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The Swiss Observer

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FEDERAL.

FASCIST ASPERSIONS UPON SWITZERLAND.

In connection with the discovery by the French police of an anti-Fascist plot to kill the Italian delegate to next week's League Council meeting in Geneva, Signor Grandi, the Italian Foreign Minister, the Fascist Press has once more renewed its deplorable campaign against Switzerland for permitting, as it alleges, anti-fascist activities in our country. The "Popolo d'Italia," edited by the Duce's brother, is particularly vociferous in this threatening campaign.

It alleges that the Geneva police did nothing to prevent the plotters to inspect the League of Nations buildings in preparation of the crime although it was warned of the existence of the plot. There is no proof whatever that such an inspection took place. In any case was the Swiss police not in a position to know the plotters before they were unmasked so as to prevent their entry into Switzerland. As the plot was hatched out and discovered in France it is astonishing that Switzerland should be attacked on account of it. The "Popolo d'Italia" goes so far as to suggest that our authorities are knowingly neglecting their duty of protecting the League of Nations against would-be murderers. The imputation is a gross insult to our country, which has already drawn sharp protests from the Swiss Press.

The "Manchester Guardian," of January 6th fairly describes the situation in the following message from its Berne correspondent:

Several times during recent years the Italian press has levelled severe reproaches at the Swiss authorities for their attitude towards non-Fascist Italians who enjoy freedom of movement and freedom of opinion on Swiss territory. Whenever an anti-Fascist speech was made at any public meeting at Geneva the Italian press retorted with the threat that Italy might propose to withdraw the seat of the League of Nations from Geneva if the Swiss authorities could not guarantee that the Italian delegates could work at Geneva in an atmosphere untroubled by anti-Fascist demonstrations.

Such Italian reproaches and menaces against Switzerland and Geneva as the seat of the League have been intensified by the reported discovery in Paris of an anti-Fascist conspiracy against the life of Signor Grandi, the Italian Foreign Minister, who next week intends to take part in the session of the League Council at Geneva. This will be the first time that Italy has been represented at any League meeting by a Minister. The Italian press accuses the Swiss authorities of not having taken any measures for the protection of the Italian Delegation, although the Swiss Government was informed twenty days ago that anti-Fascists in France were conspiring with anti-Fascists in Geneva, and had prepared an attempt on Signor Grandi's life. The Italian press especially reproaches the Geneva authorities with having permitted the Geneva Anarchist Bertoni, together with Berneri, to visit the League Secretariat some weeks ago, obviously, it is assumed, to choose the best occasion for committing the crime.

The Swiss authorities acknowledge having been informed about Christmas-time that some conspiracy among anti-Fascists was believed to be on foot, but they declare that they immediately took special precautions. Although it is not denied that Bertoni, at Geneva, is in personal contact with Berneri, no indication of Bertoni's complicity has been obtained, although the Geneva police searched his house on Friday night and seized much correspondence. As to the Alleged visit of Bertoni and Berneri to the League Secretariat, the officials of the League deny such a visit.

However, the Geneva police, in conjunction with a high League official, had concerted measures for Signor Grandi's protection before the Italian press began their reproaches. It is

observed that the centre of the anti-Fascist movement in the neighbourhood of the League headquarters is not at Geneva but at Annemasse, just beyond the French frontier. The investigations of the French police at Annemasse are said to have revealed that the anti-Fascists prepared an attempt not against Signor Grandi but against the Belgian Royal Family, who on Saturday passed through Switzerland on their way to Rome for the royal marriage.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

At a meeting of Zurich's clergymen (Pfarrkongress) attention was again called to the slums in the old parts of the town. The poor access of sunlight in those flats is a grave danger to health, and the smallness of the accommodation causes overcrowding. Although attention to these matters has been paid in a slight way, much remains to be done; in fact only a thorough clearing up will satisfy, and it was decided to call a public meeting to bring the whole matter once more prominently before the public eye. N.Z.Z.

* * *

The Zurich town council, following a motion by Schmid-Ruedin (democrat), has by a majority decision decided to inform the Cantonal Authorities, that they consider the building of a town hospital a necessity. This hospital will increase the insufficient accommodation available up to now at the Cantonal hospital.

* * *

On January 2nd the Savings Bank of the town of Zurich celebrated its 125th anniversary. The original capital of this Bank was subscribed by members of the "Hilfsgesellschaft" during a "Bertchtoldsesen" on Berchtoldstag (January 2nd) 1805. The collection amounted to 10 Gulden 21 Schillinge (roughly £1 present day value). The Savings Bank has now paid to the Benevolent Association the sum of Frs. 3,212.20 which represents the amount collected in 1805 plus interest.

* * *

A terrible tragedy at Uster marred the New Year's day. Mrs. Hess, aged 32, was found drowned in a pond with her four-week's old baby boy. It appears, that she left her home on New Year's Eve in a state of insanity, her husband at the time being away at his work, tied her baby to herself with string and put an end to their lives. St. G.T.

BERNE.

Federal Councillor Minger has been presented with the freedom of Schüpfen, of which he is a citizen. St. G.T.

* * *

Emil Rikli, avocat, Mayor of Laupen died at Berne, aged 57, after a protracted illness.

* * *

Notary Eduard Wenger, travelling from Neuenburg to Biel, stood on the platform between two railway carriages shortly before the train entered Biel, as he did not feel well. A sudden jolt over the points threw him off his balance and he fell beneath the wheels. Both his feet were severed. He also suffered a broken arm and serious head injuries. N.Z.Z.

SOLEURE.

Hans Roth, proprietor of an old established firm of cloth and clothing merchants in Soleure, has committed suicide after killing his wife and his two daughters with revolver shots, while they were asleep. The whole family enjoyed the friendship and respect of the citizens; Roth himself belonged to an old established Soleure family. There are no indications of any trouble either financially or in the family life, so that the authorities believe, that Roth suddenly lost his reason. This theory is supported by the fact, that Roth suffered from tubercular kidney trouble of long standing, and that shortly before his death internal hemorrhage must have caused him unbearable pain. N.Z.Z.

ST. GALL.

15-year old Felix Pfiffner from Unterfisch was helping to fell trees, when a beech tree fell on him and broke his neck. St. G.T.

APPENZELL.

Socks and stockings belonging to an Appenzell tinsmith were stolen from the washing line. He inserted the following in the "Appenzeller Voksfreund": To the person who has stolen socks and stockings off my washing line, I wish a merry Xmas and particularly warm feet! St. G.T.

AARAU.

Brown, Boveri & Co., have obtained the Cantonal Factory Inspector's permission to extend the working hours to 52 per week for 2,200 workmen until the end of June next. N.Z.Z.

* * *

The heirs of the late Mr. C. Habich-Dietschy, of the Salmenbräu Riehenfelden, have presented to the town the historic Stammhaus zur Sonne to serve as a Fricktal museum in memory of the defunct. St. G.T.

BASLE.

The tenant of a room at the Landskronstrasse in Basle was not a little astonished when, on entering his room on the morning of the 2nd January, he found in his bed an elderly man sleeping off the effects of drink. On enquiry it was found, that the "guest" was once upon a time the tenant of this room and, having celebrated New Year too freely, had taken his old way home. N.

* * *

Owing to the increasing number of burglaries and nocturnal attacks, 80 members of the Basle police raided certain ill-reputed public houses in Kleinbasel, the outlying quarters and along the frontier. In one place, the police were received with chairs held aloft as weapons. Twenty-five arrests were made. St. G.T.

NEUCHATEL.

Samuel Bucher, Manager of the Fleurier electricity works, has perfected after seven years' work an electrical safety appliance for safes, etc. As soon as a safe equipped in such a manner is touched in any way, an alarm bell starts ringing, and an indicator fitted up in the police station shows a number indicating the locality of the endangered safe. St. G.T.

WINTER SPORTS.

Murren.

The British University Ski Club defeated the Swiss University Ski Club in their annual match at Murren to-day. The British club won the straight race and the slalom race. Colin Wyatt (Cambridge) won the straight race and Barry Caulfield (London) won the slalom race.—Reuter.

Davos.

The second Olympiad for students' winter sports is now in progress and will continue till January 12. The first Olympiad was held two years ago at Cortina d'Ampezzo, in Italy. Fourteen nations took part in it. This number has only increased by one this year.

Unfortunately, the Scandinavians will be absent, because they do not agree with the altered regulations by which some events will be introduced which they do not cultivate, such as "Slalom" and "Down Race." But competition will be sterner than at Cortina d'Ampezzo owing to the systematic training that has been going on everywhere since 1928, and it is doubtful if the Norwegians would again secure their former position at the top of the list.

DEATH TOLL OF ALPS.

Fifty deaths a year is the average toll of the Swiss Alps.

This is revealed in the latest statistics which show that mountain climbing is becoming increasingly dangerous. For the three-year period of 1926-1928 a total of 150 accidents was registered with a consequent death-roll of 105. This was a marked increase over the preceding three-year period with 112 accidents and 138 deaths.

Most of the fatalities occur in winter, and are blamed on the increase of skiing, while the summer accidents are generally caused by quests for Alpine flowers on the edge of precipices or heights of peaks.

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