

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: 472

Rubrik: Home news

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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. P. 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. 472

LONDON, NOVEMBER 8, 1930.

PRICE 3d.

HOME NEWS

FEDERAL.

THE ZONES DISPUTE.

The difference between France and our country as regards the Savoy Free Zones are still under justice at the Hague Tribunal and Prof. Logoz is making an epic fight for the Swiss point of view. The proceedings are expected to be terminated this week.

SWISS RAILWAY BUDGET FOR 1931.

Included in the Budget for 1931 of the Swiss Federal Railways are the following items:—Transformation of the Geneva-Carnavon station, 1,800,000 fr.; enlargement and transformation of the station at Neuchâtel, 700,000 fr. Transfer of the goods station at Berne to Weyermannshaus, 1,900,000 fr. New sorting station at Basle, 2,000,000 fr. Enlargement of the station at Zurich, 2,300,000 fr. A sum of 13,900,000 fr. is reserved for the work of electrification of short distances not yet converted. There is also an item for 530,000 fr. for the construction of a passenger boat for service on Lake Constance.

THE SWISS BOURSES.

The Banque Commerciale de Bâle reports that the unexpectedly decisive victory of the Brüning Cabinet in Germany has been responsible for a more optimistic tone on the Swiss Stock Exchanges. The revival which followed seems, however, to have occurred too suddenly, as there has been a subsequent reaction, partly due to less favourable reports from Wall St. A firmer tone now prevails again. In the banks and trusts Compania Hispano-Americana de Electricidad have been rather prominent, especially the Series A/C shares, which, on the firming up of the peseta exchange, have improved from 1,700 to 1,855. Among bank shares Banque Commerciale de Bâle notably have been favoured, and on good purchases advanced from 765 to 776½. South American Government bonds have been heavy, but German loans have improved.

SWISS TRADE IN AUGUST.

Swiss imports receded from 218.2 million francs in July to 205.8 million francs in August, and exports from 137.8 million frs. to 130.3 million frs. Exports thus covered 63.3 per cent. of imports, as compared with 63.1 per cent. during July.

LOAN REPAYMENT.

The Nestlé and Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company will repay at 1st March, 1931, the outstanding Five per cent. loan of 10,000,000 Frs. of Peter Cailler Kohler Chocolates Suisses S.A.

This loan was finally redeemable on 1st March, 1938, but the company had the option of redemption after 1928.

THE OERLIKON COMPANY.

The annual report of the Oerlikon Company just published states that competition has become extremely keen and aggravated by prospective clients in the different countries. Standardisation seems to be impossible, in fact efforts in this direction have brought about an opposite result. Though the net profit of the Oerlikon concern is somewhat smaller than in the previous year the dividend of 8 per cent. is maintained.

FOOTBALL.

At the international match played on the Letzli ground in Zurich, between Holland and Switzerland, the Swiss team scored 6 goals against 3 goals scored by the visitors. The match was favoured by good weather and witnessed by a record attendance of about 20,000.

THE RAILWAY DISASTER IN FRANCE.

Four Swiss are stated to have perished in the railway disaster at Périgueux on the Geneva-Bordeaux line. Their names are: Edmond Jund of Geneva (a director of the Swiss National Insurance Co.), Hans Wilhelm of Wattwil (St. Gall), W. Müller of Zurich and Emile Henri Benvegnin of Vuflens (Vaud).

LOCAL.

LUCERNE.

Edmund Merz, a native of Berne appeared before the cantonal Tribunal on a charge of fraud. The accused, who had already previously served a sentence of ten years penal servitude for dealing in fictitious and valueless bonds and shares, has again swindled several business people at Zurich. Under the pretext that he was financing a dry goods business he succeeded in

inducing various people to part with sums totalling over 30,000 Frs. It was found that the business for which he acquired the funds did not exist at all. The Court sentenced him to 5 years penal servitude, although the public prosecutor only asked for a sentence of 4 years. N.Z.

GENEVA.

The death is reported of M. Anthony Rochat, for many years Pasteur of the commune de Satigny.

NEUCHATEL.

The Banque Cantonal de Neuchâtel has suffered losses amounting to about 17,000,000 Swiss francs. The State of Neuchâtel places at the disposal of the bank 1,000,000 frs. free of interest and 23,000,000 frs. at an interest of 3 per cent., instead of the 4½ per cent. paid up to now.

* * *

Colonel Albert Gyger, "colonel divisionnaire" in 1908, has died suddenly at Neuchâtel.

SCHAFFHAUSEN.

A bad accident has occurred at the new building of the schoolhouse near the Schwabentor. Owing to the breaking of a crane cable a heavy load of timber fell from a height of six meters on to the labourer Ulrich Holzer from Oerlikon. He was taken to the Cantonal hospital in a serious condition and soon afterwards died.

N.Z.Z.

* * *

An initiative introduced by the Socialist party, for old age assistance in the town of Schaffhausen, was defeated last Sunday by a vote of 1,967 against and 1,963 for. The initiative was taken up by the socialist against an original proposal by the town council. N.Z.Z.

VAUD.

M. Alfred Piguet, correspondent of the *Revue* in Berne, has been appointed secretary of the "Chambre vaudoise du Commerce et l'Industrie."

LAUSANNE.

The death of Dr. med. h.c. Alfred Ney is reported at the age of 55. The deceased occupied several positions, amongst them some government appointments. As a young man he emigrated to Pfullingen (Württemberg) where he was appointed as a Secretary and Manager to a well-known and influential landowner. When war broke out, Dr. Ney not only took charge of the Swiss interest in Southern Germany, but also looked after the interest of prisoners of war of almost all nations. He was a delegate of the International War Prisoner's Office in Berne, and rendered great services to this institution. After the war various countries honoured his untiring efforts on behalf of their imprisoned countrymen. The University of Tübingen conferred on him the degree of "doctor honoris causa." Dr. Ney was also the founder of the international Association for the upkeep of war and mass graves, a book of his, entitled "The Right of the Dead," forms the basis for this organisation.

MEILEN.

The brothers Guggenbühl, coffee merchants in Meilen, who suddenly left the country when bankruptcy proceedings were taken against them early this year, have been arrested in Casablanca (Morocco). Proceedings for deportation have been started. The deficiency exceeds 2,000,000 francs. The report of the bankruptcy authorities alleges a case of fraudulent bankruptcy, preferential treatment of some of the creditors and falsification of bills. St.G.T.

MARIASTEIN.

Last Tuesday evening a young couple were found lying in the road between Mariastein and Flüh. It was found that both had their arteries severed. An ambulance took them to the hospital in Bâle, but the man had then succumbed to his injuries. It is hoped that the woman will recover. An inquiry has established that it was a case of a suicide pact. N.Z.Z.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

PLEASE RESERVE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28th

for the

ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL,

at the

May Fair Hotel, Berkeley Square, W.1.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

Geneva, the City of Refuge.

F. Mortimer Grimes, in the *Nottingham Journal and Express*, 16th October:

While walking through the city of Geneva recently I discovered a very picturesque tower which bore on its facade a stone plaque depicting a wounded man being succoured. Above the plaque were the words "Geneva: City of Refugee." As I continued my walk I realised, quite suddenly, the truth of this inscription.

Geneva, during the ages, has been the refuge of many who have stood for the right of the individual—both in religion and in politics. It was to Geneva that men looked in the Middle Ages for help and protection from religious tyranny and persecution. It was in Geneva that the great Red Cross was formed for the relief of the sick and suffering throughout the world. It was from Geneva that much good work was done for the exchange of wounded French and German prisoners during the war. Men without arms, without legs, men with neither arms nor legs, men with parts of their face shot away, men with terrible stomach wounds, these and others were brought to Switzerland from the prisons of France and Germany and restored to their homes. It was, as a Swiss eye-witness reminded me, an unforgettable piece of work.

To-day, men and women all over the world are looking to the League of Nations at Geneva for the alleviation of their troubles and the removal of their difficulties. The deliberations of the special commissions, set up during the meetings of the Assembly, show that these people will not look in vain.

The Health Section has been particularly active. When cases of diseases have occurred in the East details have been telegraphed immediately to the League Health Bureau at Singapore. In a few hours these details have been broadcast by wireless from Singapore to 137 of the leading Eastern ports which have been and are in constant communication with the Bureau. On receipt of these warnings port and health authorities have been on the alert for ships coming from the infected areas. These infected ships have been stopped and, where necessary, quarantined. As a result of this work the action of disease has been greatly reduced in the East.

This section has also, during the past year, sent doctors and sanitary engineers to Greece and China to advise the Governments of these two countries how best to set up systems of preventive medicine and sanitation similar to our own. This work has been of indirect value to all the world because disease, like war, respects no frontiers and can be stamped out only by international action.

Since the Assembly met in 1929 many shipments of opium and other dangerous drugs have been intercepted in different parts of Europe and have been confiscated, the smugglers being sentenced to heavy terms of imprisonment. In spite of this the traffic still goes on, even in the streets and night clubs of our own capital. During the last year a Control Board has been set up in Geneva. Each country will, in future, advise the Board of the amount of drugs manufactured and the quantity required for medical and legal purposes. Shipments from country to country will be made by licence only. In this way it is proposed to supervise the use of dangerous drugs from the time they are manufactured until the time they are actually used. It is hoped by this method the League will be able to stamp out the illegal traffic which is causing every year the physical, mental and moral degradation of hundreds of thousands of men and women throughout the world.

It is good news to know that the White Slave problem is to be tackled in Asia. Five years ago a number of experts went down into the underworld of Europe and South America to find out who financed, organised and carried out the traffic in women and children. Their report showed that the centre of the traffic was the Maison Tolere, and, following its publication, the system of licensed brothels has been abolished in a number of European countries. During the coming year another inquiry is to be carried out in Asiatic countries. It is hoped that as a result the League will be able to take