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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

### FEDERAL.

The Federal commission of experts, set up to study the possibilities of effecting economies in the budget for army expenses, met last week at Berne, under the presidency of Mr. de Gmüems. The session, which lasted two days, allocated the work to be done by various sub-committees. *T.G.*

### KLAUSENRENNEN.

Contrary to the statement made in our last issue the Swiss Press now says that the Klausenrennen will be held as usual on 9th and 10th August.

### FORCED LANDING.

A military aeroplane from La Blécherette made a forced landing near Romanel. One of the pilots, Lt. Collet, sustained a broken leg and had to be transported to the cantonal hospital at Lausanne.

### WATCH INDUSTRY.

An important conference was called for April 24th at Bienné on account of ever increasing unemployment in the watch industry. Representatives of the States Council for Berne, Neuchâtel and Solothurn and of the various towns in the neighbourhood discussed ways and means to alleviate conditions with the help of the Federal authorities.

### VOLUNTARY SERVICES.

The committee which organised the voluntary service colonies at Somo (Ticino) in 1924 and in Liechtenstein in 1928 is again appealing for helpers to establish a similar colony at Montauban. The volunteers are housed and fed, but receive no payment. Their railway fares are refunded if they undertake to work for a period of at least two weeks. *T.G.*

### COST OF LIVING.

The Federal Statistical Office reports that the index figure for the cost of living at the end of March was 159 (100 in June 1914) which compares favourably with 160 for the end of February and 161 at the end of March 1929.

### CONSULAR SERVICE.

The Political Department has nominated Dr. A. Däniker to deputise for Vice-Consul Zuber at Shanghai during the latter's illness.

### SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS.

According to the report of the Swiss Federal Railways for the current year, constructional work is to absorb Frs. 66,011,200. With receipts placed at Frs. 413,770,000 and expenditure at Frs. 283,231,700, the working results show a presumed excess of earnings amounting to Frs. 130,538,300. The profit and loss account shows Frs. 152,992,000 on the revenue side, and Frs. 150,362,000 on the expenditure side. It balances, therefore, with a probable net profit of Frs. 2,630,000. *M.T.*

### SWISS HOUSE IN PARIS.

The collection for a Swiss House in the Cité Universitaire Paris amounts to 300,000 francs. As the building, however, will cost considerably more the committee has approached the Federal authorities for assistance. The sum collected will be deposited with the Finance Department for the time being and the Federal Council has granted an additional sum of 100,000 francs. *N.*

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

A serious outbreak of fire occurred in an old house at the Helmutstrasse in Zurich. This house is built in between two apartment houses and was chiefly used as warehouse for dried herbs by the herbs-merchant Egli. The huge stocks of "Kräutertee" were completely destroyed, and the damage is estimated at 35,000 Frs. *St. G.T.*

The tribunal of Horgen passed judgment in the case where Dr. W. Siegfried was killed by an express train when cycling over a level crossing at Rüschlikon in June 1929. The enquiry has shown that the barriers were not closed and that the alarm signals did not function properly. The woman in charge of the barriers had only been employed for a short time, and the defence made it clear that she did not obtain the necessary in-

structions before being engaged for the post. A fine of 150 francs was imposed on her and the cause of the accident has been attributed to insufficient instruction services on the part of the C.F.F. Since the accident the railway authorities have made arrangements to build a subway and do away with the level crossing. *T.G.*

#### LUCERNE.

The beautiful surroundings of the lake of Lucerne are being spoilt by an increasing number of large and small quarries, which have been worked during the last few years. Unfortunately, the authorities do not seem to pay this matter the necessary attention. The least that should be done is to limit the number of new quarries and to enforce the planting of bushes in all quarries where work has been definitely stopped. As it is, the landscape is marred by ugly yellow and grey scars, which are visible from afar, being in the midst of the dark green of the old woods. The number of quarries in existence is already considerable: two between Gersau and Brunnen, one between Stansstad and Hergiswil, five on the Alpachersee, one between Kehrsiten and Stansstad, one in the Matt below the Bürgenstock, four between Beckenried and Treib, and two between Seedorf and Isleren. The stone industry is having a flourishing time, as many roads are under construction, and transport on the lake is cheap. All the same, this should be a matter for some rationalism. *St. G.T.*

#### SOLEURE.

The Bürgergemeinde Solothurn acknowledges, in a fifth list of donors, the receipt of 25,600 Frs. towards the costs of a hospital. This amount brings the total of the donations for the new Bürgerspital, which is to be opened shortly, to 617,800 Frs. *N.Z.Z.*

The Socialist members of the Cantonal Council demand the calling of a special session to deal with the unemployment problem in the watch industry. *St. G.T.*

An incredibly callous action is reported from Starrkirch. A motorist, believing that a group of young men had thrown stones at his car, deliberately drove into them. Two young men are in hospital with serious injuries. The motorist was arrested. *N.Z.Z.*

Manufacturer Mägli and his 14-year-old son, of Grenchen, were in the garden shooting crows. As Mägli put down his loaded gun, there was a report, and his son collapsed. The shot had penetrated his temple; he was immediately removed to the Biel hospital, but died on admission. *St. G.T.*

#### BASLE.

Basle police authorities have established the principle of deporting foreign workmen who take leading parts in strikes. Carrying out this policy, a constable in mufti was ordered to accompany an Italian to his room at the Webergasse, so that he could collect his belongings before leaving for Chiasso. In the Webergasse the man suddenly escaped and fled to the Communist headquarters at the "Bläsitor." A few compatriots of the fugitive, having been told of his compulsory departure, surrounded the policeman. However, he managed to get to a telephone and ask the Klaraposten for help. Thereafter, he and two uniformed officers entered "Bläsitor" and searched the building for the prisoner. In doing so, they discovered on the second floor two men who had helped the Italian to escape and arrested them for aiding and abetting. Communist strikers arrived, and in no time the ground-floor was the scene of an embittered battle. Further police reinforcements hurried up and had to use their batons, two separate charges being needed to rescue the officers inside the house. One of them is seriously injured, as he was knocked out and, while lying on the ground, was kicked unmercifully all over the body.

A motor cycle accident at Liestal ended in a lucky manner. A new rider took his cycle out for the first time, with a friend on the pillion. Arrived at Liestal, he took the wrong turning and, noticing this fact, he endeavoured to turn round. At the same time, a motor car came round the bend. Evidently somewhat shaken in his self-confidence, the motor cyclist mistook the accelerator for the brake and went full force into a fence. He escaped all injury, while his companion somersaulted right over the fence and landed on a window frame, thus hurting himself.

The population of Gelterkinden has received pleasant news. The ribbon factory will not be closed down, as was announced, but will be re-organised for the manufacture of velvets, which offers better prospects of obtaining orders. *N.*

#### APPENZEL.

The garage Baumann at the Weissbadstrasse in Appenzel was the scene of a serious fire following an explosion. The fire quickly reached the staircase and cut off the retreat of the two families living above the garage. One woman broke her leg in jumping from the window.

#### ST. GALL.

The Uznach school council had proposed a gift of 700 Frs. to Alois Schmucko, who has retired after 45 years service as teacher. A Conservative member proposed to reduce this amount to 300 Frs., and this proposal was carried by ballot vote. The retiring teacher's family showed their pleasure by refusing the present altogether. This episode throws a striking light on the understanding with which some circles look upon the teaching profession. *St. G.T.*

#### THURGAU.

The police of Kreuzlingen have made an important discovery, compromising several highly placed persons, supposed to have been engaged in helping to smuggle large quantities of cocaine. It is suggested that the cocaine has been imported from Konstanz and was sent to France via Geneva. *T.G.*

#### VALAIS.

Returning from the Simplon to Brig, the horses of the post-coach were frightened by a landslide between the Ganterbrücke and hut No. 2, and jumped over the road board. Fortunately for the driver, the traces broke, so that only the horses fell into the ravine. They were found at the foot of a precipice of 150 metres. *N.Z.Z.*

On Sunday afternoon last the police headquarters at Sierre received a message to the effect that a two years old girl was missing. Police Inspector Chavannes at once left for the house of the parents with his dog "Marco," where he arrived at seven o'clock in the evening. Without hesitation the dog took up the trail of the lost child and led his followers to a near-by forest, where at 8 o'clock the child was discovered under a bush in an exhausted condition. The result is all the more astonishing, as a large part of the population organised search parties during the afternoon which, however, led to no result. *N.*

#### VAUD.

Mr. F. Pittet was mortally wounded one day last week when a terrible explosion occurred whilst he was working in his forge. The remains of a shell were found amongst the debris and an enquiry is afoot to find out whether the shell has been accidentally imported with the coal, which is of German origin, or whether the man had an unexploded shell in his workshop. *T.G.*

A fire, the cause of which is so far unknown, has completely destroyed a homestead near Diablerets. The flames spread in such an alarming way that a barn and a stable became ignited and five head of cattle were lost.

#### NEUCHÂTEL.

Sainte-Croix Council have ratified a convention with Yverdon concerning the supply of gas, and have authorised the municipality to negotiate a loan up to 250,000 francs for this purpose.

An open meeting at La Chaux-de-Fonds recently discussed the formation of an organisation to advertise the town as a resort for visitors and to draw special attraction to the beauty of the many rivers, gorges and mountains in the Neuchâtel district. *St. G.*

#### GENEVA.

A serious fire occurred at Châtelaine, near Geneva, involving a block of flats and a storage shed for coal. The fire brigade was able to control the outbreak after two hours arduous work. The estimated damage, which is fortunately covered by insurance, amounts to about 100,000 francs. *N.Z.Z.*

#### TICINO.

Statistics for the canton give the following figures for 1929:—2,494 births, 2,472 deaths and 883 marriages. The excess of births over deaths is only 22 against 285 in 1928 and 1,288 in 1914. The "Popolo e Libertà" laments the alarming conditions and fears that the figures will be even less encouraging in future years. *T.G.*