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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The Socialist Paul Gruber (Neuchâtel) has been elected vice-president of the National Council by a small majority, thanks chiefly to the support of members belonging to other parties.

Nat. Coun. Tschudi (Glaris) and 35 co-signatories have deposited a motion inviting the Federal Council to submit definite proposals for the alteration of certain articles in our Constitution with a view to prolonging the life of the Swiss Parliament from three to four years.

During the discussion of the military estimates, which are slightly higher this year, the Socialist and Communist members made their usual proposal of suppressing this department altogether.

In the Federal budget for 1929 an amount of Frs. 130,000 is included for the succour of indigent Swiss still residing in Russia; Nat. Coun. Gruber suggested that the lot of these unfortunate ones should receive the attention of the League of Nations.

A lively debate on Fascist propaganda took place in the Grosser Rat of Schaffhausen. The Communist member Bringold had accused a local Italian as a Fascist spy, upon which the latter asked to have the Parliamentary immunity of the councillor removed; the Council, however, declined to accede to this request.

The collection made in Switzerland and abroad on the occasion of the 1st of August celebrations brought in a record sum of nearly Frs. 380,000; the money is being applied to assisting old people.

The heavy snowfall has entirely cut off the village of Gadman, near Meiringen in the Bernese Oberland; telephonie communication is interrupted, and the danger of avalanches renders access extremely hazardous.

A well-known Neuchâtel notary, M. Charles Guinand, has been placed under arrest on a charge of misappropriating funds entrusted to him; the amount involved is said to be about Frs. 200,000.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

### Un arrêté qui intéresse les Suisses à l'étranger.

Le Conseil fédéral a pris un arrêté concernant l'obligation, pour les militaires à l'étranger, de rejoindre leur corps en cas de mobilisation de l'armée. Cet arrêté dit notamment :

Lorsque l'armée est mise sur pied, doivent rejoindre leur corps les officiers, sous-officiers, appartenant et soldats incorporés dans les états-majors et les unités de l'élite et de la landwehr qui sont en congé dans les pays ci-après :

Europe : tous les Etats d'Europe, y compris les îles européennes.

Asie : Turquie, Syrie et Palestine, ainsi que les îles asiatiques de la Méditerranée.

Afrique : Egypte, Tripolitaine, Tunisie, Algérie et Maroc.

Amérique : Etats-Unis d'Amérique et Canada.

Les militaires non touchés par les dispositions ci-dessus ne se présentent que sur instructions particulières.

Lorsqu'une partie de l'armée est mise sur pied, seuls doivent rejoindre, à moins que l'arrêté de mise sur pied n'en dispose autrement, les officiers et sous-officiers qui appartiennent aux états-majors et aux unités de l'élite et de la landwehr mobilisées et habitant les Etats voisins, sans les colonies ni les protectorats, savoir : l'Allemagne, la France, l'Italie, l'Autriche et la principauté de Liechtenstein.

Les militaires à l'étranger sans congé sont en toutes circonstances tenus de se présenter dès que leur corps est mis sur pied.

Les militaires tenus de se présenter en vertu des dispositions ci-dessus doivent, après la publication de l'arrêté de mise sur pied, se rendre immédiatement au lieu de mobilisation de leur régiment et, de là, sur la place de rassemblement du corps de leur état-major ou unité.

Les légations et consulats suisses sont autorisés à avancer les frais de voyage nécessaires aux militaires indigents rejoignant leur corps. Les familles

des militaires à l'étranger tenus de rejoindre leur corps ont droit aux secours prévus aux articles 22 à 26 de l'organisation militaire.

Les militaires empêchés pour des raisons majeures de rejoindre leur corps doivent le faire savoir sans tarder à la légation ou au consulat en produisant les pièces justificatives nécessaires (certificat médical, etc.).

La légation ou le consulat prononce provisoirement sur le cas, sous réserve de la décision définitive de l'autorité compétente en Suisse.

—*La Tribune de Genève.*

### Die Roman eines Schweizer Autors verfilmt.

John Knittels, des Baslers, grosser Roman "Der Weg durch die Nacht," der bereits in deutscher, schwedischer, englischer und amerikanischer Ausgabe vorliegt, ist von der deutschen Filmgesellschaft "Ufa" zur Verfilmung erworben worden und wird im Laufe dieses Winters gedreht. Von der deutschen Ausgabe erscheint 1929 eine neue Auflage (Verlag Orell Füssli, Zürich).

—*Nat. Zeitung.*

### Auszeichnung von Schweizer Architekten durch die Regierung Argentiniens.

—Wir haben die Genugtuung, unter den für ihre Tätigkeit beim Bau des neuen Post- und Telegraphengebäudes in Buenos-Aires lobend erwähnten Architekten die Namen zweier Landsleute, der Herren Jean Baptiste Ballié, ehemaliger Studierender an der Eidgenössischen Technischen Hochschule in Zürich und Théo Ferrier aus Neuchâtel zu finden.

—*Nat. Zeitung.*

Le Village Suisse à Paris est un pittoresque marché permanent.—Tout près de l'Ecole Militaire viennent de s'ouvrir les nouveaux stands, sorte de foire de l'habillement : le Village Suisse.

Depuis des années déjà, il fonctionnait, mais il n'avait pas reçu de consécration officielle. Dans un magasin de chapeaux de dames, parmi les cloches et les capelines aux couleurs tendres, des gens graves sablent le champagne en portant un toast à la prospérité du village et souhaitant qu'il devienne une ville. C'est un véritable bazar oriental.

Aux étalages, des vestons voyants, des mannequins de femmes, des chaussures, de la lingerie, des corsets. Oui, des corsets, des vrais, de ceux que l'on mettait avant la guerre.

Et, à tous les stands, ce sont de longs choix, des marchandages sans fin.

—*Democrate, Délémont.*

Nos légations et ce qu'elles coûtent.—La Suisse possède, à l'heure actuelle, 16 légations dont une, celle de Petrograd, n'est plus occupée depuis 1918. D'après le budget pour 1929, les traitements de nos 15 ministres atteignent au total 625,000 fr. A cela s'ajoutent les traitements et les indemnités pour le personnel de nos légations, soit, au total 1,514,675 fr. L'effectif du personnel de nos légations compte 170 personnes en chiffre rond : en tête vient la légation de Paris avec 28 personnes, suivie de celle de Londres avec 20 personnes, Berlin (19), Washington (12), et Rome (11 personnes). Les légations de Vienne, Buenos-Aires et Madrid occupent chacune 9 personnes, Varsovie et Bruxelles 8, Athènes et Prague 6, Bucarest, Belgrade et Rio-de-Janeiro 5, Tokio 4, La Haye et Stockholm 3.

Les indemnités de voyages, de résidence, etc., de notre personnel diplomatique sont budgétées à 470,000 fr.; un poste de 311,000 fr. est prévu pour la location des immeubles et des locaux qui abritent les divers services de nos légations, le chauffage, l'éclairage et l'entretien des bureaux. En outre, 190,000 fr. sont prévus pour les dépenses résultant de l'achat de mobilier frais de bureau divers, affranchisements postaux et télégrammes. Au total, la Confédération dépense, en chiffre rond, 3,1 millions pour notre représentation diplomatique à l'étranger. D'autre part, 2,3 millions son prévus pour notre service consulaire, qui comprend au total 220 personnes; ainsi, les dépenses totales de nos services diplomatiques et consulaires s'élèvent à 5,4 millions de francs.

—*Democrate, Délémont.*

Den 104 Geburtstag feiert am 6. Dezember Niklaus Rohner in Wangs, im St. Galler Oberland. Der ehrwürdige Greis, dessen wohlgetroffenes Bildnis vor uns liegt, ist körperlich und geistig noch in erfreulich gutem Zustand. Sein Interesse an dem, was auf dieser Welt vor sich geht, ist noch lebendig, denn er liest die Zeitung ohne Brille und klopft mit Vorliebe allabendlich ein gähnliches Jässchen. Vor wenigen Jahren starben zwei Brüder von Rohner, die das hohe Alter von

92 und 95 Jahren erreichten. Eine zweite Photographie zeigt Papa Rohner mit seinem 73jährigen Sohn, Herrn Kaplan Rohner in Wangs. Dem ehrwürdigen Patriarchen wünschen alle, die von ihm hören, einen frohen 104. Geburtstag.

—*Glärner Nachrichten.*

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### Architecture in Switzerland.

Modern tendencies in building operations in Switzerland have recently enjoyed a good deal of notice in the technical papers of this country. The references are all of an appreciative nature and are generally accompanied by corresponding illustrations. We reproduce the letterpress of an article which appeared in the *Architect and Building News* (Nov. 16th) :—

"The realisation that Switzerland is developing an interesting and characteristic phase of the modern movement comes to many people in this country with something of a shock. There are even people who feel a little hurt at the idea that a country which is so deservedly connected with chalets, and winter sports, and honey for breakfast, should have architectural pretensions besides. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Switzerland has always been one of the places which we could go to for a winter or even a summer holiday with the pleasing certainty that here, at any rate, was one country where the sketch-book and the measuring-rod were not required. No one expected even the much harassed architectural school student to bring back a neat little sheaf of measured notes from Mürren or Andermatt, or even from Geneva or Lausanne. In Switzerland there were old buildings, of course, but not the sort of building which required sketching; and as for modern work, it had no reputation in England at all. So Switzerland was the ideal place for the architect who was trying to escape from himself. Mountains and lakes which looked amazingly like the picture postcards made one forget to worry about the connection between design and function, and one could cease to argue about the rival claims of the traditional and the modern.

Gradually, however, this pleasant state of affairs is coming to an end. The almost sugary picturesqueness of Lucerne, the eighteenth century affability of Berne, the bourgeois opulence of Geneva and Lausanne, are beginning to be disturbed by architectural innovations. Buildings are arising which, following as they do upon a period of many years of architectural passivity, make an almost unfeeling claim to serious consideration. It is as if some poor relation, hitherto regarded as decently humble and resigned to mediocrity, suddenly disturbed the family sense of fitness by revealing himself as a coming painter.

The real truth is, of course, that the present day signs of revival in Swiss architecture are only the logical outcome of the existence in Switzerland of an architectural tradition which is much finer than is generally realised. The fact that the country has been more or less of a playground, a European recreation centre, has blinded the average traveller to its architectural attractions. The big centres, of French Switzerland particularly, with their hotels and villas and shops, reveal comparatively little of interest from the modern standpoint. But in the country, and the smaller towns, more especially in German Switzerland, it is a different story. A circular journey, say, from Basle to Lausanne, Geneva, Berne, Lucerne, and Zurich, reveals the existence of a series of trim and gay small towns and villages, linked by isolated farms and cottages, abounding with delightful works which is based on a characteristically Swiss tradition; work which, of course, is comparable to that of Germany, the Tyrol, or northernmost Italy, but which is yet sufficiently different to be considered as entirely indigenous. Not only are these Swiss buildings straightforward and unaffected: they are, in addition, full of inspiration for a natural development into a style which will be suitable to meet the demands of the present day.

Pleasant proportions, an easy and ample system of fenestration, a very extensive use of colour, and in some districts the use of the balcony as an integral feature of the design, are characteristics which form an admirable basis for a modern treatment. And a further feature of traditional Swiss work, particularly attractive from a modern standpoint, is the neatness of arrangement of such extraneous features as applied signs, lettering, or the plaques used for adver-

tisement. These are items which throughout all ages have been recognised as necessary, and which in old work were often pleasantly incorporated in the general design; to-day, however, in spite of the enormous development of advertising, the growing importance to business of the clear and attractive label, little or no thought is given to their possibilities as an agreeable element in the design or, at least, to their attractive arrangement when, as must sometimes inevitably happen, they are added to a building as an afterthought.

Perhaps it may appear far-fetched to suggest that the street frontages of a small Swiss town may be taken as an example of what may be done by a talent for neat and orderly arrangement of elements which in themselves are not particularly attractive, but the fact remains that amongst the many impressions remaining from a tour of Switzerland, that of the taste and skill displayed in the disposal of signs and advertisements is not the least important. This question, which may be considered by some as a side issue, is nevertheless of considerable interest to us at this present juncture, when the exhibition now being held at the Architectural Association reveals the effort which is being made to cope with the ugliness and disorder arising from commercial exploitation which is not governed, as in Switzerland, by a natural desire to appeal to the mind by first appealing the eye.

While the smaller Swiss towns have, in the main, retained their old-world atmosphere, the larger centres have suffered, during the past thirty or forty years, from the effects of the very uninspiring architectural ideals which have governed during this period.

With the exception, perhaps, of Semper, there have been few important influences at work, and new buildings on a large scale have followed the general trend of a gradual debasement from models based on either German or French eighteenth century models. In both German and French Switzerland there are signs of the repercussion of the so-called Art-Nouveau. The more extreme work of France in this manner finds a very pale echo in Geneva and Lausanne, blended with a flavour of Munich as we approach Lucerne. In Zurich the eighteenth century Swiss tradition, so pleasantly dominating at Berne, found a few adherents in modern shops, offices, apartment buildings and hotels. But the far more general trend was towards a style based on contemporary central European work, and echoes of Germany and Austria are considerably in evidence.

The resultant buildings are not unpleasing. The mass is usually well composed, with a tendency to "lumpishness." Detail, however, is coarse, and throughout these designs is felt the touch of the heavy hand. The colour and gaiety of paint and plaster have been largely banished, and replaced by stone or drab-toned stucco. The effect is Teutonic; but this German influence is dated, and has little to do with the experiments which have been going on in Central Europe between the period of the Art-Nouveau and the present day.

Within the last few years, however, there have been notable evidences that a new epoch in Swiss architecture is approaching. It is difficult to distinguish the influences behind the movement, for at present there is not sufficient uniformity of type to suggest any one definite source. Undoubtedly Karl Moer, whose Kunstmuseum in Zurich was prophetic of present tendencies, must be counted as a leader, and his Church of St. Antoine at Basle is still, perhaps, the most "advanced" building in Switzerland, if we except such individualistic essays as the Goetheum at Dornach. Most certainly, also, Le Corbusier has affected Swiss architects to a marked degree, possibly more through his writings than his actual buildings. But it must be remembered that Le Corbusier has several works to his credit in Switzerland; and there are a few new buildings by other architects which bear the direct impress of his manner.

On the whole, it may be said that the modern movement in Switzerland is still very much in the formative stage.

In the following week's issue (Nov. 23rd) of the same publication the Basle Fair Building, Zurich railway stations and other modern structures receive special consideration. A reproduction of this article without the accompanying illustrations would lose much of its charm but we warmly recommend those of our readers who are interested in this subject to procure the two numbers referred to of the *Architect and Building News*.

#### The "Kursaal" Initiative.

The comments which appeared in the English Press on this subject rather welcome the return of the gambling tables as it is taken as a concession to the tourist. People on holiday, especially if they hail from a country where betting is a national pastime, like to indulge in a little gamble. We reproduce an article from *The Times* (Dec. 2nd), which deals with the antecedents of the present measure.

"In the referendum to-day the proposal to amend the law so as to permit public gambling was carried by 290,000 votes to 269,000.

Gambling was authorised in Switzerland until 1874, when its suppression was demanded in consequence of various scandals. An article was then introduced in the Constitution to the effect that no new gambling houses should be opened, and that the existing ones should be closed by December 31st, 1877. Until 1887 the Constitution was fully respected, but after that date certain games, such as "petits chevaux," "chemin de fer" and "bottle" were authorised, and the number of kursaals and gambling halls increased to such an extent that the Federal Council was compelled to make special rules for their administration, although they were, in fact, illegal according to the Constitution.

The anomalous legal position, as well as a movement of opinion, arising out of scandals in a few gambling houses and backed by numerous educational institutions, resulted in the definite suppression of all public gambling houses, with regulations to prevent their re-opening in another form. The existing gambling houses were allowed to carry on for a few years, but all of them were closed at the end of 1926. Even before that time, however, a campaign had been begun for the reintroduction of gambling, on the ground that its suppression was damaging to the hotel and tourist industries.

The new article in the Constitution, which has now been accepted by the electorate, allows the Cantons to suppress or authorise gambling. Stakes, however, are not to be more than two francs, and one-quarter of the profits is to be handed over to the Federal Treasury for use in helping the victims of catastrophes or in subsidising charitable works."

The Geneva correspondent of the *Morning Post* (Dec. 5th) rightly points out that Switzerland is not going to emulate Monte Carlo and that the croupiers are not likely to scoop in much cash from the *petit bourgeois* and working classes of our country.

"The view that Switzerland is about to become a nursery of a series of Monte Carlos, as the result of the week-end plebiscite favouring the reintroduction of gaming tables, is quite erroneous, though widespread.

Even the Swiss people themselves have hazy notions concerning the significance of the referendum. M. H. P. Pelvarin, Director of the Geneva Casino, told me to-day that he had been besieged by telephone inquiries since Sunday, wanting to know what day gambling will start.

It will surprise many people to learn that there is still a long way to go before gaming tables will be set up. It is even possible they will never be re-established.

The referendum was but the lever setting in motion complicated legislative and administrative machinery. The favourable result of the referendum is equivalent to a request to the Federal Government to give authorisation to the Cantonal governments to authorise gambling in their respective Cantons.

It will probably be two or three months before the Federal Government completes the first step. The Cantonal governments, therupon, have power to permit or prohibit gaming. This decision rests largely on wirepulling within the political coalitions. Only after the Cantonal governments have given general permission, and stated what forms of gambling will be allowed, will individual applications to set up tables be considered.

Altogether about six months will be taken up before playing is inaugurated. Heavy gaming in any case is ruled out. The highest stake—two francs—is no temptation to habitual plungers, who are admittedly not wanted here. Fears that crowds of the working classes will be enticed to the casinos are unfounded, for a subtle supervision will virtually restrict their entry into the kuraals.

"La boule," which is popular in France, will probably be the only play permitted by the Cantonal governments, who also have the right to determine what establishments will be granted permission to run the tables. It is believed that permission will be restricted to casinos, to the exclusion of hotels.

It is obvious, too, that it is not going to be a gold mine for proprietors, for several bodies will require a slice from the cake. The Federal authorities have the first bite of a full quarter of the gross takings, of which 15 per cent will be applied to charitable purposes. The Cantonal republics want 15 per cent; the municipal authorities, less greedy, ask but 10 per cent."

We also quote the *Manchester Guardian* (Dec. 4th) which elaborates on the arguments put forward by the opponents of the measure.

"After deciding eight years ago that all games of chance should be prohibited in Switzerland, even in the kuraals, the Swiss people resolved in a referendum held yesterday, by 290,000 against 270,000, that the Cantonal governments may in future allow such games if these are considered necessary for the maintenance of the tourist traffic and are conducted under strict guarantees for the public interest."

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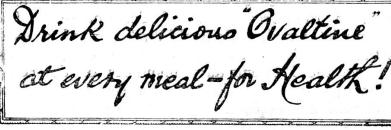
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Advocates of the new law asserted that the kusaaal, especially those of Lucerne, Interlaken; Montreux, Geneva and Berne, cannot offer a sufficiently high standard of musical and theatrical entertainment to tourists without the aid of about half a million Swiss francs which they hope to gain from the gambling tables. The opponents of the measure argued that the continuous increase in the number of foreign visitors during the last few years has shown that no artificial attractions are necessary to entice tourists to Switzerland. If better musical and theatrical entertainments are needed the wealthy hotel industry should subsidise them. In no case, however, should Switzerland return to her former practice of exploiting her foreign guests in the kusaaal. There was a possibility, also, that the provision of facilities for games of chance in the kusaaal might inculcate a passion for the games upon the Swiss population itself.

About 50 per cent. of the population voted yesterday in the referendum. Considerations of material welfare connected with the tourist traffic which is one of the main sources of Swiss prosperity, have defeated the courageous resistance of those who pleaded in favour of safeguarding public morality."

#### FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

An extraordinary General Meeting of Shareholders of the Swiss Bank Corporation is to be held in Basle on the 19th of the present month for the purpose of electing a new member to the Board of Directors in place of Mr. Leopold Dubois, the Bank's late Chairman. The necessity for calling a special meeting at this time for this purpose is explained by the fact that the gentleman who has been selected to succeed Mr. Dubois is not at the moment a director of the Corporation, and his election to the Board is therefore an essential preliminary to his appointment to his new office. Dr. Max Staehelin, upon whom the choice of the Board has fallen, is by no means a stranger to the Bank. For many years past he has functioned as Managing Director of the Société Fiduciaire Suisse, and as such has always been in close touch with the Bank. He has, moreover, been a director of the "Valeurs d'Électricité," and was appointed a few weeks ago to succeed Mr. Dubois in his position of Chairman of this concern. His choice for the post of Chairman of the Bank will be greeted with special satisfaction in Basle, where he is already a well-known figure, and the consensus of opinion seems to be that Dr. Staehelin is admirably suited to the work which is now before him.

Born in the year 1880 in Basle, Dr. Staehelin after visiting the schools in his native place and spending the earlier part of his University career in Pale, passed on to Berlin, Tübingen and Paris, taking his degree as Doctor of Law in Basle in 1902.

In 1907 after some practical experience as a lawyer he was made a manager of the Société Fiduciaire. In 1910 he became Managing Director of this concern. As a practical lawyer and an expert of the highest order in everything connected with the Trustee business, Dr. Staehelin has made a name for himself not only in Basle but throughout Switzerland, and his eminence in his profession has already caused him to be called to occupy public offices such as membership of the Court of Appeal and of the governing body of the Basle Chamber of Commerce.

#### QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES

	BONDS.	Dec. 3	Dec. 11
Confederation 3% 1903 .....	£	82.00	82.50
5% 1917. VIII Mob Ln	101.75	101.80	
Federal Railways 3½% A—K .....	87.45	87.05	
1924 IV Elect. Ln.	102.00	101.85	
SHARES.	Nom.	Dec. 3	Dec. 11
Swiss Bank Corporation .....	£	500	857
Crédit Suisse .....	£	500	977
Union de Banques Suisses .....	£	500	765
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	3315	3477
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	5320	5337
Soc. Ind. pour la Sérappe .....	1000	4287	4330
S.A. Brown Boveri .....	350	589	588
C. F. Bally .....	1000	1497	1500
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mfg. Co.	200	937	930
Entreprises Stizer S.A. .....	1000	1220	1210
Comp. de Navire à la Lac Léman	500	515	520
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco .....	100	335	335
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon .....	500	805	805

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*The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by Correspondents and cannot publish anonymous articles, unless accompanied by the writer's name and address, as evidence of good faith.*

Chers Concitoyens,

Il est encore temps d'envoyer à l'Eglise, 79, Endell Street, W.C.2, tous les habits usages, souliers, comestibles, jouets, etc., que vous soudez à destiner aux fêtes de Noël de cette année. Les besoins sont grands, il y a bien une centaine de familles auxquelles nous voulons envoyer des paquets et tout peut servir. Une phalange de bonnes volontés, venues de divers côtés, se concentrent à Endell Street pour y faire les paquets. Vos dons en nature seront donc très bienvenus encore Lundi et vos dons en espèces, à mon nom en tout temps! Un grand merci d'avance. — Votre nom en tout temps! —

R. HOFFMANN-DÉ VISMÉ.

#### THREE "ALPINE" SPEECHES BY THE SWISS MINISTER.

We have secured the tenor of the speeches which our Minister has lately delivered at the Banquets of three different London Alpine Societies and we are sure they will interest our readers.

The one given below was delivered on November 28th at the Dinner of the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club.

The Swiss Minister expressed his thanks for the kind words said by Mr. Morris about Switzerland and her people and was happy to see from the cordiality with which the toast had been received that there is no decrease in the popularity of the Swiss Alps amongst British mountaineers. He said he was greatly touched by the reception given to him personally, this all the more as he would soon have been a guest of the Association for a whole decade, and, while it is said that one may look upon the face of the Jungfrau, of the Münch and of the Eiger for years without ever getting tired of the view, no such statement had ever been made, to his knowledge, about the face of the Swiss Minister! (Laughter).

Mr. Morris had spoken with emphasis of difficulties arisen on our southern frontier in consequence of strict measures of control applied by our southern neighbours. If he, the Swiss Minister, might make a few remarks on this point, he would like to say that a few days ago he had the pleasure of meeting an old and distinguished member of the British Alpine Club who told him that during the 60 years of successive visits to Switzerland, in the course of which he made innumerable ascents, he had never had any bother or unpleasantness either with his companions, the Swiss people or the Swiss authorities. This was no doubt the reason why he looked to-day twenty years younger than his age. The very thing to keep young was to avoid bother with authorities. Nothing takes it out of one like a row with officials. He (the Swiss Minister) ought to know something about that, as he was an official himself (Laughter). Whenever he had a row with a customer he would see to it that the latter suffered mentally and bodily as much as circumstances will allow (Laughter). This was the way to keep up the respect of the Authorities. His friend must have been a remarkable man, though somewhat of a disappointment to gendarmes and douaniers! (Laughter). But he spoke only of Switzerland and intimated that as soon as he went over the southern frontier the situation changed. He (the Swiss Minister) had, in fact, received several letters from British mountaineers, amongst which was one from Mr. Morris himself, complaining about the rerudescence of frontier formalities in the immediate neighbourhood of our southern border interfering with the liberty of movement of mountain climbers. These letters stated that it is bound to cause you inconvenience when you are asked for your passport and a special permit by a uniformed being at the moment when you inadvertently hang over the wrong side of a precipice! (Laughter). They suggested that he should use his full diplomatic influence and personal prestige to stop that. So he did—as he always did when he could be agreeable to English friends—but his diplomatic influence and his personal prestige stopped nothing! (Laughter).

The Swiss Minister continued: "But let me tell you that, although our southern frontier is at times closely watched and eagerly controlled, this does not mean that we are not on the best of terms with our Italian friends. We love them and they love us; so that is all right. It does not mean, either, that Alpine climbers—who are naturally mostly English—and when I say English, I mean, of course, Welsh—are doubtful or suspect individuals. It means something quite different...but I do not know what."

The best proof of the cordiality existing for instance between the Swiss and Italian authorities, in spite of a one-sided display of stamps and permits, was the way in which the officials on both sides worked hand in hand. The Swiss Minister recalled a story, told him by a friend with whom he stayed over the week-end. This man, an officer in the Guards, wished to rush on important business from Geneva to Milan, where the Carnival was in full swing! (Laughter). At Domodossola it was pointed out to him that with that such passport and papers as he had there could be no question of his entering Italy. He argued for some time in a language which he thought might be something like Italian and, after a while, it dawned on him that his passport had run out three or four years ago, a fact of which he himself, as well as all those who had handled it in at least five countries, had so far remained unaware. Eventually he (the Englishman) was handed over to two Swiss gendarmes to be taken back to Brig, and on their arrival the gendarmes suggested that the best place to discuss the situation would be the Puflet de la Gare. The discussion lasted as long as two bottles of Wallizer—the Englishman wily poising as a teetotaller—and after that the two Swiss gendarmes indicated to him the ways and means to get safely to Milan that night, which he did! (Laughter).

\*The President of the Association, General Bruce, who was in the Chair, is a Welshman.

The Swiss Minister was glad to say that the British self-control and compromise came out at their best at such irritating incidents, and that his English friends do not let such trifles prevent them from enjoying their holiday in the Alps. Englishmen had obviously better things to think about than the mere renewal of a passport! (Laughter).

Also, the Swiss were tiring in their efforts to procure entertainment and enjoyment for the British visitors. Motor-cars were now allowed all over the country; even on mountain passes of the most dangerous kind and, if you were lucky, you could get the fun of being pushed over the mountainside into the torrent below by one of the specially constructed official autocars!

Another new diversion seemed to be the wolf-hunt. A friend told him that last winter, at Arosa, he went out several times to hunt this animal; when excited peasants came to announce its presence in the woods nearby! This friend seemed to be a passionate wolf-hunter, for he told him—speaking French by courtesy: "J'aimé beaucoup la chasse du loup, ou le loup tous vous." C'est très excitant. Ou vous touez le loup, ou le loup toue vous." In his case, however, neither of the two alternatives happened, for there was no wolf.

The Swiss Minister concluded by saying that, while the English Guests were taking their holidays in Switzerland, they might be sure that their comfort and their enjoyment would always be the principal preoccupation of the Swiss Confederation. (Cheers).

(The remaining speeches of this series will be given next week.)

#### VIOLETTE BROWNE.

##### THE ARTIST.

To Violette Browne I make the *amende honorable*. Some three years ago I heard her and thought that she would, as the American express it, "stay put." I was so confused by the fact that a pupil of Maria Phillipi could be Violette Browne, that I failed to see what Violette Browne was!

Her performance at the Wigmore Hall last night opened my eyes. Miss Browne has made enormous progress in her art. The voice is bigger; the range, especially in the higher register, is wider, and the control more sure. She has added coloratura achievements, and at the end of a delightful evening (if I may venture a pun) her voice was riding the high C's with ease. The old charm of manner was there, only increasingly; the same care in the choice of a programme that is to be the vehicle of these charms. Of her concert presence I will not trust myself to write, lest I be accused of being over-influenced by it. But so must the young Hempel have looked, and for those readers who spent the evening at a cinema—well, Hollywood could not have offered a sight so pleasant!

I would now describe Miss Browne as an English singer, in style and outlook—though she is, of course, reinforced by the power of being able to sing French that really is French. She is a mistress of the gossamer effect; she knows exactly what she can do, and she knows exactly the sort of programme to suit her. The result is that I would rather go to her concerts than to those of any other lighter English soprano I know of. A.G.

#### SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

##### EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

In connection with the scholastic programme the following lectures were given by the students during last week:—

Fritz Voser, Wohlen: "Spain." H. Vetter, Zurich: "Street Noises." K. Schlaepfer, St. Gall: "The World's Degeneration." W. Schaad, Biel-Beris: "The Manufacture of Paper." M. Vogler, Lucerne: "The Colour Question of Races." R. Lafont: "Degersheim: London's History and Development." M. Biedermann, Berne: "Fascism." J. Frischknecht, Waldstatt (Appenzell): "Original Customs in One Country." E. F. Zweifel, Glarus: "International Relations in Sport." R. Lützemann, Basle: "Superstition." A. Wehinger, Burgdorf: "Thoughts on Internationalism." B. Jegge, Eiken: "Influence of Country and Town upon Children." Fr. Friedli, Thörigen: "Some Customs in Switzerland." Edmond Schmetz, Geneva: "Friedemann Bach." Miss E. Weinmann, Herrliberg (Zurich): "My Work at Jungfrauojoch." J. Kuratle, Zurich: "London Beggars." Miss B. Faumann, Aarau: "Country Life in Toscana." Gebh. Sturm, Rorschach: "Wireless Telegraphy." M. Bachmann, Basle: "Going Abroad."

The debating classes dealt with the following subject:—

"Is Woman's Lot Harder than Man's?" Proposer, Miss H. Rieflé; Opposer, Dr. K. Schaefer.

Friday: The Headmaster gave a very humorous Lecture on "Woman have always been the Deminating Factor in Mankind and always will be."

Saturday: A party of Students visited the London Museum.

Football: Return Match on Wednesday, Nov. 5th, at Regent's Park: Berkley Hotel F.C. 2; Swiss Marc. Society F.C. 3.