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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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HOME NEWS

ZURICH.

Joh. Bär-Risler, Unterort-Wädenswil, has died from injuries sustained through falling off a ladder while gathering fruit.

Eight police-stations in the town of Zurich have had to be closed temporarily, as the police force is considerably below strength. N.Z.Z.

BERNE.

Dr. Erich Dölken, of Thun, left early in October to take up a post at Dr. Schweitzer's hospital at Lambarene, in the African jungle. News has just been received that Dr. Dölken, who was only 28, has died suddenly on the way out to Lambarene. N.Z.Z.

URI.

Farmer Martin Arnold, of Bürglen, intended to frighten off a tramp by sending a warning shot from his window. The bullet killed shepherd Christian Buggli, of Flüelen. N.Z.Z.

SCHWYZ.

Major Fridolin Fassbänd, proprietor of the "Waldstätterhof" in Brunnen, has died from a seizure. He was for many years a Liberal member of the Cantonal Government. N.Z.Z.

GLARUS.

Taxed property in the Canton has increased in value by 11 millions to 303 million Francs within a year, while taxable income shows a reduction from 7.85 to 7.7 million Francs. St. G.

BALE.

The strike at the A.C.V. has been settled by arbitration. N.

ST. GALLEN.

A curious accident cost the life of Adolf Zai of Ragaz. He and Mr. Iten, zum Löwen at Ragaz, had each charge of a wagon load of straw on the road from Sargans to Ragaz. Darkness fell before home was reached and, when Iten arrived at Ragaz, Zai was missing. He was found dead in a ditch, which was filled with water, alongside the road, buried underneath his wagon. It is supposed that in the darkness Zai drove too near the ditch and that the cart toppled over on top of him. The horse was standing in the ditch, still attached to the shafts. N.Z.Z.

The barn adjoining the Mühlhof at Tübach near Rorschach was burned down. Thanks to an efficient telephone alarm service, the local fire-brigade could prevent the spreading of the flames. The old mill building Mühlhof is used as a temporary hostel for discharged prisoners, one of whom is strongly suspected of having caused the fire to revenge himself.

Endeavouring to ascend the Säntis from the Ennetbühl side, two tourists were caught by an avalanche at the "Mausfalle." Fortunately they were securely roped. One of them managed to hold on to some rocks and also to haul to safety his companion, who had lost his foothold. St. G.T.

APPENZELL.

Lack of water has once more reduced the fire-brigade to impotence, when house and home of Franz Inanen (Schlitter unter den Fähnern) were totally destroyed by fire. N.Z.Z.

THURGAU.

Col. Louis Stüchelberg, for 17 years Artillery instructor and Commandant at Frauenfeld military schools, has died at Lugano.

A. Hafner, established as book-seller at New York has given to the Teachers' Widows, Orphans, and Old Age Fund the sum of Frs. 50,000 for the creation of an "A. Hafner Fund." N.Z.Z.

GRAUBÜNDEN.

Damage caused by deer in the districts of Maienfeld, Prättigau and Davos is so considerable, that the Cantonal Government has ordered a 10-days shoot, to be carried out by gamekeepers. N.Z.Z.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

Golf.

The response to my recent appeals has been so disappointing that the idea of arranging a mid-week meeting of Swiss Golfers in the London Area has been dropped, as far as Kyburg is concerned. Four Swiss gentlemen have expressed a desire to arrange such a meeting on a Saturday or Sunday and if others will follow suit I will gladly put them in touch with one another, so that something may happen even yet.

The Gleanings this week show the approach of the Winter Season, inasmuch as quite a lot of them deal with Winter-Sports and kindred subjects. It makes me feel sad to accept the fact that the wonderful summer we have enjoyed is a thing of the past, belongs to us no more, except in memory, like so many other good things!

However, the longer evenings give us more leisure for reading and listening in, looking after our intellectual requirements now that we can expect our bodies to be thoroughly sun-bathed and I take it that our Readers too will look forward to the *Swiss Observer* more eagerly than, perhaps, they did during the hot weather.

Armaments Expenditure of the World.

The Economist, 19th Oct.

According to the Memorandum compiled by Mr. P. Jacobsen, formerly a member of the Economic Section of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, the total Armaments Expenditure of the World, for 1928/1929 (one year) amounts to Gold Francs 22,392,400,000. Of this fabulous amount, *Europe* including U.S.S.R. spends more than half, i.e., Gold Francs 13,437,000,000.

Just, please, remember that this huge sum is spent *annually*, with slight variations and then think what poor old Europe might do with such immense sums spent on better purposes. Isn't it enough to make one despair of humanity, or, to turn anyone off inherited political ideals! Or, to put my thoughts into another form, are not the above figures calculated to make one feel that all those individuals who, often for mere lack of thinking, so lightheadedly talk about that next inevitable war, that is bound to happen sooner or later, that all those individuals should be treated by honest men and women as enemies of mankind.

Once we get that feeling uppermost into our mind, once we resolutely stamp out and endeavour to stamp out, *wherever* we find it, that loose talk about that next war, we shall be getting nearer the era of European Peace and European Federation, which both are the most important things to be achieved by coming generations.

My readers will excuse this fierce transgression, but the realisation of the utter folly in which European Governments are even to-day steeped, chiefly because their peoples forget so easily, does rouse me to indignation.

The Prince of Wales to go Winter-sporting in Switzerland.

Let us hope so! See what the *Daily Mail* says on the subject on the 17th Oct.

On October 31 there is to be an ice carnival at the Park-lane Ice Club at Grosvenor House, which the Prince of Wales has promised to attend. The Prince has never been to Switzerland, and in consequence his skating has suffered from lack of practice, though he and his brothers all skated in the great frost last winter on the lake in the grounds of Buckingham Palace.

In previous years the Prince's interest in hunting has precluded any question of his going to the winter sports. The proprietors of Swiss resorts are hoping that now he has sold his stud he may like to try the thrills of ski-running and bob-sleighing.

By Zeppelin to the Glaciers.

Thun, the centre of the Bernese Oberland, has found a new interest though the tourists have left and the hotels are closed for the season.

The Graf Zeppelin has paid three visits to the district, sailing over town and lake and up to the great peaks of Eiger and Jungfrau to give its passengers a view of the glaciers.

The new mode of mountain climbing is watched by the hoteliers with interest and some anxiety lest in future the popularity of this method of sight-seeing should rob them of the tourist traffic.

Thun is also seething with another excitement.

The authorities, following the example of London, have introduced the round about system of traffic at the busy junction near the station and on the road to Interlaken.

Two stalwart policemen instructed country people with horse and dog carts, townspeople with handcarts, as well as cyclists and motorists, to follow the new rule.

Matters were complicated still further by the herds of cows returning from the high pastures of the Alps, their bells clanging and their drovers urging them on with strange noises!

Personally, I rather think the *Dorniers* will oust the *Zepps*!

A Vatican City Census.

The Times, 18th Oct.

That the Pope has succeeded in his intention to keep down the number of Vatican citizens is illustrated by the results of the first population census held by the new State. The total number of Vatican citizens is at present 518; two of these were born after the date of the Lateran agreement, and have therefore never had any other nationality. The remaining 516 have been recruited from 11 different countries.

The Italian contingent, which numbers 389 persons and includes the Pope, is naturally far greater than any other national group. The Swiss contingent comes next with 113 persons, the large majority of whom are members of the Swiss Guard. France comes third with 11 representatives, then Germany with five, Spain with two, and the United States, Belgium, Norway, Austria, Holland, and Abyssinia follow with one representative each. Cardinal Lépicié, Cardinal Ehrle, and Cardinal Merry del Val figure among the French, German, and Spanish groups respectively, while the Dutch-born subject is Cardinal van Rossum. The 25 Cardinals of the Curia, although Vatican citizens, live, with the exception of the Cardinal Secretary of State, outside the boundaries of the Vatican City.

Rubber from Oils.

Daily News, 18th Oct.

Wide claims are made for the discoveries of E. Kleiber, a Basle chemist living at Lugano, who is said to have succeeded in making synthetic rubber and, moreover, making it cheaply.

Taking as a starting point the experiments of the scientist Hoffmann, of the Frankfort Dyeworks (who produced rubber, but at ten times the price of the natural product), Kleiber is stated to have produced rubber at a cost of about twopence-halfpenny a pound with all the qualities of natural rubber and exceeding it in elasticity.

His method is said to be based on the utilisation of mineral oils and their residues, all his materials being cheap on the market.

(The present price of rubber is nearly 10d. lb.)

Children's Nationality in Divorce cases.

Observer, 27th Oct.

The Court of Appeal of Milan has decided that an Italian woman divorced from a foreign husband has not only the right to take back her own nationality, but also to bring up her children as Italians, in the absence of any express stipulation to the contrary at the time of the divorce.

This decision ends a long process of litigation between Contessa Maria Giuseppina Richelmy, of a noble Piedmontese family, and her husband, a Swiss millionaire. M. Wild and Contessa Richelmy were married at Turin in December, 1913. Three children were born, but after a few years the couple agreed to separate and in 1926 they were divorced according to Swiss law, on the ground of incompatibility of character due chiefly to the wife's ardent love for her own country, which gave annoyance to her Swiss husband. He settled a large sum of money on his three sons, and it was decided that they should be brought up by their mother in Piedmont.

In 1927 Contessa Richelmy legally resumed her own nationality, which she had lost by her marriage to a Swiss subject, and took steps to

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for the BANQUET and BALL of the
CITY SWISS CLUB.

have her children recognised as Italians. This was vehemently opposed by M. Wild, who brought an action against his wife at Milan, which was decided in his favour, the Court declaring that during the father's life-time it was impossible for his sons, being minors, to lose their Swiss nationality. The Countess, nothing daunted, appealed, and this time she has won her case.

Seeing that the mother, an Italian lady, is bringing up the children, I should have thought it monstrously unfair and stupid if the Tribunal had upheld the first decision and given the children Swiss Nationality. And mind you, I am not influenced in this by any political considerations. As a matter of fact, this question of the Nationality of Children born in a foreign country has occupied me, in the abstract, for a very long time, i.e., ever since the early days of the N.S.H. in London.

I am satisfied that children born in a foreign country, i.e., a country in which their parents are foreigners, should not be influenced too much in favour of their parents' country, at least not when the country in which they are being brought up is of similar culture and civilisation. Take Switzerland and England for instance. Had I any children, I would wish them to be absolutely free to decide for themselves, when they reach maturity as regards their nationality. They would be British by birth, anyhow and would probably do and prosper best if brought up here, not according to Swiss ideas, but in accordance with English ideas. True, we know our Swiss Schools are in many respects better, but then, is it wise to create a sort of dual personality? What about the assimilation of Immigrants in Switzerland? What about its counterpart in England? What would happen if all Nationalities kept rigidly to their own ideas all the time? I think assimilation should proceed as quickly as it is possible and no egotistical patriotism should stand in its way. As for keeping a foreign nationality for three generations, I think it is snobbery, pure and simple.

Please, Mr. Editor, may I say a word or two about the correspondence on speeches at banquets? I have always found that a jolly, rattling good humorous speech, such as very few can really make, enlivens proceedings no end and puts the whole assembly at ease with one another. Contrarywise, a dry, solemn oration, spiced with statistics, exhortations, praise for those up high, flattery, etc., in short the sort of oration everybody, who has ever been to one such banquet, knows by heart and could make himself with his eyes shut, i.e., not looking at the cuffs for the notes thereon, generally makes people frightfully and rightly impatient and should be stopped. Nobody, I think, except the one who makes such a speech, wishes to hear it. Nobody comes to such a Banquet "in the hope" of hearing such a speech, but everybody comes with an idea that he or she are going to have an amusing time. Well then, why not get up the funny man of the assembly and let him say a few funny things and make people laugh? Make them laugh and they will feel happy and the whole show will be voted a success, irrespective of whether the band was good or not. But, stuff them with statistics, with important facts, try to make them feel solemn on such occasions, and they will stay away in future.

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A RHONE-TO-RHINE WATERWAY

Switzerland, with no seaport of her own, is naturally alive to the possibilities of reaching the sea by artificial waterways linking up with the great rivers. A successful experiment has already been made with the Rhine waterway, and now a scheme is proposed for linking Switzerland with the Mediterranean through the Rhône.

Allied with this are two supplementary schemes, the first for the improvement of Rhine navigation, and the second for connexion of Basel with the Lake of Constance. The port of Basel, built 24 years ago, has been steadily growing since 1919, but navigation on the Rhine is handicapped by the Istein Rapids. An international commission has just met to consider means of getting rid of them, and it is probable that explosives will be used. Recently the Basel Grand Council voted a sum of £320,000 for this purpose. Further, engineers are at present examining the possibility of connecting Basel and the Lake of Constance by the Rhine to allow the passage of 1,500 ton barges, a scheme which would cost about £2,500,000. If, as is probable, a canal is made also from the Danube by German initiative, Switzerland will then have access to Bavaria, Austria, the Balkan States, and the Black Sea.

But the meeting at Geneva last July of the Congress of the "Union Rhodanienne"—an organisation including representatives of all districts in the Rhône Valley from the Mediterranean to the Furka—has revived interest in the main scheme of a Rhône-to-Rhine waterway. Investigation has shown that the Rhône can be made navigable from Lyons to Geneva, despite all natural obstacles, and that the connecting of the Lake of Geneva with the Rhine is a comparatively easy matter. The part of the scheme which offers the greatest technical difficulties is the Lyons-Genève section, where the Rhône passes through a very mountainous region. It would be necessary to build a dozen locks and dams and many side canals between Lyons and the Swiss frontier, a distance of about 150 miles. A sum of nearly £28,000,000 would represent the cost of the section, an important part of which could be repaid by the sale of electric power from six or eight of the biggest dams. From Bellegarde, near the border, four dams and locks, one of which is already made, and two side canals would enable 700-ton barges to reach the Lake of Geneva. In order to pass through Geneva itself and to avoid the pulling down of a quarter of the town it has been suggested that a canal tunnel could be bored under the town. The Geneva authorities are taking steps to acquire the land for a port on the lake. The construction of the Bellegarde-Genève section would cost about £10,000,000.

From the Lake of Geneva, vessels would reach the Lake of Neuchâtel through the Canal d'Enteroches, 23 miles long, the necessary construction of which would cost about £6,720,000. The waterway would then pass through the Lakes of Neuchâtel and Bienne, run along the River Aar, and enter the Rhine at a short distance from Felsenau, about half-way between Basel and Constance. Part of this last section is ready for navigation; its completion would involve an expenditure of £900,000.

The whole scheme would connect Marseilles and Lyons with Geneva, Basel and Rotterdam, and eventually with the Balkans, and would have a great influence on the economic development of Switzerland. While all natural obstacles can be conquered, it is still doubtful, however, whether the financial resources can be found. The share of Switzerland would be about £17,620,000, and it is not certain that the French Government would find it possible to provide its share of £28,000,000. Supporters of the scheme are of opinion that private enterprise may be successful where Governments may hesitate, and hopes are entertained that the Rhône-to-Rhine waterway may be built with the assistance of the chambers of commerce, the business organizations, and the municipalities concerned.—*The Times*.

INCREASE IN CUSTOMS' REVENUE.

During the third term of 1929 the total receipts of the Swiss customs attained 64 million francs exceeding by over 6 millions the amount obtained during the corresponding period of 1928. This increase is chiefly due to favourable economic conjunctures.

FOREIGN TRADE.

During the first 9 months of this year Swiss imports reached the sum of 2,012 million francs and exports that of 1,542 million. These figures are considerably higher than those obtained during the corresponding period of the preceding year.

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