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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS



FEDERAL.

THE FUTURE OF THE STATES COUNCIL.

One of the items on the tractanda list of the next delegates' meeting of the Swiss socialist party is the abolition of the States Council; the existence of a second (upper) chamber is said to be more of a hindrance than an advantage.

INCREASED DUTY ON CIGARETTES.

In order to raise the annual amount levied by the tobacco duty in favour of social insurance from 20 million to 30 million francs, an additional tax is to be imposed on cigarettes: the cheap variety is to carry another half-centime whilst the more expensive one is to be surcharged one centime.

PROF. DR. MAX HUBER AND A NEW INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION.

The political commission of the League of Nations Assembly has decided to create an international office to regulate the status of political refugees. Prof. Max Huber, who is the President of the International Red Cross, has been asked to work out the statutes governing this new body.

A COMEDY OF ERRORS.

The latest happening in Geneva has proved that sometimes even the French have difficulties with their own language.

Just before the Commission for an All Europe Conference assembled, a White Book was distributed by the French deputation entitled "Documents relating to the Organisation of an European Federation." Soon, however, it was discovered that a tremendous blunder was made with the date, and it seemed really to be "Futuristic" as it was antedated one month. After that it was found that it really formed a sort of "dictée de cent fautes." It was full of literary mistakes. No less a person than M. Léger, the poet and intimate friend of M. Briand, pronounced it as containing an enormous amount of offences against the rules of syntax. M. Léger blamed M. Bargeton, who had laboured for six weeks at this document. M. Bargeton, in his turn, accused the "Imprimerie Nationale" in Paris, over which accusation M. Peycelon, its director, became furious. In short it was a most unpleasant situation but not so much so that M. Briand could not master it. With a "bon mot" he restored peace and robbed the "affaire" of all its sting. He said, "What does it matter, gentlemen, if the French is good or bad? In Geneva it will be understood because they speak 'European' there." N.Z.Z.

DEATH OF A FEDERAL JUDGE.

The death is announced of M. Camille Guggenheim who, as recently as December last was elected a Federal Judge. Born in Oberendingen (Aargau)—he was only 36 years old—he studied law in Berne where in a short time he acquired a very considerable practice. He belonged to the socialist party and was a prominent member of both the municipal and cantonal councils in Berne.

KILLED THROUGH STONEFALL.

The well-known Italian guide, Cislone Ollier, of Courmayeur, met with a tragic end on the Colle dei Gigante in the Montblanc region whilst hunting for chamois. He was surprised by stonefall and killed. The next day when another guide found his body, the dog who accompanied Ollier, woke up. He kept watch over his dead master in spite of the intense cold and could only be restrained with difficulty from attacking a party which arrived to recover the body. Ollier was the guide who accompanied the Duke of Abruzzi on his expedition on Mount Kenya in 1906. N.Z.Z.

ACCIDENT OR CRIME?

A month ago Miss Irwin and her fiancé met with an accident on the Pointe de l'Évêque. The father stated that he was the only eye-witness and that he saw the two disappear in a crevasse of the glacier. He regarded all searching as useless and consoled himself with the idea that his children could really not have wished for a better grave. The guides from Evolène, however, are of

a different opinion. After a lot of trouble they succeeded in recovering the bodies, not, however, before a second attempt was made, as at first a defective rope, which was found on the body of the man, broke.

As Mr. Irwin had left Switzerland without leaving any money, the authorities applied to the English Consulate for the recovery of the expenses. But more important than the material question is the doubt which exists about the accident. The numerous guides who have for the past month studied the occurrence, have come to the conclusion that the two who, as is stated, fell from the top of the Pointe de l'Évêque, could not possibly have fallen into the crevasse in which they were found. How did they get there from the top? This is the anxious question which is being asked and which is being studied at an inquest by the Public Prosecutor Reider, before Mr. Irwin is asked to return to Switzerland to give further information of how the accident really happened. N.Z.

THE BASSANESI CASE.

Seven accomplices who are supposed to have assisted Bassanesi in his political air raid on Milan are to appear before the tribunal in Lausanne; amongst them are three Ticinesi. Martignoli, a magistrate in Lodrino, is the owner of the field from which the aeroplane set off, Cardis (an Italian subject and in the employment of Martignoli) is said to have cut the grass in order to facilitate the operation, and Fiscalini and Varese, the first a Ticinese civil servant and the latter a cantonal cashier, are charged with having been instrumental in obtaining a supply of petrol for the engine.

LOCAL.

ZÜRICH.

Fritz Mueller has flown for 1 hour 4 minutes and 3 seconds during a heavy wind on his glider S12, designed by Ingen. Spalinger. He flew in large curves round the Bachtel and gained a height of 800 feet. The landing was made without a hitch at Hinwil. The glider is a monoplane with a wing measurement of 45 feet. This time is a record for a Swiss glider. N.Z.

BASELSTADT.

By a straightforward and clear social legislation, the Canton of Baselland is not only in the first rank of Swiss Cantons in respect of the public welfare of its inhabitants, but is also strictly adhering to democratic principles. This is certainly a great achievement at the present day, when such a lot of loose talk is abroad about the failure of democracy.

As a proof of loyalty to the democratic idea the following is a good example. As is well-known in some parts, the Canton of Baselland is about to erect in the "Haselbühl" a mental hospital, fitted according to the latest principles of psychology, an asylum as there is none the like anywhere near. It is to hold 120 patients. Naturally a large number of doctors and nurses will be necessary and the whole will have to be under the supervision of one responsible person. For the future tenant of this responsible position the Regierungsrat proposed to the Landrat the designation of Director. At first no one made any objection to this. The committee of the Landrat, when studying the question decided, after a lengthy and stormy discussion, to drop the designation of Director and to substitute for it the name of Chief Physician or Administrator. At a full meeting of the Landrat this change was unanimously accepted with the explanation that the simple folk of Baselland would not willingly look up to a "Herr Director" and that Administrator or Chief Physician would be more in keeping with a democratic institution. An asylum which would require a Director would never be permitted by the people.

That just shows what good democrats the Baselleider are.

SCHAFFHAUSEN.

The Communist rally which was announced to take place in Schaffhausen last Sunday and which was prohibited by the Regierungsrat, did not materialise, although several attempts were made by German Communists to cross the frontier at Thayngen and Schleiheim. The frontier guards were, however, able to stop their attempts by barricading the roads. In Schaffhausen itself 37 arrests were made on Saturday. Sunday passed without any undue happenings. N.Z.Z.

ALTSTETTEN.

The large waste products sorting house of Messrs. Moeschingen, Wilhelm and Co. in

Altstetten was burnt to the ground last week. The damage is estimated to amount to about £8,000. The cause of the fire has not yet been definitely fixed, but it is believed that it has either been caused through a short circuit or through internal combustion. N.Z.

FROM THE TICINO.

SUBSIDY IN FAVOUR OF THE CANTON TICINO.

In order to sustain the racial and language characteristics in the canton Ticino an annual subsidy of 60,000 Frs. has been voted; the amount will form a regular charge in future Federal budgets.

THE LUGANO-PORLEZZA ROAD.

After many years of discussion, the projected road from Castagnola to Grandria and the Italo-Swiss frontier should soon become an accomplished fact. The distance is only about 5 kilometres but the estimated cost is about three million Swiss francs. The National Council approved last week a subsidy of 50 per cent. from the Federal Exchequer and there is no doubt that the remaining formalities will be overcome without difficulty. The Italian authorities have, apparently, also settled all details for the completion of the road from Porlezza to the Swiss frontier and it is expected that the new highway will be ready for through traffic as early as 1933.

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS.

In the coming year the Grand Council will have to deal with the project elaborated by a special Cantonal Commission for the improvement of three main-roads which are not yet up to the standard of modern requirements. It is intended that an amount of about 17½ million francs should be spent in the course of a few years. As it is mainly only a question of upkeep, the Federal subsidy will cover but a very small portion of the total cost. The capital required will have to be covered by a Cantonal loan.

LIBERAL MEETING IN BELLINZONA.

The Cantonal Federation of Young Liberal Societies held an important gathering in Bellinzona on the 7th of September, for the purpose of inaugurating their Cantonal banner. About 3,000 liberals, mainly young men from all over the Canton foregathered in Bellinzona and it was an audience of about 4,000 people which was addressed by Mr. Carlo Maggini, mayor of Bellinzona and leader of the liberal-radical party, National Councillor G. B. Rusca, Mr. Lohner, a lawyer of Berne and President of the Swiss Federation of Young Liberals, as well as Mr. G. Guglielmetti, member of the Grand Conseil and President of the Federation of Young Liberal Societies of the Ticino (with a membership of about 3,000). At the delegate's meeting, which followed, Mr. Guglielmetti was re-elected President, by acclamation. O.B.

Naïveté.

Un brave paysan se présente au guichet de la gare d'Orsay à Paris.

"Un billet pour Bordeaux, s'il vous plaît."

"Voilà, c'est cent dix-sept francs."

"C'est-y Dieu possible? Cent dix-sept francs. Faites-moi donc une remise."

"On ne marchande pas ici."

"Criez pas! Y a d'autres gares dans Paris: j'achèterons ailleurs."

Débrouillarde.

Une petite fille de trois ou quatre ans était penchée sur le chat et lui donnait quelque chose à manger que le chat, visiblement, n'avait pas envie d'avaler: c'était des graines pour canari. "Voyons, lui dit son oncle, maman ne t'a certainement pas dit de donner ces graines au chat?"

"Non, elle m'a dit que c'était pour le canari."

"Alors va le trouver dans la cage."

"Il n'est pas dans la cage, il est dans le chat."

CITY SWISS CLUB.

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28th
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ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL,
at the
May Fair Hotel, Berkeley Square, W.1.