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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

FEDERAL.

The Military balloons K11 and K12 left Berne on Thursday morning. The K11 finally landed after two intermediary landings at Roggwil near Langenthal. The K12 which reached a height of 4,700 feet in 7 minutes went as far as Pfäffikon.

Whilst testing a private aeroplane, the pilot Wittlin of Zurich crashed on the Breitfeld Aerodrome and was taken to hospital with a fractured skull.

The Board of the Crédit Suisse have elected as President in place of Dr. W. E. Escher, who died recently, Dr. H. Stoll formerly Vice-President of that bank.

The family of Carl Spitteler have offered to the Federal Council to make a present to the Confederation of all rights appertaining to the complete edition of this Author's works.

National Councillor Baumberger addressed the "Volkswirtschaftliche Kommission der Schweizerischen Gemeinnützigen Gesellschaft" on the result of recent enquiries made into the parlous state of the population in the mountainous parts of our country. It appears from the statistics collected, that only in the Ticino is there a pronounced migration towards the plains, that the same movement might later on take place in the Grisons unless preventative measures are taken, and that the Hasli and Melental show a tendency similar to the one in the Ticino. On the other hand, the canton Wallis seems overpopulated, which may be just as serious a disadvantage. All in all, the result of the enquiries made is a picture of a very disquieting nature: progressive impoverishment and indebtedness of those inhabitants and communities, particularly the smaller ones, lack of progress and apathy. Help will have to be given by the Confederation towards achieving a certain measure of self-support in those communities and the creation of suitable employment. Everywhere one hears the same appeal: Give us work for the winter months. The Federal Authorities, as well as the S.A.C. and the various Swiss Associations for Public Welfare, are giving these matters their urgent and close attention.

VAUD.

Twenty thousand people have taken advantage of the permission given by the Cantonal Authorities to visit the penitentiary at Bochuz in the Orbe plain. This model institution can accommodate 480 prisoners. The whole equipment has been made by 40 prisoners withdrawn some 3 years ago from the Lausanne penitentiary. They have made the beds, the folding tables, cupboards, windows and iron doors and have installed amongst many other things the complete central heating system. It is very probable that this institution will be made use of by the Geneva Authorities who up to now have had an average of 50 prisoners at Thorberg for whom they have to pay £2 per day. Their Vaudois neighbours are willing to take charge of them at half that price.

VALAIS.

An expert ski-runner, Mr. Louis Lorehan, 26, has lost his life while game shooting on the Tornenthorn. He left a friend to follow up a trail and in crossing a gully he started an avalanche and was dragged with it. Up to now his body has not been recovered.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

A tragedy of unemployment is reported from Zurich. Returning to his flat, in Zurich 8, a man was startled to find his home filled with gas. In the kitchen he found his 33-year-old wife with her head in the gas-oven. After prompt measures she recovered and confessed that, in despair over their economic situation, she had the same afternoon thrown her 1½-year-old boy into the lake,

before attempting to make an end of herself. The family used to live in comfortable circumstances until the husband lost his position. This was two years ago and, all endeavours to find employment being unsuccessful, they had reached the end of their resources.

N.Z.Z.

OBWALDEN.

Abbot Basilius Fellmann of Engelberg has died aged 72 years. Under his capable guidance the monastery achieved remarkable success and development. Born at Sursee, his first post at Engelberg was as professor at the monastery's schools; from this stepping-stone he climbed from high to higher appointment, until he was elected Abbot in 1914.

N.Z.Z.

NIDWALDEN.

As a motor lorry was passing the wooden bridge over the Eschlibach on the road Kerns-Melchtal, the bridge collapsed. Fortunately the chauffeur escaped injury. The beams supporting the bridge had rotted right through.

St.G.T.

ZUG.

The proprietor of the Neumühle in Baar, Jakob Haab, while crossing the Lorze-bridge at Cham, pulled out to the right to let a cart pass. His motor car skidded into the bridge wall and, the latter giving way, fell into the river. Haab had the presence of mind to open the doors, and he managed to swim to safety. His passenger, chauffeur Robert Achermann, father of three children, was killed by the fall.

St.G.T.

BASEL.

As a sequel to the recent strike in the A.C.V., socialists and communists proposed to request the resignation of the council of administration. The vote taken on this proposal resulted in its defeat by 17,128 against 11,209 Ayes.

N.

For the third time within the last few years, a motor car has smashed the railings on the Wettstein bridge at Basel. A motorist swerved to pass a cyclist and, the brakes refusing to act, mounted the pavement and ran into the railings. The car came to a stop with front wheels hanging in the air, and it was only thanks to helpers who arrived at the critical moment, that the car could be pulled back to safety.

N.

ST. GALLEN.

105 years ago the first steamboat landed at Rorschach, but not until 1840 was a small harbour built. Soon after completion of the work, the facilities provided proved insufficient, and, in 1862, the harbour was rebuilt in its present form and size. The harbour covers a surface of 9,700 square metres. For some time it has been too small to accommodate all the traffic, particularly on Sundays, and extensions have become a matter which brooks no further delay. An old "Zopf" is still in existence in the tying-on fee levied, 25 centimes per steamer, a fee which is unknown in any other Bodensee harbour. Repeated endeavours to do away with this annoying toll have been in vain, and the foreign companies have decided to refuse to pay. Pending a settlement, the Swiss administration is footing the bill! The stubbornness of the Rorschacher harbour authorities is not creating a good impression.

The renovation of the Arbon town hall is finished, and a great success according to everybody. The coat of arms of the Entgasser, repainted by Kunstmaler Schmid at Diessenhofen, shines above the main entrance. On the south side is the new coat of arms of Arbon, derived from an old seal, which brings to an end this much-disputed question. On the west side part of the old town wall has been made visible to the satisfaction of all, who are interested in history. The tower has also been given the necessary attention, and present-day documents and postage stamps have been placed into the ball surmounting it.

St.G.T.

AARAU.

The straw industry in Wohlen is accustomed to work overtime and extra shifts in the months of November and December. This year as well big orders were in hand, particularly for the U.S.A. Most of these orders have now been cancelled by cable, and many manufacturers are compelled to pay off their hands. The lack of employment in the Seetal also has resulted in the paying off, in a smaller measure. The cause for the cancellation is believed to be the Wall Street crisis and price-cutting from Japan and China.

N.Z.Z.

Here we are again—Appealing.

Again our weekly is being sent out to practically the whole Swiss Colony in Great Britain. Our aim is to get a large increase of subscriptions, sufficient not only to cover all the costs of the *Swiss Observer* as at present produced, but something over so as to improve the choice and substance of our reading matter.

We have had a fair response to our last special appeal of a few months ago for new subscribers, which was so generously supported by our Minister, Monsieur Paravicini. But the number of new subscribers was not nearly as large as might be expected of a Colony of some ten to twelve thousand members. It is clear that we are up against a considerable degree of indifference of a majority of our compatriots, an indifference which, we flatter ourselves, can scarcely be entirely due to the shortcomings of our publication.

However numerous the societies and clubs in our Colony are, there are still all too many Swiss in England who keep away from them and, incidentally, from our newspaper. We think this deplorable, as losing contact with one's countrymen abroad so often, though not necessarily, means losing contact and active interest for one's country as well. It happens imperceptibly, may be, but none the less surely: in isolation the love for a far away homeland, though it may remain irradicable, stands in danger to get overshadowed more and more by the unceasing claims on one's attention that life and the immediate surroundings are inevitably making.

We are trying to help the loyal Swiss émigré to keep in touch and au courant, with a minimum of effort, not only with the happenings and the development of Switzerland but also with all events in our Colony. That has always been the unfaltering endeavour of the *Swiss Observer*, surely a worthy aim and deserving of support. We are fully aware that there is but little brilliance in our efforts—but neither are they a flash in the pan. In our very much larger sister colony in France several attempts at establishing a regular news-sheet have failed. A new venture has just been started, the "Journal Suisse de Paris," much more ambitious as regards size, etc., than our modest publication. Thanks to generous financial support it may possibly outlast the necessary period for getting sufficient subscribers to make it pay its way, and the Swiss Colony in France would be very much the richer for it. The *Swiss Observer* on the other hand has been kept alive for over eight years by the perseverance mainly of one man and a very few voluntary collaborators. Our wish, at present, is to get through subscriptions sufficient means not only to keep alive but to develop.

We are trying to mend our shortcomings, but can do so only with the help of the Colony at large. Time and again we have invited readers to make suggestions and helpful criticisms, but very rarely do we receive such communications and then they usually postulate the impracticable from a financial point of view. One friend very strongly put it to us that we should be more Swiss and talk "Wie'n is de Schnabel gwachse'n isch." He actually suggested that we ought to write—not in the three official languages, but in the many dialects of our country, in fact be more Swiss than the Swiss at home.

Less fantastic although undeserved, is another criticism from the same source, namely that we are not democratic enough. He thinks that we write too much about the big bosses' affairs and not enough about the less conspicuous but more numerous folks. He was especially alluding to reports from the Colony, club activities, death announcements, etc. Our reply was that we have repeatedly not only invited but implored the officials of every society and club to make arrangements that we should get regular reports of all their doings, important personal or official news, etc. Only one or two clubs have taken advantage of this opportunity up to now. If all the other societies would do the same we should be very pleased indeed to give everybody a fair share of space in our columns. We must rely on the voluntary collaboration of the Colony at large and we entreat everybody once more—to subscribe and to communicate with us much more freely than has been done up till now.—THE EDITOR.