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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The Federal Council has endorsed a decision of the Swiss telegraph office in Geneva which refused to transmit a despatch from a reporter to his paper in Brussels on the ground that this despatch contained insulting references to the members of the Russian delegation attending the League of Nations sittings.

\*\*\*

With reference to the increase of emoluments to the members of the Regierungsrat, which was refused by the people at the recent votation, it was stated in the Basle Grosse Rat that the councillors in question considered this refusal as an unmerited censure; all the party leaders (including the Socialists) thereupon expressed their regret and the hope that at the next votation this popular *faux pas* might be rectified.

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The accounts of the canton Berne for the year 1926 close with a deficit of 1,6 million francs, about double this amount having originally been budgetted for.

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Dr. Friedrich Hegar, a prominent musician and distinguished composer, died in Zurich at the age of 86, after a prolonged illness. He was the founder and director of the Conservatoire of Music in Zurich and was closely identified with the musical life of that town.

\*\*\*

The 103rd anniversary of his birth was celebrated last Wednesday week by Jakob Schaffner, a farmer of Ormalingen (Basel-Land), who enjoys the best of health.

\*\*\*

Plenty of rain was experienced in Switzerland during Whitsun, and snow has fallen down to altitudes of about 1,300 metres, especially in the Säntis and Jungfrau regions.

\*\*\*

The traditional Whitsun excursion of the Basle Rhine Club was responsible for one of the participants, Ernst Flückiger, age 18, from Basle, losing his life. The Club had started in a large open boat (pontoon) from Rapperswil; near the gas works at Baden the crew tried to pass through one of the lock bye-passes, but owing to the strong current missed the entry, with the result that the boat was dashed against the bridge pillar and cut in two. Of the 21 rowers, five were carried down the Limmat for about 2,000 metres, four of them being pulled to the shore with the help of lines thrown out, whilst the fifth disappeared in the water and was drowned.

\*\*\*

In returning from Constance, a car took the level crossing at Kradolf at too great a speed with the result that two of the five passengers were thrown out and remained unconscious on the ground near the track. Their names are Wendelin Kunzelmann and Emil Trosch, both from Herisau, and they are lying in a critical condition at the local hospital. The driver and owner of the car, Hermann Schoch, from Herisau, has been arrested, it being stated that the whole of the party were the worse for drink.

\*\*\*

When exercising on the horizontal bar Emile Wehrli, age 25, from Erstfeld (Uri), fell so badly that he subsequently died in hospital from his injuries.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### Swiss Trade and Industry.

An interesting survey of the economic position and the prospects for the immediate future were given in the presidential address at the recent annual meeting of the British Chamber of Commerce in Switzerland; the following extracts were published in the *Times* (May 28th):—

The British Chamber of Commerce in Switzerland recently held its seventh annual general meeting at Basel, under the chairmanship of Mr. A. C. Sparling, H.M., Minister at Berne. Mr. Crowe, the president, in speaking of Anglo-Swiss commercial relations, stated that Switzerland had not yet been affected by the new British import duties as severely as was expected twelve months ago. Swiss exports to Great Britain were three times the value of British

exports to Switzerland. Great Britain remained one of Switzerland's best customers, and could, with a little effort on her part, become a more prominent supplier.

In this connection a contrast may be drawn between British indifference to the Swiss market and the energy displayed for a long time by numbers of other countries.

The new French tariff holds out a serious menace to Swiss exports, particularly watches. At the same time there are signs that French trade in Switzerland is increasing to the detriment of that of competitors. The opening of the Röve tunnel has provided a link between Marseilles and the Rhône, and in a short time the work of regularising the French Upper Rhône as far as the frontier at Geneva will be started. Later it is proposed to create a free Swiss port at Villefranche, near Nice. Further, an accelerated rail service has just been organised between Switzerland and Marseilles, cutting out Lyons.

Germany is also displaying considerable activity. The increase in her trade has induced her to establish a new international railway station. She is preparing to sell considerable quantities of coal in Switzerland, and negotiations have taken place with a view to sending gas from the Ruhr, thus obviating the transport of coal and the manufacture of gas in Switzerland. If this project is realised, exports of certain descriptions of British coal to Switzerland will be seriously affected. A German Silk Congress has been held at Zurich for the purpose of arranging with the Swiss producers for a scheme of rationalisation and a joint purchasing organisation.

Switzerland does not expect great things from the raising of the boycott on its goods in Russia. Only Swiss watches and Russian grain—if there is any—are likely to be affected.

Industrial depression still prevails, and is prejudicing the purchasing power of the country. For example, imports from Great Britain during the first four months of the year declined in value by 31,000,000. The export of watches, which is the barometer of Swiss activity, declined by 11 per cent. during the first quarter of the year, and the Swiss Union of Technicians, in view of the prevalence of unemployment, is suggesting to the youth of the country that they choose some other profession. Owing to the fear of a crisis the authorities have decided to agree to the joint request of several groups of manufacturers to permit 52 hours a week to be worked in their factories until the middle of October. One favourable feature has been the decline of one point in the index number of the cost of living which is now 158. At the same time applications for employment at the Labour Bureaux have slightly diminished.

### One-Man Trains.

The experiments made as regards this promising innovation have now led to the adoption of this principle on a small part of the Swiss railway system. We doubt whether the bulk of the travelling public will be enamoured with this new departure for the purpose of reducing working expenses. We quote *Modern Transport* (May 28th):

Eleven electric trains, each driven and conducted by one man, are to be introduced on the Swiss Federal railway system this summer. Exhaustive trials have been carried out during the past year with these one-man trains over the principal lines in Switzerland, and satisfactory results have been obtained. Ingenious automatic and safety devices eliminate the risk of accident and enable the driver to act also as conductor and ticket-collector. By the introduction of this system it is expected that substantial economies will be made and the benefits passed on to the travelling public in better services and, eventually, cheaper fares. The Swiss Federal Railway system is now almost completely electrified, and is regarded as a model for the rest of Europe in comfort, cleanliness and efficiency. By the end of 1928 the work of electrifying the whole Swiss railway system, it is expected, will have been completed.

### International Studies.

A new Institute—Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes Internationales—has recently been founded in Geneva for the study of contemporary questions in politics, law, and political economy. The executive council includes M. Chuard, Federal Councillor for Home Affairs, and M. William Rappard, Rector of the Geneva University. Among the lecturers is Prof. Eugene Borel, for many years President of the Arbitral Mixed Anglo-German

## ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

June 13th, 1285.—Opening of Bridge across the Rhine at Basel.

June 14th, 1891.—Railway accident near Münchstein, where over one hundred persons lost their lives.

June 15th, 1847.—Running of first steam train in Switzerland, between Zurich and Baden.

June 16th, 1798.—Storming of Sion by the French.

June 17th, 1405.—Battle of Stoss. Victory of Appenzell over the Austrian Duke Friedrich. In the narrow pass of the Letzimauer the retreating Austrian army was hemmed in and several hundred lost their lives.

June 18th, 1476.—Storming of Murten, which was repulsed by the besiegers, under the leadership of Adrian von Bubenberg.

June 19th, 1620.—Valtelline Massacre. "Armed masses of the people arose under the leadership of enthusiastic Protestant preachers, such as George Jenatsh, pastor at Scharans, a man twenty-two years of age; and at Tisis they set up a noisy criminal court to deal with the 'Spanish traitors.' The brothers Pompeius and Rudolf Planta, the leaders of the Spanish-Catholic party, were outlawed, and a price was set upon their heads. Even death sentences were passed; Rusca, arch-priest of the Valtelline, was put to death upon the rack, on the accusation of having handed over a Protestant pastor to the Inquisition; and a number of persons were heavily fined. Vainly did the Spanish faction endeavour to make a rejoinder by means of an armed rising and a criminal court in Chur; the other side proved to be the stronger...

"Consequently, a plan was matured for the forcible extirpation of the Protestants and for the shaking off of the Grisons rule. The knight Robustelli, a nephew of Rudolf Planta, was the leader of the conspiracy. He found zealous assistants among the principal families of the Valtelline, the Venosti, Guicciardi, Schenardi, etc., but above all among the clergy. The massacre began in Tirano at dawn on July 20th, 1620. To the sound of the tocsin and spurred on by the priests the fanatical population fell upon the Protestants. Men, women and children were slaughtered without mercy, even the Catholics who attempted to protest sharing their fate. From Tirano, Robustelli hastened down the valley, for fresh massacres. In all, 600 persons were slain."—Oechsl.

Tribunal in London (and *inter alia* President of the City Swiss Club). The objects of the Institute are given in the *Times* (May 28th) as follows:—

The Institute offers facilities for advanced study of international problems to students who have already been prepared by previous studies in law, history and political economy. Courses are also held for young students who have not matriculated at the university and who intend to take up international questions. Geneva is a particularly favourable centre for the observation of international institutions. With the help and direction of the institute students will be able to see and hear what elsewhere may only be gleaned from books, they will come into contact with people who are directly concerned with public affairs, and will be able to attend the annual assembly of the League of Nations and of its grand council, as well as most of the Council meetings of the League, the International Labour Conference, the meetings of the International Labour Organisation, and the frequent special international conferences, such as the Economic Conference of this year.

The personnel of the institute consists of a director, two professors and an assistant professor who will give twelve-monthly or six-monthly courses, allowing ample time to the students for personal study or for attending the university lectures. There is no intention of exhausting the whole teaching in one year or in a cycle of years. The aim will be rather for a student to study thoroughly some subject chosen with a view to elucidating some general problem, making as much use as possible of the documents and direct information available at the League of Nations.

During the coming year (1927-28) courses will be given on recent peace treaties and par-

ticularly on the Treaty of Versailles; present political problems and the League of Nations, diplomatic law, contemporary economic problems and the Economic Conference of 1927, international commerce and tariff barriers of the last 100 years. Students may be admitted to the courses if they hold a university degree or its equivalent, and may be granted a diploma after a year's study on writing a monograph of sufficient merit. To a student who has only attended for one term a certificate may be granted. It is intended eventually to grant doctors' degrees at the Geneva University on a thesis written at the institute.

The institute will have a library of indispensable books of reference and will arrange to provide books not to be found in the libraries of Geneva, if necessary, for special study. The first term will last from October 20th to March 22nd, and the second from after Easter to July 22nd.

#### An Unsatisfactory Competition!

The *Carpenter and Builder* (May 20th) bemoans the fate of the English architects whose plans in connection with the new League of Nations building have not found favour with the jury:—

Architects are, in truth, very complaisant individuals. The amount of time, energy and expense many of them are willing to devote to the offence of winning fame—and incidentally money—in architectural competitions, is pitiful. Of course, it may be that in most such instances the competitors are budding merely, and are wishful to keep their powers active whilst awaiting definite commissions. The new League of Nations Palace Competition has attracted thousands of competitors, and the net result is that not one of them has been successful in securing the desired commission to execute the work. And, alas! Italy, France, Sweden, Switzerland and Germany have been adjudged to be worthy of prizes, whilst poor England is entirely ignored. There is, be it understood, no suggestion herein of favouritism, for England was represented by one of her best architects on the jury of assessors. Twenty-seven competitors got something for their trouble, and the thousands—nothing.

#### The Movements of Swiss Glaciers.

From the *Shields Daily News* (May 28th):—

Some important observations were made last year on the Swiss alpine glaciers which are surveyed and measured year after year, by Dr. Mercanton, the Lausanne glaciologist, and a dozen other scientists.

First of all it was noted that the amount and depth of snow remaining on the Alps in August, 1926, were much greater than in the previous year. The winter of 1925-26 was abnormally warm, and snowfalls rather small, but the spring and summer of 1926 were uncommonly cold, snowfalls were frequent and abundant, and snow melted very little on the mountains, so that the snowfields were larger and deeper in August, 1926, than they were during the same period of the three previous years. The consequence was that a recurrence of glacier progression was recorded, but it is not yet certain whether this progression is only accidental and resulting from the meteorological conditions in 1926, or whether a period of general progression of the alpine glaciers has begun.

Out of 100 Swiss glaciers observed in 1926, 52 were advancing (19 in 1925), eight were at a standstill (11 in 1925), and 40 were retreating (69 in 1925). The Fiesch glacier advanced by 24ft., the Saleinax glacier by 12ft., the Scheissbach glacier by 96ft., the Zappart glacier by 33ft.; on the other hand, the Aletsch glacier retreated by 39ft., the Upper Grindelwald glacier by 30ft., and the Roseg glacier by 96ft.

Experiments were also made for measuring the depth of the ice in several glaciers by means of geophones such as those used during the war for detecting mining work on the front. These instruments registered the echo on the rock bed of the glacier of the bursting of explosives on the surface, and the results thus obtained were found to coincide with the measures obtained by means of the Somigliana formula which takes into account the superficial velocity of the glacier, its gradient and width. These experiments will be renewed this summer, as the number carried out in 1926 was too small to lead to a definite conclusion.

#### A Swiss Artist.

The following critique is taken from the *Times* (May 30th):—

Stylishness, with a tendency towards the "enigmatic" in expression, is what strikes us most in the portraits in oil and pastel, etchings and drypoints by Mr. F. Lenhart (Merano), a Swiss artist of Austrian descent, now on view at the Brook-street Art Galleries. "Lady with Green Eyes" trusts altogether too much to her eyes to inspire confidence in Mr. Lenhart's powers of drawing and construction, and the same is true of most of the other heads, but he is a capable painter and is to be commended for conceiving of the picture as a thing complete in

itself and not merely a section of painting jammed into a frame. His decorative use of lettering, for instance, gives a pleasing finish to his portraits. "Sir Henry Wood," in the act of conducting, is a somewhat idealised portrait of the musician, but the head is deftly painted as is that of the artist himself in "Self Portrait"—with the accessory, not unexpected from the enigmatic tendency of the artist, of a bronze Buddha—and there is charm of rhythm, as well as good painting of a silk gown, in "Lute Player," performing to her own reflection in an oval mirror. "A Mountain Chapel," with a dark red tower relieved upon a fan of ascending light, is a forcible landscape, and the landscape etchings have a decorative quality. But it is versatility and, again, stylishness, which impress us most in the work of Mr. Lenhart.

#### Gaol for Child Smokers.

Here is an example of reactionary legislation with which we can all agree. The report is taken from the *Daily Express* (May 26th):—

The Government of the canton of Obwalden has reintroduced an ancient law, passed eighty years ago and since obsolete, which prohibits persons of both sexes under eighteen years of age from smoking.

Penalty for the first offence is one week in prison, with a fine of £4, which is doubled for the second offence. Tobacconists, when in doubt, must ask the age of a customer, or they also are liable to a fine.

#### FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The difficulties under which the English railways are at present labouring are by no means a local phenomenon, as appears clearly from a recent monthly bulletin published by the Swiss Bank Corporation, in which the position of the Swiss Federal Railways is studied and analysed. Notwithstanding a considerable increase in traffic on the Swiss lines, results for 1926 fail to come up to those of the preceding year. Notwithstanding an increase of about a million in the number of passengers carried, receipts from the passenger traffic show a falling-off, having decreased from 139½ million francs in 1925 to less than 137½ millions in 1926. When, however, the 1926 figures are compared with those of the last pre-war year it becomes apparent at once what great development has taken place. In 1913 only 91 million passengers were carried, and receipts from the passenger traffic amounted to 84½ million francs. The increase of the receipts per person carried from 92 centimes in 1913 to Frs. 1.33 in 1926 is in fair proportion to the general rise in prices of all commodities since before the war. The reduction of revenue per passenger which has taken place since the record returns in 1921 is to be attributed in part to concessions which have been since allowed in fares, but also to a large extent to the tendency of travellers to utilise a lower class on the railways.

The volume of the goods traffic shows a slight increase against 1925, while it is considerably in excess of the figures of 1913. In the latter year the total tonnage carried was 14,614,781, and in 1926 it had increased to 16,804,716. The receipts from goods fell from 222 millions in 1925 to 215 millions in 1926, which revenue per ton transported fell from Frs. 13.53 to Frs. 12.79 over the same period. The falling-off of receipts in the last few years, which is to be attributed partly to reductions which the Railway authorities have made in their tariffs, the immediate and temporary result of which has been to cause a reduction of revenue until fresh business is attracted which will make up the deficit. At the same time the competition of motor transport is being keenly felt.

Expenditure, with a total of 266 millions, is about 10 millions lower in 1926 than in the preceding year, but still stands at a level 100 per cent. above that of 1913. The largest item of expenditure is on salaries, which use up roughly 80% of the total revenue, as compared with 70% before the war. This is due to the operation of laws concerning the 8-hour working day and cost-of-living bonus to be paid to the employees, and the authorities are considering means for obtaining concessions which will allow of a reduction in these heavy charges, and a scheme is proposed which should, within the next three years, permit of an economy of 6½ million francs under the heading of staff expenditure.

In view of the steady progress of the work of electrification on the Federal Railways' lines—more than half the total mileage is now electrified, and by the end of 1927, 65 per cent. should be completed—the expenditure on coal has decreased considerably. While in 1925 expenditure under this heading amounted to 19 million francs, it was only 14½ millions in 1926. On the other hand, the quantity of electric power consumed has gone up from 159 to 213 million kilowatt-hours, the cost increasing by only 400,000 frs. to Frs. 12,839,379. This is a very small increase in view of the fact that the tonnage transported by the electric service has gone up by one-third. This

saving is entirely due to the greatly improved use which can now be made of the existing generating facilities and is a phenomenon which will become intensified as a larger and larger percentage of all the lines become electrified.

The Profit and Loss Account of the Railways shows a net deficit of 9½ million francs, which compares with a surplus of about 1½ millions in 1925. The loss thus shown is not to be regarded as serious, since a small increase of traffic, say 3 per cent., would be sufficient to wipe it out, and the year 1927 has already shown prospects of being a more favourable one.

The bulletin points out, in conclusion, the difficulties with which the Railways are still faced, maintaining that any improvements in the general situation of the Railways must be effected from within the present organisation, and dismissing as entirely impracticable and undesirable the proposals for a return to private ownership which are, from time to time, put forward.

#### QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

	BONDS.	May 31	June 7
Confederation 3% 1903	... 8125	8050	
5% 1917, VIII. Mob. Ln.	10150	10125	
Federal Railways 3½% A-K	8432	8437	
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	10225	10250	
	SHARES.	Nom	May 31
		Fr.	June 7
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	707	707
Crédit Suisse	500	813	815
Union de Banques Suisses	500	700	705
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2412	2415
Fabrique Chimique et-dev. Sandoz	1000	3810	3813
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	2892	2895
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	567	567
C. F. Bally	1000	1312	1310
Nestle & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	758	700
Entreprises Suizer S.A.	1000	1055	1050
Comp. du Navire sur le Lac Léman	500	590	600
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco	100	115	121
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	735	737

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