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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The Federal Council has appointed as further members of the Permanent Arbitration Court at The Hague Prof. Eug. Borel, of Geneva, and Prof. Dr. Walther Burckhard, of Berne. Prof. Borel officiated for some considerable time as President of the Anglo-German Arbitral Tribunal in London (created under the Versailles Treaty) and is well-known in our Colony, having during his stay been President of the City Swiss Club. The other two Swiss delegates at the Hague Court are Prof. Max Huber and Federal Judge Soldati.

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No less than 523 candidates are offering themselves for the 125 seats of the Zurich Grosser Stadtrat, which is to be re-elected on April 15th. At present the Socialist-Communist combination is in the majority.

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During the following week-end the two councils—legislative and executive—of the canton Neuchâtel have to be renewed. The present Grand Conseil of 105 contains only 37 Socialists, but it is expected that the latter will be returned in greater strength.

\*\*\*

A week after, on April 29th, elections will take place in the canton Schwyz; the Kantonsrat contains a Catholic-Conservative majority. At the same time a by-election for the second member of the Federal States Council, in place of Dr. Räber, will be contested.

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The adjoining cantons are protesting to the Berne authorities against applying different traffic regulations to motor lorries registered in other cantons.

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In the course of an interview granted to an Italian newspaper representative Federal Councillor Motta is reported to have stated that while the spiritual life (Kultur) of the German and French Swiss is somewhat different in character from that maintained in Berlin and Paris, Ticinese civilisation remains exclusively Roman, adding that while the Ticinesi are unflinchingly loyal in their allegiance to the Confederation they preserve a pride in their Italian origin.

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By decision of the Neuchâtel Cantonal Court, confirmed by the Federal Tribunal, the local watchmakers' trade union of La Chaux-de-Fonds is ordered to indemnify a non-unionist workman whose dismissal the union enforced by means of an illegal boycott directed against his employer.

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Rumours, so far uncontradicted, are again current in the Swiss Press to the effect that Federal Councillor Chuard, our Home Minister, intends to relinquish his high office at the end of the present year.

\*\*\*

An unusual case—a typical example of Kantonal-ligeist—has been adjudged by the Federal Tribunal, Appenzell a.Rh., is one of the few cantons where medical practitioners are not required to possess a recognised qualification in the form of a university degree or diploma. Members of this fraternity, in other parts of the country described as quacks, send out their circulars broadcast and an applicant from Buchs (Aargau) was supplied with medicines under the name of "Wundertröpfen." The district court of Aarau promptly fined the charlatan in question for contravening the cantonal laws, which only allow registered and qualified practitioners to exercise the medical art. When, contrary to incantonal judiciary practice, the local Appenzell court refused to enforce the judgment on the ground that the matter was outside the jurisdiction of the Aarau courts, the Lausanne Tribunal was appealed to; the latter has upheld the decision of the Aarau court.

\*\*\*

On the arrival at Flums (Grisons) last Monday of the Orient Express it was discovered that one of the carriages had caught fire. All the passengers were able to alight without much trouble, though the occupants of a first class compartment were unable to save their personal luggage. It at first looked as if the fire was spreading to other carriages, but thanks to the prompt intervention of the local fire brigade the carriage affected was uncoupled in time. The train finally proceeded on its journey with the help of a steam engine, as the supply of electric power had been interrupted.

A short traffic interruption took place on the Gotthard line last Saturday between Capolago and Mendrisio, owing to some trucks leaving the rails. The accident seems to have been caused through the front engine of a heavy goods train suddenly applying the brakes while the locomotive at the rear still continued to push, thus actually squeezing some of the trucks off the line. The line remained blocked during the night and the passengers of the following express train had to descend at Mendrisio and enter motor-cars which took them to Capolago, where a relief train completed the journey.

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Gustave Ador, the President of the International Red Cross Society, died suddenly at Geneva at the age of 83.—We reproduce below the obituary notice published by the *Daily Telegraph*.

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Col. Dr. Karl Bohny, the president of the Swiss Red Cross Society, died in Basle at the age of 71.

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Being caught in the middle of the road between a horse-cart and a motor car, Mrs. Sophie Billeter, a widow, aged 60, of Zurich, was knocked down and killed on the spot, whilst a two-year-old infant which she was carrying in her arms miraculously escaped injury.

**M. Gustave Ador**, the veteran Swiss statesman, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, died early on Saturday morning. He had attended a meeting of the Committee on Friday. The Hon. Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary-General to the League of Nations, has addressed messages of condolence to the family and to the City of Geneva.

M. Gustave Ador was born on Dec. 23rd, 1843, at Cologny, an outlying suburb of Geneva; he was educated at Geneva College, and studied law at the University. He, however, devoted all his time and energies to politics. In 1874 he was elected a member of the Grand Council of Geneva and, with a short interruption, remained in this capacity until 1915; in fact, for those forty years the political history of Geneva was inseparable from the name of Gustave Ador. In 1871 he became Mayor of his native community of Cologny, where he lived, and whether he always returned to spend a holiday in later years, when much of his life was passed in France. For a number of years he was a member of the Swiss Parliament, in charge of the State finances.

Like every able-bodied Swiss citizen, Gustave Ador did his military service, and attained the rank of lieutenant-colonel. As a lieutenant he took part in the occupation of the frontiers in 1871. He was a crack rifle-shot, and once, while on a visit to England, joined a shooting party on the estate of a Scottish nobleman. Having brought down two grouse at one shot, he replied to the keeper, who complimented him on his fine marksmanship : "My friend, all the Swiss are like me." A Protestant himself, and proud of his Church, he was no sectarian, and his love of fair play led him to oppose the annoyances to which the Catholics were subjected by the Government of Calvin's city. Tactfully and without ostentation he braved the intolerance of the majority, and at length succeeded in finding the solution of the problem, so that the Catholics in the Canton of Geneva were again free to open their churches, which had for long remained closed.

The question of the separation of the National Church from the State in the Canton of Geneva was for years hotly debated, and M. Ador at first opposed the movement. But in 1907, at a dramatic moment for Geneva, the decision was taken under the leadership of the late Henry Fazy to disestablish the Church and make it independent of the control of the State, and M. Ador, having become convinced that the "National Church of Geneva" would thus have wider scope and more influence in social questions, did much to make the idea of disestablishment acceptable to the people.

Outside Switzerland the name of Gustave Ador is best known and honoured in connection with the International Red Cross. Perhaps his greatest work, at any rate that which procured for him European and indeed universal celebrity and the gratitude and homage of countless thousands, was the organisation in August, 1914, of the International Prisoners of War Agency, which undertook the transfer of letters to war prisoners in the belligerent countries, and accomplished a vast work in the search for missing soldiers belonging to all the different armies.

There was some irregularity about the election of Gustave Ador to the presidency of the confederation as, according to Swiss rule, it is the vice-president who succeeds the retiring president

at the end of his year's term of office. If this rule had been followed in 1918 Herr Müller, a German-Swiss, known for his German sympathies, would have become President, but with admirable patriotism and unselfishness he waived his right to the honour, and Gustave Ador was called upon to take the office. At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, however, he was not, from the Genevese point of view, altogether successful.

M. Ador, who was closely connected with the League of Nations, was chairman of the Economic and Financial Commission of the League, and also served as president of the Brussels Financial Conference in 1920 and as a delegate to several Assemblies.

—From the *Daily Telegraph*.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Une statistique inquiétante.**—En 1927, la statistique démographique pour l'ensemble de la Suisse a enregistré 28,585 mariages (28,079 en 1926) ; 69,532 naissances (72,118) ; 49,202 décès (46,452), soit un excédent des naissances de 20,330 (25,666). Tous les cantons, à l'exception de Neuchâtel et de Genève, accusent un excédent de naissances ; à Neuchâtel, on trouve 1601 décès pour 1547 naissances et à Genève 2262 décès contre 1610 naissances.

Des sept villes de plus de 50,000, cinq enregistrent un excédent de naissances, et deux, Lausanne et Genève, un surplus de décès, la première par 831 contre 738, la seconde (agglomération) par 1723 contre 1154.

L'accroissement de la mortalité constaté l'an dernier provient essentiellement de l'épidémie de grippe survenue en janvier 1927. Il n'en reste pas moins que la démographie suisse a enregistré en 1927 les résultats les plus défavorables que l'on ait jamais constaté depuis que l'on dresse des statistiques d'ensemble. Avec l'immigration étrangère, la question de la dénatalité devrait être placée au premier plan de nos préoccupations.

—*Gazette de Lausanne*.

**Consommation de munitions.**—S'agissant une communication du Dépôt fédéral de munitions, à Thonon, il a été délivré durant l'année 1927, les munitions suivantes : munition gratuite 11,537,412 cartouche ; munition d'exercice à 10 cts 13,435,402 cartouche, à 16 cts 2715 ; munitions de tête, à 13 cts 3,120,063, à 15 cts 16,102, à 20 cts 4,938, soit, au total, 28,116,652 cartouches. D'autre part, le nombre des cartouches de pistolet délivrées s'élève à 769,546 et celui des cartouches de revolver à 120,449.

Pendant l'année dernière, on a enregistré 92 fêtes de tir, auxquelles il a été attribué de la munition dite de fête, et 67 tirs amicaux ou tirs de sociétés, auxquels il a été attribué de la munition d'exercice (10 cts).

—*Democrate, Delémont*.

**Hommage à Walther Siegfried.**—L'écrivain suisse Walther Siegfried, à Patenkirchen, dont les romans "Tino Moralt" et "Fermont" ont fait sensation il y a trente ans, a fêté mardi le 70me anniversaire de sa naissance. A cette occasion, la Fondation Schiller lui a fait parvenir une adresse de félicitations dans laquelle elle souligne avec plaisir que le romancier entre dans son quinzième lustre en pleine possession de ses facultés et relève l'œuvre féconde accomplie par le jubilaire.

"Eloigné du pays, dit l'adresse, vous avez cependant toujours su retrouver le chemin de la patrie. Vous ne l'avez pas oubliée et vous n'avez jamais renié votre nationalité. Dans vos œuvres se mirent nos lacs, chantent nos cascades, brillent nos cimes vivent et luttent nos compatriotes."

"Qu'il vous soit donné d'achever dans la plénitude de vos forces l'œuvre si heureusement commencée et poursuivie."

"La gratitude et la cordiale sympathie du peuple suisse vous sont d'ores et déjà assurées."

—*Gazette de Lausanne*.

**Wattenwyl Museum.**—Bern hat Glück. Vor Jahren schon erhielt es die prachtvolle Moser'sche Sammlung orientalischer Teppiche und Waffen. Nun ist ihm abermals eine Sammlung zugefallen, diesmal bestehend aus einer grossen Zahl afrikanischer, zum Teil seltener Tierfelle und Häute, die es nun zu möglichst naturgetreuen Formen zu gestalten und würdig aufzustellen gilt. Im Jahre 1914 und 1915 unternahm der in England lebende, aber seiner Vaterstadt Bern treu gebliebene Bernhard von Wattenwyl seine erste Jagdexpedition nach Afrika. Er hat sie 1923-24 wiederholt, begleitet von seiner mutigen Tochter Vivienne, eigens zu dem Zweck, seiner Heimatstadt eine einzigartige Sammlung zu verschaffen. Hierbei hat v. Wattenwyl infolge der erlittenen Wunden im Kampf mit einem Löwen