

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1930)

Heft: 453

Rubrik: Prepaid subscription rates

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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE LONDON COLONY.

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 9595

Published every Friday at 23, LEONARD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 10—No. 453

LONDON, JUNE 28, 1930.

PRICE 3d.

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES

UNITED KINGDOM AND COLONIES	3 Months (13 issues, post free)	3/6
	6 " " "	6/6
SWITZERLAND	3 Months (13 issues, post free)	12/-
	6 " " "	24/-
Fr. 7.50		
14/-		

(Swiss subscriptions may be paid into Postcheck-Konto Basle V 5718).



HOME NEWS

FEDERAL.

FURTHER STATE HELP FOR THE HOTEL INDUSTRY.

After a short discussion the National Council has sanctioned the prolongation for another three years (till Dec 1933) of the present "temporary" measure which forbids the building of new hotels or the extension of existing ones unless the cantonal authorities approve any such scheme. It was stated that the crisis which in 1924 was responsible for this restriction had not yet been overcome and that the industry still required state help, especially in view of the heavy capital expenditure necessary in all hotels to meet modern requirements. The measure was opposed by a small minority (5 to 79), as being unconstitutional and not conducive to the relief of unemployment in the building trade.

NO REDUCTION OF "POSTAGE."

Federal Councillor Musy, in the National Council, held out no hopes of an early reduction in the postal charges; the State Treasury had advanced the Post Office eighty million francs during the war, and until this amount had been repaid this question could not be considered.

UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS.

According to the official figures published for last month unemployment has considerably increased as compared with May 1929. This is due, in the first instance, to the crisis in the watch industry and in a lesser degree to adverse conditions in the building and textile trades. Figures relating to the other trades are stated to be satisfactory; in the hotel industry there is actually a surplus of vacancies.

THE MOST POWERFUL LOCOMOTIVE IN THE WORLD.

The Swiss Federal Railways have placed an order with the Oerlikon and Winterthur works for the construction of an electric locomotive which will be the most powerful of the kind in Europe. It will be nearly 96 ft. long and weigh 234 tons, and will be capable of a speed of 80 miles an hour. It is intended for service on the steep gradients of the Saint Gotthard line.

MOTORING IN SWITZERLAND.

Motoring in Switzerland is becoming more popular in summer time now the authorities there realise that road travel is preferred by a large bulk of the tourists. Attention is drawn to the fact that all duties and fees on Swiss Alpine and transit roads were abolished early in the year 1929. Foreign motorists may drive in Switzerland for three months (in Geneva for 2 months) without paying any tax on their cars. The only things required are: For the driver: a valid passport (with or without visa according to nationality); for the car: a triptique or a frontier pass-card, or a free pass, or for a 5 to 10 day's stay, a provisory entrance card (obtainable at any Swiss customs office), and the international driving licence.

O.S.d.T.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

On the occasion of a lecture, which the German Ex. Reichsminister Severing was to deliver at the "Volkshaus," the communists arranged a demonstration in order to prevent this meeting taking place. An hour before the lecture was due to take place a band of communists turned up in force to stop people getting access to the Hall. A member of the communist party began to address the crowd outside the Assembly Hall, when after frequent interruptions he was pulled down from the platform and roughly handled by members of the socialist party. In order to disperse the considerable crowd now assembled, which seemed to have got quite out of order, the stewards played a water hose on the interrupters, but this not meeting with the required success, the police were summoned who turned up in several motor lorries about 120 men strong. After considerable opposition and much booing and hissing they managed to clear the demonstrators from the vicinity of the building and the meeting took place without any further interruptions.

N.Z.

The Executive Council has submitted to the Grand Council a proposal to unite Albisrieden, Altstetten, Hönegg and Wytikon with the town of Zurich.

ST. G.T.

While the "ZIKA" is on in Zurich, a sea-plane belonging to the Elmer-Citro Ltd. is carrying out propaganda flights. Last week the plane left the hangar at the Zürichhorn to pick up a passenger at Kitchberg for a flight to Lausanne and Geneva. Near Wollishofen, the pilot prepared to come down on the lake and, as soon as the plane touched the water, the pilot and the mechanic felt a shock. Turning round to locate the obstruction, they discovered that the right float had been wrenched off. The machine dipped to the right, so that soon wing and motor were in the water. However, the left float kept the plane's left wing and the cockpit over water. A steamer was nearby and immediately took the machine in tow. It appears that a wooden beam was floating in the lake and was struck by the right float.

N.Z.Z.

Owing to the continued crisis in the silk industry, one of the big manufacturers, with three mills in the neighbourhood of Zurich, has decided to stop work completely for four weeks. After this period work will be resumed on a three-day week basis. These mills employ about 1,000 hands, who will be paid part of their wages during this enforced idleness. It is said that this measure will prevent the necessity of discharging some of the hands.

S.I.T.

BERNE.

The Executive Council acknowledges gratefully a gift of 5,000 Frs. from the Berne Savings Bank (Spar- und Leihkasse) in favour of the victims of the recent storms.

N.Z.Z.

At the Gwattstutz near Gwatt a cart with a load of hay toppled over. The carter, Samuel Mami, aged 33, who was only recently married, fell on the wheels and had his chest crushed in. He died after a very short time.

N.Z.Z.

Thirty-four golden wedding rings was the unusual find made among the refuse at the Witzwill prison. It transpired that these rings were the property of a Berne wholesaler, who had placed them, in a box, on the window-sill. Apparently a gust of wind dislodged the box and threw it into the waste-paper basket beside the window. From there they were emptied into the bin. The owner has handed to the police 10 per cent. of the value of the rings as a reward for the finder.

N.Z.Z.

LUCERNE.

A very sad affair is reported from Lucerne. A very aged inmate of the Altersasyl on the Wesemlin had become of so unstable a disposition, that he had to be removed to the workhouse in his commune. He escaped from there, re-appeared at the home and repeatedly asked the sisters in charge to admit him, finally drawing a revolver as a further argument. For the safety of himself and the other inmates his demand had to be refused, and the police were informed. The poor old man retired to a shed and, when the police appeared on the scene, he started shooting. Finally he turned the weapon on himself: he is now in hospital with a severe wound.

ST.G.T.

GLARUS.

Five trucks of a goods train jumped the rails at Bilten and interrupted traffic for many hours. Brakesman Alleman, aged 22 and father of a child, was killed. The accident is believed to be due to premature changing of the points while the goods train was travelling over them.

Continued on back page.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

The Art of Travelling.

With the approach of the Summer Holidays questions of travels and journeyings, of places to go to, of countries to visit, of waters to bathe in or to drink of, become subjects of absorbing interest.

I came across an article in the *Birmingham Post* of 10th June, from which I quote the beginning:

If anyone dares to say that travelling, like conversation, may almost be counted as a lost art, he will certainly cause astonishment, and may even rouse doubts of his sanity. He will be reminded that at no time in the world's history have more people been moving about from place to place, and that modern science has revolutionised the methods by which we travel and almost annihilated time and space. Aeroplanes and motors will be, metaphorically, thrown in his face with the demand, "What do you make of these?"

Yet, granted that speed approaches lightning more and more and that our fastest trains are becoming mere crawlers in comparison with modern machines, does it follow that we travel more than our grandfathers did? Do we understand and practise travelling as an art as bygone generations understood and practised it? It only needs a little thought and observation to justify the contention that travelling has ceased to be an art. Everyone is nowadays in too violent a hurry to travel: the one aim is to "get there" and to create a record every time and in every way a journey is taken.

Ruskin said that going by train was not travelling at all, it was merely being sent like a parcel. We have accepted the railway and we find that travelling in the true sense is possible in a train, though not to the same degree as on a coach. But what is to be said of motors and, still more, of aeroplanes? Those who are transported by them from one place to another do not really travel, they are simply hurled through space, not quite as rapidly as Jules Verne's inventors, who were shot out of a cannon into the moon, but still in much the same way. Excessive speed, whatever the method used, makes travelling impossible.

Those who greedily seize on everything that lies upon their route pay the righteous penalty of a blurred vision and mental indigestion. If lack of time makes it necessary to omit visits that we should like to pay, we can leave them to the imagination and console ourselves with the reflection that perhaps we are being saved from spoiling a pleasant dream by seeing the reality.

There is a great attraction in the idea of the old-time "grand-tour," largely because it was taken in the leisurely manner that belongs to the art of travelling. It came, too, at the right time in a young man's life; as it followed his university course he was in a mental condition to appreciate all he saw. Because it was preceded by study it had an educational value that no journeys by men with money, but no culture, can ever have. It reminds us that we see only what we have the capacity for seeing, and that to enjoy either scenery or objects of historical or artistic interest we must know something about them and be interested in them before we leave home. The best guide book is the one we carry in our head, not the one we carry in our hand.

Amongst the truest travellers we must always reckon the pilgrims of the Middle Ages. They took travelling seriously, making it an expression of their deepest thoughts and feelings and putting before themselves a definite purpose and a definite goal; yet they contrived, because of their healthy belief in the oneness of life, to find pleasure by the way as they journeyed to pay their devotions at the shrine which they had chosen. What conducted tourists to-day get half the delight out of a journey through Switzerland that Chaucer's pilgrims knew as they went by easy stages to Canterbury? They have no common object, they lack the one mind and heart that bound Chaucer's travellers together, and, because they are modern English men and English women, they look upon one another with suspicion instead of treating all their companions as friends and giving of their best to the general conversation.

Special "Souvenir" Number.

Owing to the many demands for extra copies of the last three issues of the "S.O." we have decided to reprint the articles referring to the "Jubilé Décennal" of our Minister. This Souvenir number, which is ready now (price 3d.), is printed in brown on toned art paper and contains the illustrated article of May 31st and the full report of the subsequent Dinner and Presentation with the speeches *in extenso*, as published in the two following issues.