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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHINGER.

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## FEDERAL.

### THE NEW NATIONAL COUNCIL.

In deference to suggestions made some time ago the Federal Council has drawn up a message to the two Houses of the Swiss Parliament recommending that in future the election figure for a National Councillor should be raised from 20,000 to 22,000 inhabitants and that the life of the latter Council should be prolonged from three to four years. This would mean a revision of Articles 72 and 76 of our Constitution.

### PROFESSOR HUBER RETIRES FROM THE HAGUE TRIBUNAL.

Professor Dr. Max Huber has notified the League of Nations that he does not wish to be nominated for membership of the International Court at the forthcoming elections. Prof. Huber, who is only 56, has been a member of this Court since 1921 and was its president in the years 1925 to 1927.

### NEW LOCOMOTIVES FOR THE SWISS RAILWAYS.

The General Direction of the Swiss Federal Railways has decided to ask the Administration Council for a credit of 10,000,000 francs for the purchase of 20 electric locomotives for passenger traffic, and a second credit of 2,250,000 francs for the purchase of 10 electric locomotives for station shunting.

### THE BASSANESI AFFAIR.

At the last sitting of the Federal Council it was decided that the Italian airman, who made a forced landing on Swiss territory after dropping anti-Fascist leaflets on Milan, is to be tried before the Swiss Federal Penal Court.

## LOCAL. ZURICH.

Director Gyr from the Waldhaus Dolder in Zurich, who was shot by someone unknown, died on August 13, in the Cantonal Hospital. He was manager of Waldhaus Dolder for eight years. He leaves a widow and a four-year-old child.

The murderer has not yet been found and an agitation against carrying of arms and the easy way of purchasing them in Zurich is at present very strong, and a general demand for a more vigorous control is voiced.

N.Z.Z.

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A 73-year-old labourer fell with an empty trolley down a lift shaft at the construction of the new works of the Machine Works of Gebr. Sulzer, A.G., in the Tössfeld strasse. He was picked up dead with a broken spine.

N.Z.Z.

### BERNE.

The borrough council of Thun has issued an official explanation about the investigations into the affairs of the "Red Children's Republic" at Duerrenast on the lake of Thun. It states that all agreements entered into by the organisers with the council, as well as all contracts with the suppliers, have been carefully kept. As regards the behaviour of the colonists, it has been found, after each case has been duly investigated by the police, that in every instance it was merely a matter of trivialities as may happen at every school excursion. As regards the case reported in the press that the military were hissed in the barracks, it was found that this was done by children of the Swiss Holiday Colony from Hartlisberg and that no German children were in the vicinity at the time. The state of health in the camp was satisfactory. From August 1, camp one child had to remain behind in hospital. At present there are two cases of scarlet fever. The organisers, among whom is a medical man, have taken all the necessary steps for isolation and quarantine.

\*\*

Recently a petition was addressed to the Bernese Government and signed by 400 Bernese citizens, mostly school teachers, protesting against the teaching of M. Gonzaghe de Reynold, Professor of History at the University of Berne. The Bernese Government has made an exhaustive investigation and, as a result of these, has informed the petitioners that there are no grounds for objection.

J.S.

## AARAU.

Professor Macco, from the Berlin University, is again at Unterkulm to continue his researches into the nationality of President Hoover's forbears. He has collected a large amount of data from Church registers in the canton of Aargau, and also in the Palatinate, containing over 1,000 pages of manuscript proving that the family tree of the Hoovers can be traced back as far as the 13th century. Professor Macco shows without a doubt that the Huber family originated from Oberkulm and that it was one of the foremost in the village, producing in the 15th and 16th century a long line of bailiffs and millers. Through the hard times existing in the 17th century, caused by the war of the peasants, they emigrated to the Palatinate, where many Swiss artisans found profitable careers. With one of the emigrant ships the Hubers then went to America. In the passenger list of which Professor Macco has a photograph the name of Huber had already been Americanised into Hoover. Naturally not all the Hoovers were related to each other, as the name has its origin from the old Huber or Hufo and is prevalent in the whole of Aargau, Bremgarten, Mellingen, Zofingen, Sarmenstorf, etc., and also in other parts of Switzerland this name is to be found.

N.Z.Z.

### NEUCHATEL.

A dispute between the management and the workmen of the "Zenith" Watch Company in Le Locle has arisen on a question of wages. On account of the serious crisis through which the watch industry is now passing, the management has proposed certain reductions in the remuneration of their employees. A section of the workers, however, are not prepared to accept the reductions and are threatening to come out on strike if they are put into operation. It is hoped, however, that the difficulties will be overcome and a strike or lock-out will be avoided.

J.

### ST. GALL.

The 31-year-old Miss Marie Burch was cleaning some clothes with benzine in the kitchen where a fire was burning in the grate. The vapours of the benzine caught fire and the kitchen was filled with flames. Miss Burch was terribly burned and died the following day in hospital.

N.Z.Z.

### SCHAFFHOUSE.

Large thefts have been committed by the 28-year-old Waldvogel, Director of the Farmers' Co-operative Society of Neunkirch. He was able to cover up his defalcations for a long time by forged receipts and false entries in his books. After the larger part of the losses are recovered a deficit of about £400 will still be missing. When the falsifications were discovered Waldvogel disappeared. He was then caught in Titisee in the Black Forest and taken to Neustadt. He was there fined for crossing the frontier without permission and was allowed to go free again, as the warrant for his arrest from Schaffhouse had not been received by then. He was later arrested in Basel.

N.

### ZERMATT.

A small column of Italian emigrants were seen by a group of tourists at a height of over 12,000 feet between the twin peaks of Castor and Pollux, cutting steps in the ice. When the tourists approached they found a woman with an eight-months-old baby and two men, one of them acting as guide, and the other as carrier. They were in a precarious position, as the wearisome cutting of the steps was not quick work and the cold and exposure might have endangered the life of the young baby. The tourists with their ropes came to the aid of the Italians, in consequence of which the woman and baby arrived safely in Zermatt, where her husband, who had found work in France, was awaiting her. The equipment of the woman was not sufficient for any ordinary mountain pass crossing, much less for such as the Zwillingspass, which is 12,000 feet high and very difficult.

N.Z.Z.

### TICINO.

The religious festivities on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of Madonna del Sasso as a pilgrimage centre started on August 14 in Locarno. The town is gaily bedecked with flags and garlands of flowers. The Cardinal Archbishop of Milan has arrived as a guest and was received by high Church dignitaries. A short address of welcome was given in the Church of Madonna del Sasso, to which the prelate replied in flattering terms to the town of Locarno and the canton of Ticino.

N.Z.Z.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

I dare say quite a number of holiday-makers have longed for warmer seas this summer and they may, therefore, be interested in the following, from the *Manchester Guardian*, of August 11:

### An Interesting Swiss Experiment.

Long confronted with the problem of entertaining the heavy summer tourist traffic, especially those who fancy bathing, Swiss resorts have hit upon the novel idea of artificially heating small mountain lakes. The climatic station of Klosters, nestling in the Grisons, has installed a heating plant with several boilers on the edge of a small mountain lake. Despite the fact that the lake is fed with rivulets of icy water coming down from snow-capped peaks, the temperature is kept at a comfortable level by constantly turning steaming water from the several boilers back into the lake.

Owing to the unprecedented rain the temperature of the water in Lake Geneva this summer is unusually low, and bathing is practised only by the hardy. An artificial plague is being considered as insurance against similar atmospheric conditions in the future.

Home industries have long played an important rôle in the economic life of Switzerland and some of our greatest export industries have had their birth in humble home-industries. We all know the wooden bears and eagles, the little animals so finely sculptured in wood and on sale in most Swiss tourist centres, but, I confess, I had never heard of Swiss Pottery, except so far as ovens are in question. I now read in the *News Chronicle* of August 11:

### Where Girls Mould Clay into Wealth.

I have discovered a little village in Switzerland where the whole population, mothers, fathers and children—but mainly children—are pottery makers. There are about three thousand inhabitants in this little art cradle a few miles from Thun, in Bernese Oberland, and you do not see any other trade or industry than pottery. If these villagers want a pair of boots, a suit, a shirt or a handkerchief they must go and buy it elsewhere, but if the big and small towns of Switzerland want cups and saucers, vases and trays, statuettes and teapots, dishes and ash trays they must come here.

Every house is a shop, every shop is a factory, every factory is a "family business," which runs from father to son and which employs as many hands as the family can supply. Girls are at a premium here, for girls' hands are more delicate in the refined craft of pottery making; they work 12 hours a day, mainly painting and decorating the unbaked articles which father and his elder sons mould at the heavy wheel out of the fresh clay.

Girls here are born artists; they know the value of colour blending, they know the delicate art of dropping spots of liquid porcelain on the clay so as to make beautiful garlands of flowers which run round the plain edges of the crude pottery; they know how to handle with fairy-like fingers the most fragile vase just fresh from the mould and how to cover its imperfections with a delicate touch of the brush.

When they come back from school they start pottery making; they work five or six hours a day, after school time; they work in the early hours of the morning, before school time; they work on Saturdays and on Sundays. The clay is abundant and cheap; timber is plentiful and inexpensive; every home has a small furnace burning day and night where the pottery can be baked with no cost. Profits are great, more than 400 per cent, at times, although these peasant-artists mainly sell in bulk to wholesale dealers, who, in their turn, fill up the many Fairs of Switzerland, making another handsome profit.

Frida, a little girl of 14, whom I discovered helping her father in one of the smallest dwellings of the village, was in her fourth year of family "apprenticeship." Her little fingers were handling the brush with the same sure hand as that of an experienced artist. Her father has already put aside 250 francs (about £10) for her, her share for her work, which will accumulate with more profits until she marries or she needs it.

"All our children are our workmen here," said her father. "We do not employ outside