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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS



### FEDERAL.

#### HOTEL INDUSTRY.

According to the latest report of Swiss hotel proprietors, 100 million francs have been spent during the last ten years in providing hotels with hot and cold water and generally bringing them up-to-date. It is estimated that a further 50 million will be spent during the next few years for the same purpose.

#### REPATRIATION OF SWISS SETTLERS IN RUSSIA.

During 1929 the Swiss government was successful in sending 76 Swiss from Russia to Canada whilst 30 returned to Switzerland, where work could be found for them.

There are still about 1,500 Swiss in Russia, most of them in the Caucasus, where families have lived for 3 and 4 generations, and their repatriation presents a difficult problem. Most of them speak Russian only and would be foreigners in their native country.

Until now the International Red Cross Society has been instrumental in distributing food to Swiss settlers in Russia and in making the necessary arrangements for those who wished to be repatriated. It is probable that the government will have to study the problem soon as the majority of the settlers are passing through difficult times and some are completely destitute.

#### CHEAPER POSTAGE.

The Federal Council will shortly deposit in London the ratification acts of the seven international postal conventions concluded in June 1929 by the International Postal Union. The department for post and railways has been requested to make an application for the entry into force of the conventions on July 1st, 1930. To a certain extent they deal with a reduction of postage on printed matter especially for international traffic. The reductions are of primary interest to newspapers and periodicals.

#### BASLE'S PORT ACTIVITIES.

Traffic operation in Basle's port during March have reached a total of 52,000 tons. This brings the total for the first three months of the current year up to 145,000 tons, which is three times that of the corresponding period of the preceding year, and twice as much as in the first quarter of 1928, which was a very favourable year for navigation on the Rhine. T.G.

#### SWITZERLAND AT THE EXHIBITION OF LIEGE.

Switzerland has accepted the invitation of the Belgian government to take part at the International Exhibition at Liège. Swiss exhibits will be shown in a special pavilion, the style of which however does not remind you of alpine chalets, as it will be entirely constructed of transparent Belgian glass.

#### MOTOR CYCLE INDUSTRY.

The total value of Switzerland's exports of motor cycles in 1929 amounts to £90,540 and imports reached the figure of £191,720, of which £160,000 is supposed to have gone to England.

#### EDIGEN. STAATSRECHNUNG 1929.

The accounts for 1929 which were submitted to the Federal Council show a surplus of nearly 24 million francs, or 1,875,000 francs more than the budget provided. The result is all the more satisfactory, as it constitutes a further increase as compared with the preceding year. The accounts for the years 1914 to 1927 have closed with a deficit; the highest figure reached in 1922 amounted to no less than over 127 million francs.

#### NATURALISATION IN SWITZERLAND.

During the last year 2,089 applications for naturalisation in Switzerland have been granted. Germans and Italians head the list with 803 and 724 respectively; practically all the nations with the exception of China and Great Britain are included in this number.

#### FOREIGN LEGION.

The Federal Council does not relax its efforts to obtain the release of those compatriots who have enlisted in the French Foreign Legion. Dur-

ing the year 1929 four discharges were obtained of young Swiss who had joined before they reached the age of 18, in the majority of cases, however, such diplomatic intervention is of little avail. A remarkable case is that of a Swiss who enrolled before the outbreak of the War and who during a visit to Switzerland in 1917 was called up by his military unit; when he happened to be on French soil in 1927 he was promptly arrested as a deserter.

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

Dr. Hans Widmer of Töss has been elected Mayor of Winterthur in succession to Dr. Hans Streuli.

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Edward Bürli of Zell, domiciled in Gerliswil, was arrested in a Zurich bank when he tried to discount a spurious bill for 28,000 francs. He was found in possession of large bills, amounting to 200,000 francs, and all drawn on well-known firms. N.Z.Z.

#### BERNE.

Two teams of seven competitors each, from the universities of Cambridge and Berne, took part in a friendly shooting match at Berne. The Bernese beat Cambridge by 1,751 points to 1,652. V.

Hans Kaufmann, a well-known guide of Grindelwald, has died in the hospital at Interlaken after an operation. Kaufmann, who was only 55, was engaged on many climbing ventures at home, in Canada and in South America.

#### URI.

Joseph Enzinger, living at Wädenswil, committed suicide at Erstfeld by putting his neck on the railway line. He was decapitated. V.

#### BASLE.

An unofficial strike of builders has been started at Basle. This has already led to conflicts between strikers and the police.

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Albert Hummel of Basle has given himself up to the police for murdering his wife. She had filed a petition for divorce and refused a demand for reconciliation. In an access of fury he strangled her. Judging by appearances his wife, aged 62, put up a terrific fight for her life. N.

#### SCHAFFHOUSE.

In spite of some opposition, Hallau has decided to fix the closing hour for public houses. This will be at midnight. N.Z.Z.

#### ST. GALL.

Next May will be held the first elections of members for the new School Council of the town of St. Gall, in replacement of the present four bodies. The Town Council has fixed the number of members of the new School Council at 35; 19, 9 and 7 respectively for the quarters Central, East and West.

\*\*\*

Colonel Hauser has announced his forthcoming retirement from the posts of President of the 'Bank Ausschluss' and member of the 'Bank Kommission' of the Cantonal Bank. He is aged 81. N.Z.Z.

#### AARGAU.

The communes of Umiken and Windisch are petitioning for incorporation with Brugg. N.Z.Z.

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Dr. A. Hartmann, professor of chemistry at the 'Kantonsschule,' has received 10,000 francs from a former pupil for the creation of a fund, the interest of which is to be used to further the tuition of chemistry at the school. N.Z.Z.

#### THURGAU.

Alfred Kaiser-Saurer, who for some years represented the Confederation as Commercial Agent in Egypt, has died at Arbon, aged 68. N.Z.Z.

#### VAUD.

The combined efforts of a member of the Vaudois Police Force and the Italian Police Authorities have resulted in the discovery at Milan of a canvas stolen at the 'Musée des beaux-arts' at Lausanne in January last. T.G.

#### VALAIS.

Mr. Jean-Jacques Mercier de Molin, of Sierre, presented to the cantonal authorities a plot of land at Montana for the purpose of the erection of the much desired cantonal sanatorium. His gift was accompanied by the sum of 100,000 francs and the States Council has expressed the population's thanks for this very generous donation. T.G.

### NEUCHÂTEL.

Fleurier, where the council voted a credit of 100,000 francs for the 'Ecole d'Horlogerie' has made use of the referendum and by 566 votes against 281 refused the sanction of the credit.

### GENEVA.

A forest fire occurred on the estate of Costa de Beauregard which destroyed a large number of trees in spite of the immediate help of all the neighbours available. The loss is estimated at over 20,000 francs.

### LAUSANNE.

Mr. O. Duserre, head of the school for agricultural chemistry at Lausanne, has tendered his resignation which was accepted with a vote of thanks for the services rendered.

### TICINO.

A new Radio station is to be constructed on Monte Ceneri to relay wireless programmes for the canton.

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A tragic accident occurred in the chocolate factory Cima-Norma, where a 16-year-old workman, named Locatelli, was caught by a transmission belt. As a consequence of the accident the man has lost one of his arms and is in a serious condition. T.G.

## ONE YEAR'S AIR TRAFFIC IN SWITZERLAND.

The following particulars regarding the air traffic accomplished by the two principal air transport concerns in Switzerland—Cie. Ad Astra-Aéro S.A. and Balair—during 1929 may be of interest.

Ad Astra company—which, by the way, completed its tenth year of aerial activities—operated two international and three internal air services, as follows:—Zurich-Stuttgart-Halle-Leipzig-Berlin (April to October 31), in conjunction with the German Luft Hansa; Basel-Zurich-Munich (May 1 to October 31); Lausanne-Berne-Zurich (June 10 to September 28); Geneva-Lausanne-Chaux de Fonds-Basel (June 3 to September 28); and a double service St. Gall-Zurich (May 1 to September 28). During February and April a winter service was operated between Zurich-Munich.

During the above periods of operation Ad Astra carried 3,985 paying passengers, 52,000 kg. mails, 50,000 kg. freight, and 14,600 kg. extra luggage. These figures represent 40.6 per cent. of the total disposable load available. The total distance of the entire Ad Astra system is about 1,504 km. (934.5 miles).

In addition to these regular services Ad Astra also did a considerable amount of touring, taxi, and joy-riding work, in which 5,410 passengers were carried. Many passengers were flown in special aerial excursions over the Lakes and Alps, the latter trips being especially popular. For these a three-engined Fokker is employed, carrying 15 passengers, and flights have been made over Mont Cervin, Mont Blanc, etc. Finally, the Ad Astra company also organised the aerial hunting expedition of Baron Rothschild from Zurich to Nairobi in the Fokker 'Switzerland III,' piloted by Walter Mittelholzer (a director of Ad Astra) and accompanied by second pilot A. Kunzle and Mechanic Weymann.

Balair, in 1929, operated over a series of lines 2,034 km. (1,264 miles) in extent, extending northward to Amsterdam, southward to the Mediterranean, and eastward to Vienna. This company employs single- and tri-motored aircraft, and operates the following international lines:—Geneva-Zurich-Munich-Vienna (May 1 to October 31); and Basel-Geneva-Marseilles, with connection to Barcelona (May 1 to October 31) in conjunction with the German Luft Hansa; Zurich-Basel-Brussels-Rotterdam-Amsterdam (May 6 to August 31), in conjunction with the Dutch K.L.M. Balair machines during this period made 1,180 flights (1,955.5 hours' flying), without the smallest accident, and only one forced landing outside an aerodrome, due to bad weather, was made, and this without damage to the machine. The three services mentioned above were operated with a regularity of 98.6, 98.4 and 99 per cent. efficiency.

Passengers, mails and freight carried on these routes during 1929 were as follow:—Passengers, 2,758; mails, 48,000 kg.; freight, 178,000 kg.; extra luggage, 31,600 kg. In addition to these regular air services, Balair also executed 303 special flights and carried 1,324 passengers. For the 1930 season the Balair company is adding four tri-motor Fokkers of the latest type. Flight.