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The Swiss Observer

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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-Carnavalet station, 1,800,000 fr.; enlargement and transformation of the station at Neuchâtel, 700,000 fr. Transfer of the goods station at Berne to Weyerhanshaus, 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 Chocolats 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 Letzi 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 Junod 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 Vufflens (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.

NEUCHÂTEL.

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 Bale, 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.

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 Toleree, 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

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some action in Asia to help the victims of this vile and inhuman trade.

Work for the elimination of slavery has, unfortunately, received a temporary set-back. Under the Anti-Slavery Convention of 1925 members of the League of Nations have agreed to take certain action to stamp out slave-raiding, slave-trading and slave-owning. A Temporary Slavery Commission has been in existence to keep an eye on conditions in countries where slavery still exists with a view to more effective action being taken to secure its suppression. This Temporary Commission has been disbanded and a permanent one was to have taken its place. Owing to French obstruction the Permanent Slavery Commission was not formed and the Temporary Slavery Commission was not re-established. The British Government delegate on the Commission, Mr. C. Roden Buxton, protested very strongly but did not receive a sufficient volume of support to carry the day. It is certain, however, that this matter will be brought up by the British Government representative at the next meeting of the Assembly, if not at one of the Council meetings that will precede it.

The League of Nations has the right, under treaties signed by certain European countries to intervene on behalf of groups of people of different race, language, religion or culture that are being persecuted by the Government of the State in which they live. The League has done much to secure for minority peoples in different parts of Europe the right to speak their own language; the right to teach their children their native language in their schools; the right to practise their religion in their churches, and the right to carry on their cultural life.

Although much good has been done people in certain parts of Europe are still being persecuted and oppressed, and Dr. Curtius, the Foreign Minister of Germany, and several other European statesmen made a plea for an extension of these treaties so that better conditions could prevail for all minority peoples. The Little Entente countries and Poland protested against these proposals, but assured the Commission that they would loyally observe the responsibilities that they had already undertaken. There is every indication, however, that Germany will press for a development of this work.

The League of Nations is the only international organisation with the machinery and the influence to take international action to solve the problems and remove the injustices of our time. Its greatest success has been achieved in its social and humanitarian work, and it is for that reason that men and women all over the world do look to "Geneva: The City of Refuge," for help and deliverance.

I put in the above article chiefly for those who may wish to have some record of the doings of the League of Nations other than what is allowed to appear in the Daily Press as a rule. So often one still hears ill-informed and ill-mannered sneers, when the League of Nations is mentioned, and it is good, in such cases to be able to state a few plain and undisputed facts, testifying to the noble work the L.O.N. is doing and has done already.

The "Huguenot Hunt."

By Autolyca in *The Christian World* of October 2nd:

In the terrible days of the Wars of Religion, the "*Chasse aux Huguenots*" had a sinister meaning here in the Cevennes. But the "Huguenot hunt" upon which I am intent is nothing but a delight to me, and I hope my quarry do not feel that they are victimized. For days I have been in contact with the Protestants here, in groups or in single families, visiting churches, villages and farms, in a kindly car or on my own very willing feet; and in the intervals of going about I have been soaking myself in the past history and the modern conditions of their religion. And all this has only confirmed what I had already come to believe—first, that the French Protestants are the salt of the earth, and second, that they are emphatically the true, the real French. They may be a feeble folk numerically—one million, out of France's forty million of population. But—and it may be for that very reason—they have an intensity and vitality which make them count for ten times their number. And we should do well to remember the cause of their small numbers. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they were slaughtered, not singly but in hundreds—nay, thousands. Those who escaped death fled to friendly countries, England and Switzerland particularly, and became good citizens and the source of much prosperity to their adopted countries. That denudation France has never yet been able to make good—and we profited partly by her loss.

This little Lamastre, which is my centre, is an amusement to me—if my good friends the Lamastrois will forgive my impertinence. It is about 1,300 feet up, and is planted on

the only flat enough place for miles. (I was at first puzzled why there should be no regular air-services here, seeing railways are so costly to construct. It was pointed out to me that there are simply no places whatever for landing or taking off—no wide, flat valleys, as in the Alps. Look at the lumps of sugar in your basin, tumbled in anyhow—that is the lay of the land here.) It has some three or four thousand souls, and electricity, and sanitation, and wax ladies—and gentlemen—in the most up-to-date shop show-cases (on hot days they have to have handkerchiefs over their faces from ten o'clock onwards) and a certain number of motor-cars. But all the important country traction—for this is a market town, and a *chef lieu de canton*—is done by cows, firmly held together in pairs by a wooden yoke which fits their horns tightly. They are so docile and patient and biddable, so pretty in their biscuit-coloured coats, so helpless against the flies on their faces when they are yoked together that I am in a fair way to become ridiculously sentimental over them. And they have nothing to do with my theme.

It happened that my first Sunday here coincided with what is called the *Journée de l'Eglise*—which may be freely translated "Church anniversary"—and the church was full. It is a typical Continental Protestant Church. It will have nothing to say to the cruciform design, and is square, almost cubical. It is washed white and painted grey, except the chestnut wood pulpit—which, because of the great galleries, is very high and does not reach the ground, being a kind of octagonal outburst from the wall behind. The preacher reaches it by stairs out of sight, appearing through a door in the wall. On the plain communion-table below is—always—a large Bible, open anywhere, and propped on a little stand. That is symbolic and historic. The minister himself wears the gown and bands which we associate with Presbyterianism—and that indeed is the order of organization to which the *Eglises Reformées* belong. It was a deeply fervent service, for all its restraint and gravity; the preacher was a young missionary home on furlough from the Ivory Coast of West Africa.

In the afternoon I was taken in the pastoral car some seven or eight miles to a remote mountain church. We left the fairly good road for a really bad road, turning and winding all the way; and at last we parked the car on the roadside, with a big stone behind it, and walked another hundred yards. There stood the church—and one farm. And yet there were seventy or eighty people waiting; and it was three o'clock of a warm Sunday afternoon. I was struck with a resemblance which had come to me suddenly. Here was the very essence of the Scottish Highlands! The grave and austere whitewashed church in a lonely place among the great hills, the minister in gown and bands, the simple toiling people—but above all, the intense spiritual thirst, the ardent yet restrained devotion, the heritage of martyr generations—these were common to both Highland Scot and Cevennol Frenchman; what mattered the difference of tongue, or of physique, or of climate? I know it is no original discovery; but it came to me personally with all the force of one.

I am here entirely on my own responsibility, and not as the accredited representative of any church or society. Nevertheless, before leaving home I had asked Dr. Berry if I might be allowed to carry a message of fraternity and goodwill from the Congregational Union to any French Protestant Churches I might visit, and he gave me a general letter of greeting and fellowship, expressing also admiration of the way in which French Protestantism has triumphed over almost insuperable difficulties in the devastated area. This letter, translated into French, I have been permitted to read aloud in all the church services I have been to—and I have read it privately to some old people who could not get to church. I can tell by their deep attention to it, by the hand-clasps and the words they have spoken to me afterwards, as well as by the expression of cordial and courteous thanks and reciprocal friendship from the pulpit, how greatly the message has moved and encouraged them.

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THE INDICTMENT OF BASSANESI AND HIS FRIENDS.

The following is a translation of the résumé published in the *Avanguardia* of Lugano of the indictment by the Federal Public Prosecutor against the anti-fascist aviator Bassanesi and seven other persons:—

The accused are:

1. GIOVANNI BASSANESI (Italian), born in Aosta in 1905, and ex-teacher, now student, residing in Paris. From the 11th of July to the 2nd of August, 1930, he was interned at the military hospital in Andermatt and since that date detained in prison at Lugano.

2. CARLO MARTIGNOLI (Ticinese), born in Lodrino in 1881, Justice of Peace, residing in Lodrino (Ticino).

3. ANGELO CARDIS, born in Mergozzo (Novara, Italy) in 1902, now in possession of the Federal authorisation for acquiring Swiss citizenship, a labourer in the employ of Martignoli.

4. EUGENIO VARESI, of Vira-Gambarogno (Ticino), cashier of the Cantonal Exchequer, residing in Bellinzona.

5. COSTANTINO FISCALINI, 41 years of age, of Borgnone (Ticino), Secretary of the Automobile Office (Department of Public Works), residing in Bellinzona.

6. GASTON BRABANT (French), born 1892, of Persen (France), Director of the periodical "*L'Avion*," residing in Paris.

7. ALBERTO TARCHIANI (Italian), born 1885, ex-Editor of the *Corriere della Sera*, residing in Paris.

8. Prof. CARLO ROSSELLI (Italian), born 1899, a journalist, residing in Paris.

THE PLOT.

The indictment sets out the "very grave" plot in the following terms:—

"The anti-fascist revolutionary committee '*Giustizia e Libertà*,' of Paris, conceived the idea in the spring or summer of 1930 to send, by way of Swiss territory, an aeroplane to drop revolutionary manifestoes over Milan, with the object to spread in Italy its subversive ideas with regard to the present régime and to win citizens over to the revolutionary cause. This irregular flight in the air space over Italian territory was prepared in all its details in Paris and in the Ticino, with the help of confidential men.

"The Italian refugee Giovanni Bassanesi, residing in Paris, an adherent of the anti-fascist movement, consented to pilot the aeroplane. He learned to fly in a very short space of time and after having qualified for the first class certificate, which would have enabled him to undertake flights abroad, Bassanesi put himself into touch with the French aviator Brabant, who entrusted him with the purchase in his own name (Brabant's) of the civilian aeroplane F. A.J.F.D. Farman-200. On the 20th of June he had the aeroplane entered as his property in the French registry of matriculation. However, before the

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THE SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY inform us that they have on their books a poor English born woman, 29 years old, of good appearance, abandoned with 3 children. She is very anxious to obtain a situation for household duties. Her earnings would help her towards the keep of her children to be boarded out. Should it be possible for her to have with her her youngest child, a boy 18-months-old, she would, of course, prefer it. No permit required.