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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The outlines of a far-reaching scheme to meet the acute crisis in the agricultural industry has been submitted by Federal Councillor Musy, the Finance Minister, to banking interests; it seeks to benefit in the first instance the small farmer in the mountain districts by affording relief in mortgage charges and generally creating facilities for financial assistance. A conference is to take place on Sept. 11th at Berne with representatives of financial houses in order to discuss particulars of this scheme.

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Considerable excitement has been caused in political circles of the canton Ticino by a new frontier incident. An Italian political refugee, Cesare Rossi, who under an assumed name was staying at an hotel in Lugano, was enticed by Italian secret police, with the help of an attractive woman accomplice, to take a motor trip; on the car nearing the frontier the victim became aware of the plot but his protests and shouts were, of course, of no avail. Having secured their quarry, some disguised Italian police or Fascists presented themselves at Rossi's hotel in Lugano and, by the application of a very simple ruse, obtained possession of his personal belongings and papers. It is stated that Cesare Rossi was one of the original four creators and leaders of Italian Fascism; he was involved in the disappearance of the Socialist Matteotti, in consequence of which he fell into disgrace. He managed to escape from Italy and settled down in Paris, whence he levelled attacks and accusations against the Mussolini régime. It is asserted that he was lured away from Paris to Lugano so as to facilitate his capture.

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Prof. Dr. Bernhard Duhm, a noted lecturer on theology at the Basle university, was knocked down by a motor-car just outside the Spalentor in Basle and died a few hours afterwards at the municipal hospital. Born in Friesland, he was called to the Basle University from Göttingen nearly forty years ago; he is the author of many important works on theology.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### "Saffa."

There is no English paper which during the last few weeks has not referred to this "All Woman" exhibition which was officially opened at Berne on August 25th by the President of Confederation and which continues till the end of this month. Though the feminine movement has never been so much to the front as in this country, the experiment has aroused a keen interest in England. Many professional ladies on this side are arranging their holidays so as to coincide with this exhibition; apart from the infant welfare stands the sections showing tapestry and pottery are of particular interest to this country. The following is taken from the *Daily News* (August 25th).

"For some time past the mystic word 'Saffa' has been appearing in the Swiss Press, and one gathered that it spelt big things to the feminine section of the community. The word, in fact, to the initiated, stands for Schweizerische Ausstellung für Frauen Arbeit, which, being interpreted, means Swiss Exhibition for Women's Work, and it stands for the result of two years' incessant effort on the part of all the numerous feminine associations in Switzerland.

Local exhibitions of women's work were held in Berne in 1924 and in Geneva and Basle in 1925, and, encouraged by the success of these, Swiss women decided to show what they could do in a national exhibition at Berne.

The result is the "Saffa," which opens its doors to-morrow.

The only woman architect in Switzerland has been responsible for the buildings, which cover an area of 100,000 square metres, and the committee is budgeting on a million Swiss francs (or £40,000) for the expenses. They have got together a big guarantee fund to which the Government has subscribed £6,000, but if the expected 80,000 people a day visit the exhibition during the five weeks of its existence this fund will not be called upon.

The intention of the exhibition is to demonstrate the economic and social importance of women's work. It is meant to interest public opinion in the education, professional activities and the social and philanthropic work of women. It will, in fact, reflect women's activities in every sphere, and to young girls at a loss to know what career to take up it will give useful guidance.

The exhibition is divided into 12 groups, in which domestic economy is placed first. Then come agriculture and gardening, arts and trades, fine arts, home work, industry, large and small (including machinery for facilitating women's work), commerce and the professions, science, literature, music, education, social work, hygiene and finally a retrospective section.

Berne will be *en fête* during the exhibition, and shop and café hours, for which in Berne the regulations are as the laws of the Medes and Persians, have been extended throughout the period. On the first two days there will be a procession through the town, in which 1,200 persons will take part, representing all the groups above enumerated, and including 600 Swiss costumes drawn from every valley in the country.

### Alpine Accidents.

The climbing season this year has been characterised by daring and hazardous ascents successfully effected and by the inevitable number of fatal accidents. The climbers seem to return every year in increasing numbers, imbued with a large dose of self-confidence which in the thrill of adventure ignores the heavy risks. The tragedies are practically all due to the fact that insufficiently experienced climbers set out without guides and, by not divulging the particular route of their ascent, render remote any chances of timely rescue by the very guides they despise. To counteract such recurrences a scheme is now under consideration which forces tourists when starting on their climbs to fill in a prescribed form stating, apart from personal particulars, the exact route they propose to follow. It has been felt that something must be done as these accidents are giving rise to comment which, unfortunately, discredits our guides and which suggest that their exorbitant fees prevent the average climber from making use of their services. The *Daily Telegraph* official correspondent, who ought to know better but who always displays a strange desire to belittle anything Swiss—the Italian Government has discovered a very drastic remedy in dealing with such scribes—sent a long diatribe about our guides to his paper. We refrain from reproducing it, but all the same we must take our hats off to our great contemporary for putting the matter right again by publishing in the subsequent issue of August 21st the following rejoinder from Lt.-Col. Graham S. Hutchison which speaks for itself.

"I remember reading a statement in *The Daily Telegraph* to the effect that exorbitant charges were made by the Swiss guides. As one who has been accustomed for quite a number of years now to employ the services of these guides, and whose father, as one of the earliest members, of the Alpine Club, has similarly made use of them, I desire to correct the impression which such a statement may make.

In my own experience the charges are exceedingly reasonable and within the reach of anyone or any party which desires to make an ascent. The following matters should be considered. The Swiss guide is employed only during a short season of about three months in the summer. The growing popularity of ski-ing finds for them an additional two or three months' employment, six months throughout the year.

During this six months their employment is not regular; they have to keep themselves to a high standard of training. They are obliged to live regular and abstemious lives. Their occupation requires qualities not only of fine physique, but of high courage and good judgment. They are obliged to pass strict tests before they are permitted to act as guides, which has entailed apprenticeship without remuneration, or for small pay as porters. They undergo considerable risks every time they make an ascent, not alone in respect of their own self-preservation, but chiefly due to the fact that they may be conducting persons or parties largely unskilled in mountaineering, who are not familiar with the hazards of crossing a crevassed glacier and who do not understand the technique of rock climbing. A fall from any member of the guide's party, or loss of nerve, to say nothing of sudden storms, ava-

lanches, rock-falls, may imperil the life of the guide, and in any case demands a steady head, good judgment, speed in decision, and all the qualities of good leadership.

The remuneration is not high for such service. For example, the ascent of the Matterhorn, on which many lives have been lost, requiring two guides, will cost about £15, and will occupy the guides' time in preparation and in the actual ascent for about a week. Bad weather may extend the period. To the average party this would work out at about £5 per head, and each guide would receive, say, £8. This is not excessive remuneration for highly skilled labour, while compared with that of professional footballers and boxers, whose employment is regular, not dependent upon weather, and who incur small risks to limb and nothing to life, the charge is small indeed. When I led a party of eighteen Boy Scouts up the Zermatt Breithorn, occupying two days and imposing considerable responsibilities on the guide, he was such a sportsman that he entered into the spirit of the adventure and his inclusive charge was £2.

Both my father before me and I always found the Swiss guides to be men of fine quality who take as much pride in their work as any body of men anywhere. They are more interested in achievement than in monetary gain, and I have never experienced or heard of an exorbitant charge.

It is true that in certain popular climbing centres, now considerably crowded with American travellers, what might appear to be high charges have been made by the guides leading certain expeditions. But the circumstances must be taken into consideration. I witnessed, for example, in 1925 a party set out to scale the Matterhorn, of which the principal was an enterprising American gentleman, who was determined to reach the top of the Matterhorn. He was quite unfitted for the task, and the guides responsible had to assist him in every yard of part of the ascent, placing his feet, pushing from behind, and pulling with the rope. It was to the credit of both the American, and especially his guides, that his enterprise was crowned with success, but as in other circumstances, such, for example, as millionaires flying the Atlantic, he paid higher than the ordinary commercial rates, and with justice.

The British climber, man or woman, will be met with no exorbitant charges, and will find in the Swiss guides, as I have done, a body of gentlemen and sportsmen, professionally engaged in a sport which almost alone remains the only one uncommercialised, and in which with them commercial gain is a consideration second to achievement.

### The League and Geneva.

The least differences of opinion between League officials and cantonal or Federal authorities automatically releases in certain quarters the now stereotyped outcry of removing the seat of the League to some other city. Most of the provincial papers as well as the *Sunday Times* came out with headlines of "League may leave Switzerland." The fact is that the erection of the new League wireless station in Geneva has raised a few interesting points as to the sovereignty over League property (especially the ground it stands on) in the event of War. One paper—*Leeds Mercury* (Aug. 27th)—says that Switzerland must make a sacrifice for the sake of keeping the headquarters of the League. No sane person will take these vapourings seriously, and *The Times*, in the following long article published on August 29th, gives chapter and verse why the present status is not likely to be changed.

"It is well known that ever since President Wilson, impressed by the history of Geneva and confirmed in his views by the advice of Colonel House, established the headquarters of the League in Geneva there have been movements afoot to obtain its removal to other places. Various, not altogether convincing, reasons have been put forward for the change, but experience, gained principally from the holding of conferences in other cities, has shown that a place has yet to be discovered which is better suited for uninterrupted work on the part of the permanent officials, or for those intimate discussions among statesmen which have proved so valuable in helping forward the League's ideals. The so-called 'Geneva atmosphere' has undoubtedly among its qualities that peculiar respect for the privacy of its guests which comes from centuries of hospitality to leaders of thought.

Many private institutions have long been seeking definite evidence that the League is to