

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: 461

Rubrik: Notes and gleanings

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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHINGER.

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. 461

LONDON, AUGUST 23, 1930.

PRICE 3d.

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES

UNITED KINGDOM	{ 3 Months (13 issues, post free) -	36
AND COLONIES	{ 6 " " (26 " ") -	66
	{ 12 " " (52 " ") -	12-
SWITZERLAND	{ 6 Months (26 issues, post free) -	750
	{ 12 " " (52 " ") -	14-

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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.

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

labour; pottery making is an art, not a trade," he added proudly. "You cannot learn it in six weeks, no, nor even in six years. It must be born in you. We are all born artists here. Frida has a very delicate hand; she can do the best class of work. My other daughter, Emma, has a heavier hand, but she can work faster. She has already 400 francs put aside for her."

"Unemployment?" He laughed when I mentioned this so Britishly common, dreadful word to him. "No; we don't know unemployment here; we have never known it; we shall never know it. I work ten hours a day, as I am getting a little older now, but my son works 14 hours a day on an average, and we cannot produce fast enough." "Do you go in for modern designs?" "Very little," he said. "The public do not ask for modern designs; they stick to the old traditions and quaint patterns of years ago. One of my most successful pieces is a large dish on which is written the time-honoured phrase: 'When you use this plate remember that you, like the plate, are fashioned of clay.'"

But, "all work and no play" has never been the motto of the Swiss, else would not be the happy and, on the whole, healthy community they are, and some of their games are as old as they are strange to those who do not know them. One of the most skilful games is "Hornussen" and the *Morning Post*, of August 9, says:

Hornussen and Schwingen.

Although Switzerland is the recognised playing field of so many sports of an international character, the Swiss people have preserved and still practise some popular games that have been played by the people in this country for many centuries past. One of the most interesting is the so-called "Hornussen."

As in cricket, Hornussen is played by "batsmen" against a "field." But only one batsman can have an innings at a time. His bat, if one may term it so, might claim to be the historic forerunner of the golf-club. It is a long and thin ash-stick and must be flexible; almost a switch, in fact.

If it is too short or too stiff, the batsman cannot get the right swing on to it, and therefore, fails to give the right flight-curve to the ball.

The fielders are provided with a kind of bat, but of altogether different shape. The fielder's bat has a blade about a foot square with a very short handle, something like a butter-pat. The ball is small and made of wood.

The game begins by placing the ball on a small mound of earth, much the same as in golf, at the top of the field, that is, with the playing-field sloping away from the batsman. Such meadows are, of course, very common in almost any part of Switzerland.

A skilful player can get a beautiful swing with his long pliable stick and strikes the ball with such force as to make it fly with great speed over the heads of the fielders. If the ball flies too low the game is spoilt and the batsman loses points. If it is struck too high it expends its force too readily and makes the fielders' task comparatively easy—like a soft catch in cricket.

The fielders are placed in the lower part of the meadow, generally farther away from the batsman than in cricket. Their game is to arrest the flight of the ball by flinging their "battlets" high into the air across the course of the ball.

This calls for very great skill; extremely nice judgment is required in timing the fling of the batlet so that its blade will cross the ball's line of passage just at the very second when the ball is at any given point.

This part of the game is always the most difficult to learn, but many of the Swiss peasants show an almost uncanny skill in stopping the ball. The game is a very ancient one, and to-day is usually played in out-of-the-way retreats where tourists seldom have the chance of seeing it.

"Schwingen" is another game very popular with the peasants and Senni (the small dairy-farmers and cowherds of the Alpine districts), particularly in the Canton of Berne and Central Switzerland. Some splendid schwingen matches can be seen at the annual Alpine fête at Basle, attended by thousands of peasants and enlivened by the Alpine horn-blowers and yodlers.

Schwingen is really a peculiar form of wrestling. The combatants wear short linen breeches tightly rolled up as far as possible. Each seizes the other by his rolled-up shorts and tries to "spill" him.

Definite rules must be observed. The opponent must be thrown backwards over one's shoulder, and is declared defeated only when his two shoulders have touched the ground.

No Senni is regarded as a true man unless he can schwingen. Its popularity extends into the upper circles, and many of the Swiss notables have been famous schwingers.

Madame de Staél has left on record her impressions of the schwingen match that she witnessed at Unspunnen, near Interlaken.

The Passing of the St. Bernard Dogs.

Belfast Telegraph, August 7:

Tourists returning from the land of the friendly St. Bernard dog report that his life-saving days are numbered (says a writer in the *New York Times*.) Science with its thermos bottle, they say, is triumphing over the shaggy hero who, for generations, has valiantly carried his little keg of stimulating liquid to despairing wayfarers storm-bound in the Alps. Recently three travellers, lost during a Swiss snowstorm, were rescued by a monk from the St. Bernard monastery and were revived with hot coffee poured from a thermos bottle carried in the rescuer's knapsack. Vegetable capsules and concentrated meats completed the resuscitation of these three adventuring Alpinists.

Despite scientific achievements threatening his romantic career, however, the St. Bernard is still cherished by dog lovers for his benign and gentle manner and his dependability in time of crisis. Dog authorities assert that a St. Bernard cannot be stamped. And St. Bernard puppies continue to frisk clumsily and to yap boisterously around the hospice at St. Bernard Pass, where patient monks continue to train the dogs to search out travellers lost in Alpine snowdrifts.

There are those who say the Swiss breed is not what it once was; nevertheless, it has its heroes. Times have changed since St. Bernard, the patron saint of the mountain climbers, founded the monastery that bears his name high on a Swiss mountain peak near the present village of Martigny.

To-day electricity and better roads have brought the famous cloister closer to a different world that chugs up the steep mountainside in shrieking motors; and telephone now connects the sides of the pass, where travel is treacherous when early snows begin to fall and when late snows form avalanches.

Close to the gray, time-weathered hospice or monastery stands a bronze statue of Bernard de Menthon, the intrepid founder. And not far away there is a statue of another hero of the pass—a bronze of Barry, the beloved St. Bernard dog who died in line of duty. Every child in the Swiss Alps knows the story of old Barry, who saved forty persons during his long career, but who died in making his forty-first rescue through no fault of his own.

After about two years of preliminary training for the puppies, the kennel master at the monastery takes them out, with an experienced dog as a leader. Over steep slopes and across icy crags the leader goes with the plucky puppies. Deep in the snow they flounder, right themselves and stagger on. Later the young dogs join regular searching parties and are instructed when to bark and how to behave when they find a bundle in the snow.

If a rescued man is able to walk, a dog guides him to the monastery. If he is too weak to make the trip the St. Bernard drags him as far as possible and then leads rescuers to him or barks until a waiting monk arrives. Through the twilight of short winter days and through stormy nights, monks watch for distress signals and scout for exhausted travellers.

The original St. Bernard of the Alps, it is said, was probably the Swiss sheepdog bred with a mastiff in order to obtain greater strength.

For centuries the monks specialised in the breeding of these dogs and eventually got a strain which was one of the finest, if not the finest in the world. But tragedy came to the monastery kennels. First a bad epidemic of distemper wiped out a large number of the best dogs, later an avalanche demolished part of the kennels and killed the dogs. In order to replenish the kennels the monks then brought dogs from the Pyrenees and bred them with the bloodhound. The result was not the rugged breed for which the monastery had long been notable. According to dog fanciers its kennels do not to-day produce the fine strain of former years. In fact England is now said to have the finest St. Bernards in the world. This is due to a strain brought to that country from Switzerland in the seventeenth century. Careful breeding has strengthened and improved the strain.

New Alpine Railways.

Switzerland caters for those among us whose advancing years make it impossible for them to do any climbing, and new mountain railways are proposed, as witness the following from *The Times*, August 5:

The Government of the Grisons has been asked to grant a concession for the building of a mountain railway to the top of the Piz Bernina (13,299 ft.), the highest peak in the Engadine. The request comes from the Bernina Railway Company, which is running the electric line from Saint Moritz (5,830 ft.) to Pontresina, the Bernina Pass (7,400 ft.), and Poschiavo (3,315 ft.) in the Valtelline.

The scheme now submitted to the Cantonal

Government provides for the construction of an electric cogwheel railway starting from Morteratsch (6,230 ft.), on the Bernina line, up the flank of the Piz Chalchagn to a height of 7,900 ft., just above the Boval glacier. From that place a tunnel 5,600 yards long, passing under the Piz Boval, the Piz Morteratsch, the Bianeo Ridge, and the Piz Bianco, would bring up the line to a spot about 100 ft. below the summit of Piz Bernina, where a hotel similar to that on the Jungfraujoch would be erected. The line would be altogether 9½ miles long; the journey would take 1 hr. 20 min.

The Commune of Pontresina has given its approval to the scheme, which is likely to be approved by the Commune of Samaden, and the two Communes would contribute part of the £150,000 needed to complete the line.

And also from the *Railway Gazette*, July 25:

Italy and Switzerland are likely to come to an accord in reference to the Aoste-Martigny project. The results of such an agreement would be to provide direct and rapid communication from the ports of Genoa, Milan, Savona and Turin with Lausanne and Central and Western Europe up to the Channel.

The plans for the tunnelling of Mont Velan between Valpelline and Orsières, which was proposed by the expert engineer Marcenati in 1898, show a double-line tunnel ending on the triangular plan of Valpelline at the neck of the Allomont Valley. The length would be from 24-25 km., and according to the declaration of the President of the Geological Institute of Rome, the nature and formation of the rock is very favourable, and would not present any serious difficulties.

The new line Lausanne-Martigny-(Velan) Aoste-Sautha Tortona, Genoa, and that of Turin-Chieri-Alba Savone-Vado, would have a length of 350 km. (the line Marseilles-Lausanne is 519 km.). It will thus be seen that the line could be passed over by express in about 5 hours, as against 15 to 16 hours of the Milan-Simplon at the present time. Prof. Dominico Regis' scheme is for a tunnel 27 km. long.

But we shall have to wait another few years before doing these journeys!

LAW COURTS.

In the King's Bench Division, Mr. Justice Roche gave his reserved judgment in the claim by the Allgemeine Versicherungs-Gesellschaft Helvetic against the Administrator of German Property for a declaration that they were entitled to proceeds of the sale by order of the Prize Court of a valuable parcel of diamonds and precious stones, which were seized during the war as enemy property under the Reprisals Order, 1915.

His Lordship, giving judgment, said the case for the defendant was based on this: (1) That the goods and the proceeds were stamped by the order of February, 1918, with the character of enemy property, (2) that the abandonment relied upon as changing ownership was an assignment of chose in action which by virtue of Section 6 of the Trading with the Enemy Amendment Act conferred no title to the goods upon the plaintiffs, and (3) that the proceeds of the sale of the property were vested in the defendant.

The first proposition was not contested by the plaintiffs, but submissions on their behalf as to (2) and (3) were these: that (a) the abandonment was not an assignment, (b) that neither the goods nor the proceeds were chose in action, and (c) that Section 6 had no application to goods detained under the Reprisals Order because the Crown were not persons liable to pay or discharge such chose in action.

To the first question whether or not the abandonment was an assignment or effected an assignment, in his Lordship's opinion the answer was in the affirmative.

With regard to the last and main proposition, he was of opinion that in the circumstances of the case, the proceeds of the sale of the property were not affected by Section 6, but were held by the Crown subject to the terms of the Prize Order itself and of the rules of international law administered by the Prize Court.

His Lordship gave judgment for the plaintiffs accordingly.

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