Mr. Voser, from Neuenhof, has been placed under arrest.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Nos Tireurs.**—Les tireurs Lienhard, Zimmermann, Reich, Hartmann, Braissant, Pelli, Schweizer, Kuchen, Pfeiderer, Tellenbach, Herzog et Steffen ont pris part au 3me match d'entraînement pour le match international de tir de Rome, qui s'est disputé à Lucerne entre les matcheurs suisses. Lienhard a réalisé le plus grand nombre de points en totalisant 1090 points. La moyenne des cinq meilleurs résultats s'est élevée à 1082, 6 points soit cinq points de plus que le chiffre record du match international de tir de St-Gall de l'année dernière. L'organisation du tir de Lucerne avait été confiée au major Keller, directeur de la fabrique fédérale de Thonon.

*Fribourgeois.*

**Hochwasser.**—Im St. Galler Oberland fand infolge der Föhnperiode und des Regenfalls eine starke Schneeschmelze statt, wodurch grosse Wassermengen zutal befördert wurden. Dies hatte ein heftiges Anschwellen des Rheins zur Folge. Die gewaltigen, schmutziggelben Wassermassen führten eine Unmenge Holzes mit sich, das von den Anwohnern mit Freuden erbeutet wurde. Es soll in etwa 200 Fuder auf diese Weise gewonnen worden sein. In Buchs stieg der Rheinwasserspiegel innerhalb einer Stunde um zwei Meter, und das Wasser

berührte das Brückenniveau der Bahn und Strasse. Am Montag wurde bei 9.8 Metern Pegelstand das Maximum erreicht. Seither senkt sich der Wasserspiegel wieder langsam. Durch die Wassermassen wurde der werdenbergische Binnenkanal bei seiner Einmündung zwischen Salez und Rüte gestaut und eine weite Uferstrecke überschwemmt. Da die Felder schon abgeerntet sind, entstand kein Schaden. Beim Rheindurstschlach stand der Spiegel 16 Meter über dem Bodensee, eine Höhe, die seit der Öffnung des oberen Rheindurstschlachtes nie erreicht worden ist. Bei Sargans geriet infolge des Wasserdurcks vom Rhein her das Gebiet vom Bahnhof bis gegen den Ort unter Wasser und bildete einen grossen See. In einem Stall stand das Vieh tief im Wasser.

*Entlebucher Escholzmatz.*

**Merkwürdige Gasvergiftung.**—Der 40 Jahre alte ledige Charles Rietlin aus Basel war auf Ende der vergangenen Woche nach Zürich gereist, um am Montag eine Stelle anzutreten. Er hatte an der Seidengasse ein Zimmer gemietet, in dem er in der Nacht vom Sonntag auf den Montag zum erstenmal logierte. Am Morgen fand man ihn tot im Bett auf. Während man zuerst an Cyanalivergiftung glaubte, hatte ein Sektor der Leiche ergeben, dass es sich um eine Kohlenoxydvergiftung handelt. Offenbar hatte dabei der Föhn eine Rolle gespielt. Die Untersuchung ist daran, festzustellen, ob das Gas aus dem Kamin ausgeströmt ist, obwohl einige Tage vorher nicht geheizt worden war.

*Basel Arbeiter-Zeitung.*

**Aufmunterung und Trost.**—Der Bundesrat schickte einem Bauern in Sisikon (Uri) ein Hundertfrankengoldstück, als der glückliche Vater seinen zehn Buben bekommen hatte.

*Burgdorfer Tagblatt.*

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Trade conditions in general both here and in Switzerland are far from satisfactory, though the causes are, of course, different in the two countries. This is what *The Times* (November 6th) says about the "Board of Trade returns" in Switzerland :

During the first nine months of this year, the value of Swiss imports reached £71,248,020, as against £74,968,020 during the corresponding period of 1925—a drop of £3,720,000. It is rather alarming to note that this decrease is mainly due to a decline in the importation of raw materials and fuel, which indicates that the factories have few orders and are not working full time. The value of exports totalled £52,782,744, compared with £62,262,744 in 1925—a drop of nearly 15 per cent.

There has been a slight improvement since the beginning of the year, but the monthly average value of exports was £5,864,651 this year, as against £6,795,811 in 1925—even lower than during the economic crisis of 1922 and 1923. Nearly all export items show a decrease on the previous year, greatly to the concern of the industrialists, as they see no hope of improvement before next year, when the new trade agreement with Germany will probably result in an increase of Swiss exports to that country.

The share of Great Britain in Switzerland's foreign trade was decidedly less this year than last. The monthly average of imports from Great Britain—which was £926,558 last year—was £502,523 for the period January-September, 1926, and that of exports to Great Britain—which was £1,386,400 last year—was only £950,249 in 1926. The decrease in imports is mainly due to the fact that, owing to the drop in the Paris and Brussels franc and the lira, Swiss traders find it more profitable to buy their products in France, Italy, and Belgium. As to exports, it should be remembered that last year was a "record" year and that there was a boom during the months which preceded the re-application of the McKenna duties; these duties certainly account for the drop in this year's Swiss exports to Great Britain.

## The Winter Season.

Whoever is responsible for the inflated articles appearing in some of the English dailies, singing the praise of the Swiss winter season, may be an unflinching optimist, but he is certainly a bad salesman. The following from the *Westminster Gazette* (November 10th) is a typical example. The italics are ours and hardly call for serious comment, the more so as we do not wish to spoil the fantastic picture :

"The Alps should not be made to resemble Ken Wood after August Bank Holiday. Even

if orange peel, etc., is buried, the first thaw will reveal the crime."

This is one of the "Don'ts" contained in an amusing Winter Sports booklet, issued for the sixth year by a well-known sports firm.

The Swiss season for Winter Sports promises to be phenomenal this year.

*Train accommodation to popular resorts was booked up by August last until the end of January, and hotels are now announcing that they have no more rooms till late in February. Parties of school-children form a large proportion of Winter Sports devotees this year.*

Clothes for Winter Sports become each year more elaborate and complicated.

All-leather outfits in emerald green, cherry-red, Dutch blue and purple, lined with silk, and fitted either with pleated skirts for skating or breeches for skiing, are the latest novelties for women. To wear with them are waterproof beret tam, scarves of wool or gaberdine, skating and skiing boots, puttees, pull-overs, and special stockings of goats' hair.

The latest outfit for a Winter Sports holiday in Switzerland is so varied that it will easily fill a large trunk.

Black is the latest colour favourite for winter sports outfits, as it shows up so well against the snow, and all the accessories, gloves, socks, "gouties" (snow-boots), caps, and scarves are in some brilliant colour.

The minimum inclusive expense this year is given as £50 for three weeks' winter sports, but many people are going to Norway and Sweden, the Pyrenees, and the Dolomites now that the Swiss resorts are so overcrowded.

Whilst on the subject of winter sports, budding ski champions will, no doubt, flock to the new indoor school, and the reported discovery of a chemical substitute for snow will presumably help to relieve the congestion on the Swiss Federal Railways and on the tops and peaks of our Alps so much in evidence at present, according to the previous reporter. The following article, entitled *Ski-ing in London*, is taken from the *Daily Mail* (November 8th) :

It is now possible to ski in the heart of London. A chemical substitute for snow has been discovered, and Miss June Boland, a novelist who is an ardent skier, has established an indoor ski school.

"I have spent the last eight winters in Switzerland," Miss Boland told a *Daily Mail* representative, "and have always been very much impressed by the pitiful exhibitions made by enthusiastic holiday-makers with only a fortnight or so to spare. If they are beginners they spend most of the holiday on their backs, learning the rudiments of a sport which in itself is absolutely delightful."

"Indoor ski schools, known as *Trockene Ski-Schule*, appeared on the Continent some years ago. My school, however, will go further than these, which were merely devoted to rather dull exercises preparatory to skiing. Helped by my snow substitute and a short run, and under conditions as nearly as possible like those in Switzerland, pupils will actually learn to ski. I have engaged professional instructors. I shall provide skis and make it possible for people who have never practised on actual snow to venture with confidence on the nursery slopes at St. Moritz or elsewhere."

"Advanced skiers will also be provided with a place for practice before going out for the sport."

## Motoring in Switzerland.

An interesting correspondence on this subject has been going on in the *Autocar*, and our Legation has found it necessary to rectify some unfriendly assertions broadcast with reference to conditions prevailing in the Grisons. The issue of November 5th of the aforementioned journal contains the following rejoinder :

Mr. Borsinger's indignation at the mere suggestion that the speed limits in his country are enforced is rather amusing. I take it that these limits were fixed when the referendum was passed less than two years ago, and were devised to meet the strong local opposition to cars of any kind. I fancy the referendum would not have been passed without the understanding that these limits were to be insisted on. The peasants would not have allowed it, and the peasants are seeing that it is carried out. In spite of Mr. Borsinger and his "semi-official federal institution," anyone who exceeds these speed limits does

