

**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:** - (1927)

**Heft:** 286

**Rubrik:** Back Numbers of the "S.O"

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**Download PDF:** 23.02.2026

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# The Swiss Observer

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 9595

Published every Friday at 23, LEONARD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 7—No. 286

LONDON, FEBRUARY 19, 1927.

PRICE 3d.

## PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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## HOME NEWS

The total of the personnel employed by the Confederation at the end of 1926 shows a diminution of 744 as compared with the figure to the end of 1925. The civil servants number 30,594, whilst the Swiss Federal Railways employ 34,662.

In the elections during the week-end for members of the Grand (Cantonal) Council of the Ticino the Liberals considerably increased their representation and are now again the strongest party in the canton; their gains are at the expense of the Agrarians. The constitution of the new Council (65) will probably be as follows: Liberals 29 (against 24 in the 1923 elections), Conservatives 24 (24), Socialists 8 (8) and Agrarians 5 (9).

The Aargau Grosser Rat has adopted a resolution which will place religious instruction in the cantonal schools under the immediate care of the respective Church authorities, two hours per week being allotted and no expense being incurred by the State.

The Zurich Stadtrat has voted Frs. 40,000 as a contribution towards the expenses of the international aviation meeting which is to take place at Dübendorf from August 13th to 21st, under the auspices of the Swiss Aero Club. The annual subsidy in favour of the educational department of the local section of the Schweiz. Kaufm. Verein has been increased from Frs. 90,000 to Frs. 120,000.

At a numerously attended meeting of farmers in Bülle to discuss the causes of the present agricultural crisis, a petition was sent to the Federal Council demanding the abolition of export duties on cheese and milk, reduction of railway freights on cheese, restrictions in the import of cattle and publication of the accounts of the Swiss cheese-union, which enjoys a monopoly as far as the export trade is concerned.

The creation of a chair for journalism at some of the Swiss universities was one of the subjects discussed at the meeting in Engelberg of the Swiss Press Association.

It is stated that the number of Italians residing in Switzerland exceeds 150,000. (The number for Great Britain is computed at 30,000).

Damage to the amount of about Frs. 150,000 has been caused by a fire which broke out last Monday in the parquet floor factory of Etienne Gschwind S.A. in Oberwil (Basel-Land).

A fire partly destroyed the old Infirmary at Rüti (Zurich); the building was evacuated in good time.

The Légion d'Honneur ribbon has been received by the editor of the *Feuille d'avis de Vevey* in recognition of his services in the cause of French wounded soldiers interned in Switzerland during the war.

A well-known firm of Basle forwarding agents (Jacky Mäder & Co.) has been mulcted in heavy fines by the Italian Government through having unwittingly shipped at Geneva a large consignment of morphia, cocaine and other drugs declared by their German clients as aluminium-ware.

An amount of Frs. 100,000 has been bequeathed to the Federal Polytechnic for research work in the textile branch by the late Winterthur engineer, Benno Rieter, who died in July, 1925.

Two military aviators lost their lives through their machine crashing on the lake of St. Moritz, which was frozen. Their names are Lieut. Emil Albrecht, aged 30, of Winterthur, engineer of the Haldegg brewery of that town, and Lieut. Eduard Buchli, aged 32, of Ennetbaden, employed in the works of Messrs. Brown-Boveri.

## BACK NUMBERS OF THE "S.O."

Subscribers ordering back numbers are requested to remit the usual 3d. per copy, provided that those required do not date back more than twelve months; for earlier issues, some of which are out of print, an extra charge is made.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

**On Samuse in the Alps** is the title of a pen picture describing the daily life in one of the fashionable mountain resorts, written by Magdalen King-Hall and published in the *Evening Standard* (Feb. 8th):

I am one of those deplorable people who are incapable of being hilarious to order.

When the Entertainment Committee in this gay Winter Sports Resort thoughtfully provides me with a paper cap, coloured streamers, bags of confetti and pellets, with permission to throw the same at my hotel-mates, I am presently overcome with a feeling of deep gloom.

The champagne also provided by the management (at a price!) only succeeds in engendering in me a sensation of vague resignation.

The truth is that, unlike most Britons, I detest being organised. To me, a tête-à-tête supper is so much more entertaining than an hotel banquet!

At the same time I cannot help appreciating the efforts of the management here to "make things go."

It is a mistake to imagine that everyone comes to Switzerland for the express purpose of gambolling in the snow. Some of us are enthusiasts, it is true, and ski and luge with such energy that we are all yawns by the evening;

Others of us admit frankly that we are "out here for the dancing." We rise at 10.30, potter about the rink in jazz sweaters, drink chocolate, gossip, flirt, write letters, and consequently are as fresh as daisies when the dance band strikes up. The Entertainment Committee steps in here.

## THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL

## SWISS SAMPLES FAIR

will be held at

## BASLE

2nd to 12th April, 1927.

For Information apply to:

THE COMMERCIAL DIVISION OF  
THE SWISS LEGATION,  
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11b, Regent Street, S.W.1.

This body is as mysterious as the Council of Ten. No one knows who its members are, but the evidences of their brisk presence are everywhere. Luge and bob races, concerts, dances, bridge tournaments, all come under their jurisdiction.

I suspect them of longing to organise our love affairs!

"Mr. Brown, will you kindly flirt with Miss Thomas this evening?"

"Captain Daring, please note the misletoe, and the lady sitting under it."

"Miss Symkins, would you mind leaving your young friend and being more generally flirtatious?"

Their aim seems to be to throw everyone literally and metaphorically into one another's arms! Many and ingenious are the devices they employ to further their ends. At one dance they will hand round gigantic paper flowers. A piquant contrast is afforded by the sight of a young man charlestoning with a large white lily held saint-like in his hand.

Rattles are distributed among the guests. Our brighter youths preserve them carefully till the dance is over, then form themselves into a "cad's party" (whatever that may be!) and race whooping down the passages, shattering the slumbers of the elderly and just.

In reality there is a frantic scramble. Affectionate couples cling together. Three young men clutch at the beauty of the hotel.

## ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

February 21st, 1476.—Grandson taken by Charles the Bold; terrible slaughter of the Confederates by Burgundian soldiery.

February 24th, 1503.—The forest cantons demand from France the surrender of Bellinzona in accordance with the terms of an agreement. Just as little (said the men of Uri) as we would abandon our own fatherland, our wives and our children, so little also, and even far less willingly, would we abandon Bellinzona." Many of the other cantons disagreed, but dare not side with France.

February 25th, 1621.—Pompeius Planta murdered at his castle Kietberg in the Domleschg by Jürg Jenatsch and his associates. Jürg Jenatsch, a former pastor at a village in the Valtelline, had not long ago escaped being murdered by the Catholics. He held Planta responsible for all the trouble. The plot was prepared at Grisch, in the Prättigau, and Planta was slain on the morning of the 25th. The son of Planta, some years later, avenged the murder of his father on Jenatsch.

February 26th, 1826.—The poet Viktor von Scheffel born. Although no son of Helvetia, he, like Friedrich von Schiller, endeared himself to the Swiss people by his complete absorption of the Swiss spirit. His two principal works, "Ekkehard" and the "Trompeter von Säckingen" are too little read nowadays. Last year university students held a memorial service at the Wildkirchli, in the Hohen Kasten region, mentioned several times in "Ekkehard."

One evening the Committee, in a flight of imagination, organised a Book Dance.

When all else fails the Entertainment Committee collect shoes from the feminine dancers and pile them in a basket. The men fall on them. Anxious youths race round the room, slippers in hand, hoping for the best, fearing the worst! Alas for the young man who carefully selects an elegant shoe only to be confronted with a stout and red-faced Cinderella!

One evening was undoubtedly a *tour de force* on the part of the Council of Ten. We blossomed out into Spaniards, negroes, cavaliers, columbines, cooks and houris.

All were uproariously gay, save for a party of Germans who, with gloomy patriotism, refused to partake of roast beef and ordered pheasant instead!

The Entertainment Committee watched its merry flock with benign approval.

A riotous party held carnival on the ice till six in the morning—

And oh! how bad-tempered everyone was next morning!

Another evening we were regaled with a cinema show. It was an earnest Swiss mount-

On another occasion a flag is held across the room. The men are herded on one side, the girls on the other. According to schedule we gently select our partners by their finger tips. Taineering film designed to instruct the mind.

Unfortunately we received it with a running fire of facetious remarks, to the bewilderment of a party of French people present.

On the dull days of snow, the feminine inhabitants of the hotel devote themselves frankly to an orgy of gossip. The young men, ill-humoured, as young men are apt to become when they are getting too little exercise and too much attention, retire to the billiard-room and smoke and create a din.

We possess an amateur jazz band. It is the smart thing among the *jeunesse dorée* to attend its practices after tea.

Brooding over us are the mountains, with their sinistre green glaciers, their bleak heights and precipices, the mystery of their regions of everlasting snow.

We are like tiny frivolous butterflies suspended in a glass cage at the very gates of Heaven.

A thunderous roar! An avalanche foams into a fearful white torrent into the valley below.

The band breaks into "Could I? I certainly could," and we hurry out of the frosty silver air into the cosy stuffiness of the hotel.

## The Physiology of Alpine Climates.

The effects, good and bad, of a prolonged stay in high altitudes are dealt with in the following review of papers published by the Director of the