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# The Swiss Observer

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## TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

Reluctantly surrendering himself to the general desire for holidays, the Editor proposes to take a few weeks' respite. The publication of the 'S.O.' will therefore be suspended as from this issue, and the next number will appear on Saturday, August 20th. We trust that the faithful ones for whom the 'S.O.' has become an indispensable week-end diet will bear with us for this short period. The date of expiry of the prepaid subscriptions and advertising contracts will be correspondingly extended. Any correspondence or enquiries received in the meantime will be attended to as usual.

THE PUBLISHERS.

## HOME NEWS

Among the number of young diplomats who have been promoted by the Federal Council to "first class" secretaries of legation are included the names of Dr. Louis Micheli (London) and Dr. Emil Stutz (Paris, formerly in London).

\*\*\*

With the assistance of the Federal authorities, a central office for the development of Swiss trade and commerce has been established; Dr. E. Wetter, the vice-president of the "Vorort," has been nominated president.

\*\*\*

Judgment has just been pronounced in a law suit which has been pending ever since 1909 between the two chocolate manufacturers Lindt & Sprüngli in Zurich and A. W. Lindt in Berne. The latter firm is called upon to change its advertising matter and printed wrappers so as to exclude any possible confusion with the products of its older competitor, and is further mulcted in the payment of Frs. 800,000 for damages suffered by the former.

\*\*\*

The administrative accounts of the canton of Zurich, just published, return the number of State employees as 5,978 and the amount paid in salaries, insurance, pensions, etc., well over 30 million francs.

\*\*\*

The Communist Party has commenced collecting signatures for the referendum demand against the new Bill regulating civil service, whilst the Socialist Party, on the recommendation of Comrade Grimm, has decided to join hands with the other parties and to vigorously oppose the movement.

\*\*\*

The municipality of Solothurn has received two anonymous donations of Frs. 30,000 and Frs. 50,000 towards the construction of a new hospital.

\*\*\*

The amusement tax in Geneva—known as "droits des pauvres"—which is imposed exclusively for the benefit of benevolent institutions, is to be increased from 10% to 15%.

\*\*\*

It is stated that Mr. Ulrich Wegelin, the cashier of the Council of Diessenhofen, has mysteriously disappeared, and that his accounts show a deficit of about Frs. 35,000.

\*\*\*

Torrential rains, accompanied by thunderstorms, were experienced during last week-end in the western part of Switzerland. In several districts of the canton of Fribourg hail of the size of a chicken's egg caused considerable damage.

\*\*\*

During army exercises in the Gotthard region, Corp. Gustav Hauert, in civil life a telegraphist at Berne, fell over a steep incline into the Reuss, and succumbed to the injuries sustained when his body rolled down the rocky slope.

\*\*\*

The bodies of the three Zurich tourists, Hans and Fritz Barth and Heinrich von Allmen, who have been missing since last winter, have been discovered by a climbing party near the top of Mont Blanc.

LONDON, JULY 16, 1927.

Through negligent handling, a lotion containing ether exploded in a Solothurn hair-dressing saloon, setting the whole establishment on fire; one of the customers, Frau Frieda Dreyer, perished in the flames.

\*\*\*

During a thunderstorm the clock tower of the church in Cernier (Neuchâtel) was struck by lightning and collapsed, the fire brigades from the neighbouring villages succeeding in saving the body of the church from the fire which had broken out.

\*\*\*

A collision between a heavy lorry and a motor cycle combination on the Col des Roches (Neuchâtel) resulted in the death of Eugen Müller, customs official, and Henri Cavin, railway clerk.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Un poste de gendarmerie peu banal.** — L'ancien bâtiment de cure de Crassier vient d'être transformé en poste de gendarmerie depuis le 1er juillet. L'immeuble comprend les bureaux du poste du chef de poste, du chef de la section militaire, une gendarmerie et des appartements pour deux gendarmes mariés. A cette modeste maison se rattachent des souvenirs historiques. C'est là que naquit et résida Mme. Necker, mère de Mme. de Staél!

*Le Droit du Peuple, Lausanne.*

**Un tragique anniversaire.** — Il y a aujourd'hui 40 ans que la charmante ville de Zoug a été atteinte par une catastrophe: tout un quartier s'effondra dans le lac.

Vers 2 heures de l'après-midi, des crevasses se formèrent sur le nouveau quai. On en avait déjà remarqué en juin. De grosses bulles en sortaient. Puis le mur d'une maison voisine se fendit. Mais la population ne manifesta guère d'inquiétude. Plus tard, le bord du quai s'effondra sur la largeur d'un pied.

A 4 heures, au moment où un bateau à vapeur chargeait assez nombreux passagers, en entendant un craquement formidable, une nouvelle partie du quai disparut, une maison et un hangar s'abattirent. Les amarres du bateau sautèrent et le bateau fut projeté en avant dans le lac. Puis, successivement, jusqu'à 11 heures du soir, 38 bâtiments tombèrent comme des châteaux de cartes, 12 personnes furent noyées, n'étant pas arrivées à prendre la fuite à temps ou victimes de leur dévouement pendant le sauvetage. Environ 700 personnes se trouvaient dans le lac.

Le lendemain, le lac montrait un aspect navrant; on voyait des toits émerger de l'eau, des meubles en masse flottaient à la surface.

Plus de quatre siècles auparavant, le 4 mars, 1435, une partie de la ville avait déjà disparu sous les flots, causant la mort de 60 personnes, et en 1591 un morceau du faubourg eut le même sort.

*La Révue, Lausanne.*

**Cernier.** — Mercredi, à 23 h. 20, au cours de l'orage qui se déclina avec violence sur la région, un formidable coup de tonnerre atteignit le clocher du temple de Cernier; il fracassa la pièce de bois qui forme le poinçon de la toiture, et la partie supérieure de la charpente fut immédiatement enflammée. Attiré par un fort vent d'est, le feu prit aussitôt des proportions importantes, projetant de multiples gerbes d'étincelles et une vive lueur s'aperçut au loin.

Rapidement alarmés, les pompiers de la localité prirent leurs dispositions pour empêcher la propagation de l'incendie et éteindre le foyer. Ils furent contrariés dans leur travail par l'obscurité et par la chute des tuiles, qui se détachent continuellement du toit. Et malgré l'emploi d'échelles, l'eau des hydrants atteignait péniblement le brasier dans sa partie supérieure, les jets étant au surplus déformés et déplacés par le vent; il fallut plus d'une heure d'efforts énergiques et soutenus pour se rendre maître de l'élément destructeur.

La clarté de l'incendie avait été aperçue des villages voisins et les pompiers de Fontainemelon, Fontaines, Chézard et Engollen vinrent se mettre à la disposition du chef de la défense. A l'exception d'une escouade de Fontainemelon, préposée à la manœuvre d'une échelle à allonge, leurs services ne furent cependant point utilisés.

Le temple lui-même n'a pas souffert, à part quelques tuiles cassées, et l'eau n'a guère pénétré dans la partie principale de l'édifice. Les dégâts à la toiture de la tour doivent être plus importants qu'appareils; la charpente devra être en grande partie démontée et remplacée, le noyau central étant fendu et esquillé par la foudre qui l'a complètement abîmé. Le feu n'est pas descendu plus bas que la corniche du toit et toute la partie abritant les cloches est absolument indemne.

*Feuille d'Avis, Neuchâtel.*

## ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

**July 20th, 1847.** — The Diet meets in Berne under the presidency of Ochsenbein and, with a majority composed of 12½ votes, declares that the "Sonderbund" is dissolved, at the same time appointing a committee of seven for the discussion of measures required to execute this decision.

**July 22nd, 1499.** — Battle of Dornach. Emperor Maximilian had asked the German princes and towns to assist in subduing the contemptible country folk. Whilst threatening eastern Switzerland from Constance and thus holding up the principal force of the Confederates in the Thurgau, his commander-in-chief, Count Heinrich von Fürstenberg, invaded the Solothurn district from the Sundgau (Alsace) with a force of 14,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry. The Solothurn men, however, had sent out an appeal for help in good time. Reinforced by troops from Berne and Zurich to a total strength of 4,000 men, they surprised the enemy on July 22nd, 1499, at the castle of Dorneck in the Birsthal. Fürstenberg fell in the first onslaught, but the imperial troops made a gallant stand until the arrival of a reinforcement of 1,200 men from Lucerne and Zug decided the issue. Victory was snatched at the last moment, thanks to the efforts of Ammann Werner Steiner, from Zug, who inspired the already faltering Confederates to further attacks. Three thousand of the imperial forces were left dead upon the field, and among them many men of rank. A few days afterwards monks from Basle, acting on instructions from the bereaved families, demanded from the Confederates that the bodies of the dead knights should be handed over, but received for answer: "The nobles must lie with the peasants."

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### From the Courts.

After a prolonged hearing the War Compensation Court, London, reserved judgment in a case brought by Messrs. Gschwind & Co., of Deansgate, Manchester, to recover about £50,000 as compensation for loss of business due to the War Trade Department's refusal to grant them licences during the war to export cotton fabrics and material to neutral countries. The case, which has been reported and commented upon in the *Daily Mail* (July 1st) and the *Times* (July 2nd) presented some disagreeable sidelights; the head of the firm, Mr. W. G. Gschwind, presumably in order to relieve his feelings over the disappointment and supposed tort, had made scurrilous attacks on high Government officials and others which had landed him already in prosecutions for criminal libel. During the hearing, the president of the Court, the Lord Chief Justice, retired and left the room, stating that he preferred to take no part in adjudicating on this claim as the claimant had thought fit to make certain attacks on him during a particular period. It strikes me as an exceedingly strange case; there must have been scores of our compatriots who, of necessity, were deprived during the war of the facilities for—or, at least, considerably hampered in—carrying on their particular trades, but Mr. Gschwind is the first one—and I believe the only one—who has made a claim on the English Government for damages.

### The Selzach Passion Play.

Here is another description culled from the *Observer* (July 3rd):

A Passion Play but little known, yet dating back to the Middle Ages, is given yearly in the little village of Selzach, near Soleure. There are only about 1,700 people at Selzach, mostly engaged in agriculture and watchmaking, but about 400 of them spend the long evenings of a rigorous Swiss winter getting ready for the play, to be given from June to September. It is then played every Sunday, with three special performances on the festivals of July 16th, August 15th and September 3rd.

In the play there are choruses, prologues, tableaux vivants, and the drama itself. These entail much preparation and many rehearsals, all carried out in a very simple, devout fashion, much as at Oberammergau; there are two choirs and a very good orchestra, both admirably directed, while the tableaux vivants add considerably to the interest of the play. The Last Supper is a copy of Leonard da Vinci's master-

piece, the Crucifixion of Perugino's, and the Christ Himself is represented as in Titian's picture in the Uffizi, at Florence. The play is divided into two parts, the first begins at eleven in the morning with the Creation, works through the Old Testament, and finishes at one o'clock with the entry into Jerusalem. At a quarter past two starts the second part, the Passion Play proper, and in this there are twenty-one tableaux (against the twenty-two of the morning performance), introducing the Crucifixion and concluding with the Ascension, the whole given with the utmost reverence and dignity.

The theatre itself is designed with the greatest simplicity, so as to prevent the attention of the audience and actors being distracted from the sacred subject before them. It is a very unpretentious building, more like a big wooden barn than a theatre, but it holds 16,000 people and was erected some thirty years ago. So free from thoughts of gain are the simple peasants of Selzach that the prices for the seats are ridiculously modest, and there still remains a debt of some 14,000 francs on their theatre. The village finds itself in the limelight of publicity during the three summer months that the Passion Play is represented, but, fortunately, there is no question of the little place and its inhabitants being spoilt, for Selzach cannot accommodate many visitors.

#### Baron Haller.

The following from the *British Medical Journal* (July 2nd) will revive the memory of one of the most distinguished men of the 18th century:—

At the Fifth International Congress of Medical History, recently held in Switzerland, Sir D'Arcy Power read a paper on the famous Swiss scientist Haller and his collection of surgical theses. A paper by Sir D'Arcy Power was likely to be interesting whatever its subject, but with a personage like Haller it could not fail to have features of special attraction. The theses were not Haller's, but were written by candidates for the university degree. They contain, it is said, a few grains of value, but the bulk, like much of such material, is chaff; the method of trial and error, however, is a fundamental evolutionary process, and not to be despised. But it is not the theses, but Sir D'Arcy Power's vignette of Haller himself, which makes such good reading; and it is illustrated with three delightful figures—one of the baron in profile, one showing him engaged in a surgical disputation in the schools, and the third depicting him botanizing in the Swiss Alps accompanied by his wife, a stout lady with an umbrella. Haller was an extraordinary man; he possessed more than the ten talents, and appears to have turned them all to profitable account. In the first instance he developed as a linguist; he early became proficient in Latin and Greek, and compiled a Chaldee grammar and a Hebrew and a Latin dictionary at the age of 9. As an encyclopaedist he wrote, at about the same age, an historical lexicon containing nearly two thousand articles. He next figures as a poet, and at the age of 15 had written tragedies, comedies, and an epic poem of 4,000 verses in the manner of Virgil, as well as translations from the works of Ovid and Horace. These early efforts did not meet with the approval of his maturer judgment, and he burnt them with his own hand. Later, however, he returned to the muses, and composed a book of poems on the Alps, a work which was highly esteemed at the time, ran through twenty-two editions, and was translated into several foreign languages. As a token of the appreciation evoked by this work it was considered appropriate at the time to create Haller a major-general, although he was by no means of a warlike disposition. Some time before receiving his military commission he turned his attention to medicine, and in due course King George II appointed him professor of anatomy, surgery and botany at the University of Göttingen. Of his renown as a physiologist and anatomist there is no need to make mention; for surgery he seems to have had a personal distaste—he could never bring himself to perform an operation on a man, although he carried out many experiments on living animals; in botany, more especially the botany of Switzerland, he became an acknowledged authority. Beyond his literary and scientific studies, Haller took a deep practical interest in public affairs. He was a member of the Sovereign Council of Berne, held, with great advantage to the country, the post of salt inspector in that city, served as president of the Society of Economics, helped to improve the condition of the clergy, interested himself in a scheme to fit the wealthier citizens for the higher civic offices, and established an anatomical theatre in Göttingen which was, it would seem, the first physiological institute in Germany. But this is not all, for a contemporary writes thus of him: "He was wholly without ostentation, either in his home or when he was amongst those who knew nothing of science. No one knew better than he how to accommodate himself to his company, for he was friendly with everyone and never gave offence. He had no pride, and

there was an entire absence of self-seeking or any air of superiority. He had, in fact, none of the faults which are usually and with justice attributed to the learned and witty. He never boasted of his own works, and if they were mentioned he turned the conversation as soon as he could do so conveniently." Assuredly a medical saint! He was not averse, however, on occasion, to a small venture in the direction of body-snatching.

Albrecht von Haller—he was made a baron at the age of 41 by the German Emperor—was born in 1708 at Berne, where he also died in 1777. He was equally celebrated as an anatomist, botanist, surgeon and poet, and spent most of his early life at German universities. In 1753 he returned to his native town. A grandson of his, Karl Ludwig, played a prominent part in Swiss public life by embracing the Catholic faith and subsequently becoming one of the leaders of the Ultramontane Party in Switzerland.

#### Motoring Regulations.

The ridiculous anomaly of government-owned cars enjoying privileges on the road to the detriment of the ordinary motorist is emphasised in the following article from the *Motor* (July 5th)—

A highly dangerous regulation has been in force in Switzerland for several years, to the effect that private motor-cars must always take the precipice edge when meeting a Federal charabancs on a mountain route. Under this category have even been included flat roads like the one bordering the lakes of the Upper Engadine. Accidents at blind corners, of course, were inevitable under this system, and the Federal Council has at last agreed to modify it.

In the first place, the only passes to which it is to be applied are the Furka, the Grimsel, and the Ofen, as well as sundry side roads of secondary importance. Hitherto, the list of passes on which the rule was enforced has been a very long one.

On the other hand, it is required that on all routes indicated by a yellow notice, motor-cars meeting a car of the postal service must immediately slacken speed. If the cars have to pass at a dangerous place, the motor-car must, if requested by the conductor of the postal car, be backed to the nearest place where it is possible to pass. At all bends in the road where the driver of a car is unable to see round the corner, he must take the utmost care to proceed at such a rate as will allow him to stop the car, even if going downhill, within a distance of six yards. On approaching such a turn, it is essential to keep the horn sounding as long as any portion of the bend is concealed from view. When a motor-car overtakes a postal car, the latter will keep on the side of the road next the mountain on all mountain routes, irrespective of the rule of the road.

It is obvious, of course, that if another car happens to be approaching from the opposite direction, there may be a mix-up owing to the charabancs having pulled over to the mountain side. It would have been far safer to have let the ordinary rule of the road prevail on all occasions, but the Federal cars, of course, are sacrosanct.

Only the latter are allowed to use horns with more than one note, or to be painted yellow; consequently, a touring car of that colour may find itself barred from general touring in Switzerland!

An entirely new proviso is announced in respect of the Great St. Bernard Pass, on the upper portion of which, on the Swiss side, a one-way traffic rule will be enforced between the Cantine de Proz and the summit, a distance of 8½ kilometres. Cars may only ascend this stretch before 11.30 a.m. and descend between 2.30 and 4 p.m.

#### A Self-propelled Train Ferry.

From the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* (July 7th):—

A self-propelled train ferryboat has recently been put into service on Lake Constance by the Swiss Federal Railways, designed to carry from eight to ten railway trucks on two parallel lines. The ferry is driven by two 80 b.h.p. airless injection Sulzer marine Diesel engines with reverse gear. The ferry is 150ft. long, 30ft. broad, with a draught of 3ft. 3in. light and 4ft. 7in. loaded. The wheelhouse is placed forward, communication from it to the engine-room being effected by two telegraphs. For reversing, each engine is fitted with reverse gear operated by handwheel. Beside the handwheel is a smaller wheel for adjusting the speed of the engines. On the trial runs, the ferry carried six trucks, of a total weight of 170 tons, at a speed of about nine knots.

#### DE TOUT UN PEU.

Il est des manifestations qui, pour sportives qu'elles soient, ne peuvent être passées sous silence. J'entends donc vous dire quelques mots du dernier Grand Prix de Suisse qui vient de dérouler ses péripéties à Genève sur le circuit de Meyrin. Par suite d'une participation tout à fait exceptionnelle, nous avons eu en somme un petit Championnat

d'Europe. Cette manifestation prenait un intérêt tout spécial par le fait que faisant suite à votre récent "Tourist Trophy," elle amenait à Genève les "as" anglais, les triomphateurs de la veille, qui allaient rencontrer non seulement nos nationaux, mais encore les Italiens, les Français, les Belges et les Allemands. Tout le monde sait que l'industrie de la Motocyclette est des plus répandues en Angleterre et que ce qu'on fabrique de l'autre côté de la Manche, est et reste la première production mondiale.

Vu l'importance du marché suisse, toutes les maisons avaient fait un gros effort de représentation. Terrot et Money-Guyon avaient envoyé leurs meilleurs hommes; Motosacoche notre grande marque suisse, présentait son équipage au complet, et surtout vos "as" étaient là. Il y avait Woods et Craig sur Norton; Dixon sur H.R.D.; Franquist sur Sunbeam, et Scott et B.S.A....

La course fut palpitante dans toutes les catégories. Mais le gros morceau de la journée resta la course des 350 et des 500 cm<sup>3</sup>. Dans les 350 cm<sup>3</sup>, on crut longtemps que Motosacoche fournit le vainqueur. Malgré tout, c'est Simpson sur votre fameuse A.J.S. qui passa en vainqueur la ligne d'arrivée.

En 500 cm<sup>3</sup> c'est une Norton qui triomphé, à une vitesse moyenne de 113,500 klm., tandis que la catégorie inférieure atteint presque le 110 à l'heure. Mais où réside le fait le plus intéressant de la journée, c'est que les 250 cm<sup>3</sup> de cylindrée, atteignent elles, une moyenne de près de 90 à l'heure. Ce chiffre est tout simplement formidable. C'est un Italien, le nommé Lasagni, qui après s'être défait des deux Condor qui s'opposaient à sa marche rapide, atteint ce chiffre inconnu pour la moto qu'il monte. Cette machine était également italienne, elle a nom: Guzzi. Disons pour clore que si les marques anglaises confirment partout une classe imbattable, nos maisons suisses ont fait piétre figure. Il faut reconnaître qu'elles ont été servies par une malchance extraordinaire, que l'on vit des accidents de route stupides et vraiment imprévisibles. Mais il n'y eut pas que cela. Une course de cette envergure et de cette importance ne s'improvise pas. C'est incontestablement l'homme le mieux prêt qui sort victorieux; il en fut ainsi encore hier.

Et maintenant vous dirai-je deux mots du grand Cirque Knie, qui promène ses tentes en une victorieuse tournée sur toutes les places publiques de Suisse? Knie, qui s'est adjoint Hagenbeck, offre vraiment à l'heure actuelle le summum de ce que nous pouvons voir dans notre pays; car à coté du cirque proprement dit vous avez une ménagerie de tout premier ordre. Une visite à l'administration s'imposait. Nous nous sommes donc rendus dans les bureaux de ce vaste organisme. Une rangée de roulettes sans fin et lorsque vous pénétrez dans la directoriale, vous ne savez exactement où vous vous trouvez. Bureau américain, mobilier impeccable et boiserie, des téléphones qui de tous les côtés sonnent et résonnent, des gens affairés, des grooms, des dactylos et des ordres brefs et vifs tout commes dans une usine. Et c'est vraiment une formidable usine que dirige Monsieur Charles Knie, avec une compétence parfaite de businessman américain. Il sait dès le matin que tel lion à la fièvre, tel phoque ne mange plus, que tel serpent montre depuis un certain temps des dispositions inquiétantes; mais il sait aussi que ce soir, tel docteur occupera le fauteuil 18 et que, en appelant au téléphone le numéro 25, ses clients pourront lui causer sans le distraire de son spectacle. Il sait que la publicité pour la prochaine tournée en Hollande coûtera tant; il sait que certains employés préparent une petite révolte et que le placide Auguste qui, le soir, fait rire tous les petits enfants de la ville, est à la tête de ce désagréable mouvement. Il sait... il sait bien des choses encore!

Quant au programme rien ne manque à ce que nous sommes habitués à voir. Il est même

#### QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

	BONDS.	July 5	July 12
	Frs.	Frs.	Frs.
Confederation 3% 1903	...	80.00	80.00
5% 1917, VIII Mob. L.	101.75	101.45	
Federal Railways 3 1/2% A-K	84.10	84.30	
" 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	102.00	102.75	
SHARES.	Nom	July 5	July 12
	Frs.	Frs.	Frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	777	777
Crédit Suisse	500	820	818
Union de Banques Suisses	500	700	698
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2375	2405
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3885	3973
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	2855	2895
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	557	556
C. F. Bally	1000	1333	1330
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. M. Co.	200	674	674
Entreprises Suizer S.A.	1000	1043	1042
Comp. de Navig. sur le Lac Léman	500	555	560
Maschinenfabrik Giubiasco	100	100	105
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	735	730

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