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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. P. BOEHRINGER.

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FEDERAL.

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS.

The two Chambers have voted a sum of 500,000fr. for the International Red Cross Institution. The Swiss Trustees of the Fund are Minister Dinichert and Dir. Rytffel from the Federal Treasury.

ST.T.

WOMEN PREACHERS IN SWITZERLAND.

It is reported that, by a big majority, the Basle Calvinist Council has decided to admit women pastors in hospitals and asylums, to baptise, perform marriages, administer holy communion, and preach. The decision follows an agitation by the women. A number of women theological students had obtained diplomas, but were not allowed to occupy pulpits in the Calvinist churches.

Geneva has one woman pastor. The Canton of Grisons, owing to the scarcity of pastors, has licensed women clergy on the condition they remain unmarried. The women, however, demand that the law be altered to enable three married women pastors to take posts.

OLD-AGE INSURANCE IN SWITZERLAND.

Both Swiss Chambers last week passed by a large majority the federal law for old-age and dependents' insurance. The proposal came before the Assembly in 1929, and will be compulsory and applicable to all between the ages of 19 and 65.

SWISS ELECTRICAL EXPORTS.

The exports of electrical machinery and apparatus from Switzerland during the three months ended with March last attained a value of £805,840, as compared with £920,320 in the corresponding quarter of 1930.

SWISS-ITALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

The Swiss-Italian Chamber of Commerce has transferred its offices from Genoa to Milan.

MANIFESTATIONS IN BRUSSELS IN HONOUR OF PROF. PICCARD.

A brilliant manifestation took place at the Palais des Académies in Brussels on the 18th inst. in honour of Professor Piccard and his companion Dr. Kipfer. Amongst the participants of the demonstration were the King and the Queen of the Belgians, members of the Government, the four rectors of the Belgian Universities and a score of scientists of world wide repute. Prof. Piccard and Dr. Kipfer received a hearty ovation.

ABOLITION OF DEATH PENALTY.

The Swiss Parliament has adopted the section of the Federal Penal Code abolishing the death penalty.

NEW SWISS HOLIDAY TRAIN.

A new *de luxe* holiday train operating between Montreux and Interlaken has been put into service on the Swiss Federal Railways for the summer season. The train is named the Golden Mountain Pullman express, and is specially equipped for the use of visitors to these holiday resorts.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The death is reported from Zurich of Ingenieur H. Hall at the age of 67. The deceased was formerly director of Locomotive Works Winterthur and Oerlikon.

ST.T.

* * *

M. Fritz Streiff-Mettler, head of the well-known textile works has died at Aathal-Seegräben at the age of 68.

N.Z.Z.

GENEVE.

Professor Duparc of the University of Geneva has been nominated foreign member of the Geological Society in London.

J.G.

AARGAU.

A serious fire destroyed a larger part of the "Schweiz. Gummiwarenfabrik J. Lohnstroff," in Aarau. The damage caused is estimated at over 150,000fr.

ST.T.

NEUCHÂTEL.

The Annual "Fête des vendanges de Neuchâtel" has been fixed to take place on October 3rd and 4th.

J.S.

VALAIS.

An explosion has occurred at the Lonza Chemical Works at Viège, Canton Valais, causing an emission of poison gas, which endangered the lives of the workers. Herr G. Zurbriggen, a chemist, forced his way into the room and stopped the leakage. The workers, about 20 in number, were saved, but the chemist was severely gassed as the result of his gallant action, and died later.

LAUSANNE.

M. Häberlin, President of the Confederation and Federal Councillor Schulthess will pay an official visit to the "Comptoir" on September 17th.

ST.T.

GRAUBÜNDEN.

A cold water spring, acting like a geyser and erupting regularly every fifteen minutes, made its appearance not long ago in Switzerland. No other is known in the whole Alpine region.

This one started into action in the course of digging operations in the Engadine valley near Tarasp-Schuls, a fashionable spa well known to visitors, with an ancient castle perched on the top of a hill in a stage-like setting.

The cause of this natural fountain seems to be an accumulating store of carbon dioxide, which finds an outlet at regular intervals when the natural reservoir in which it collects is full.

LUCERNE.

A morality play called "The Prodigal Son" will be given on the steps of Lucerne Cathedral on Saturdays, Sundays and Thursdays throughout July and August by a sacred play society called Geistliche Spiele, which has been formed in the city.

TICINO.

Measurements made by the Swiss Geological Survey show that Monte Arbino, the "moving mountain" near Bellinzona, in the Ticino, has moved about four yards northwards during the past 12 months, and that its movement shows signs of increasing.

LILY ZAEHNER'S RECITAL.

A very accomplished and gifted singer in Miss Lily Zaeher (Mezzo-Soprano) gave an interesting and most enjoyable recital of songs by Beethoven, Robert Franz, Schubert, Brahms, Liszt and Hugo Wolf before a very large audience at the Wigmore Hall on Tuesday evening June 23rd.

An unusual feature of the well-chosen programme was the inclusion of a song in Swiss dialect "Schweizerlied" by Schubert. Its gaiety was well received.

Miss Lily Zaeher's sure command of a very pleasant voice ringing perfectly true in her middle notes and dignified in the low tones, her generally clear and eloquent diction, at the service of a well-marked sense of interpretation, showed abundantly her qualities and wide attainments as a singer and musician.

If at times her 'piano' and her 'forte' appeared perhaps just a trifle over-emphasised, it made one feel that the singer would have been heard to yet better advantage on a larger concert platform.

It was, indeed, a remarkable and high-class recital, which earned Miss Lily Zaeher a rich and well-deserved applause. And let us add—to our pride—yet another name on the list of distinguished Swiss artists we have been privileged to hear in London.

Mr. George Reeves played the piano accompaniment with sympathy.

Among those present was Miss Jacqueline Paravicini. The City Swiss Club was represented by its Hon. Secretary.

J.Z.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

While the very interesting article about "Ulrich Zwingli" was running in my column, other collaborators of the Swiss Observer were not slow in taking their chances.

Zwingli may be all right for some readers, they thought, but, knowing our Swiss as we do, we fancy they want something in a lighter vein and they hardly turn to the Swiss Observer to be educated in History or to read about ancient times of religious strife.

Hence, I have observed, not without pleasure, believe me, that the third page of our weekly Swiss paper has gradually become the most eagerly sought after, because on that page were and are to be found the tit-bits, the little sensations, the personal touches, so dear to most of us.

"Ck" has surpassed himself and, probably under the influence of the weather and the rising temperature, has even gone into poetry of a sort.

Then, in our last week's issue, we had that story about that tall dog, or was it a tall story? The "Gillette" dog, I mean. I should imagine that dog to be quite bald, because the razor blades he devours naturally would cut off his hair at the root! Some dog, anyhow. Further news is most anxiously awaited and I, for one, shall look out to read about sensational happenings shortly in the home of that doggie. Someone is bound to feel cut-up about it by and by.

Then that car, in which the thieves left the sausages! My dear Watson, it's as clear as daylight that the thieves were of English nationality. No foreigner would have left the sausages!

We also are regaled with a "funny cut" of very ancient vintage and then we have a very interesting article on Professor Piccard's wonderful flight and the preparations preceding it.

All that on page 3 of last week's issue. All that for the equivalent of three farthings as it were. What a paper, what collaborators, what ho!

Naturally, I am put on my mettle. I cannot afford, lest I might lose my job for good, to let others absorb all the interest of our readers. I have to make good again and I have decided, in a weak moment, to work much harder in future and to see to my readers, those who really know THE best stuff is found in the Swiss Paper, to be able to hold up their head again and point out the wonderful articles of Kyburg.

No, my dear "Ck" you won't have it all your own way, be you ever so comfy in your corner! I almost thought just now, thinking of "Ck" and that Gillette doggie at the same time "go back and keep in your corner." But, of course, we are very polite to each other, you know that icy politeness underlying professional jealousy and we don't call each other names, at least not in each other's hearing. Nor do we print libels or slanders, because we cannot afford any such costly amusements.

On our merits we stand or fall, hence our mostly recumbent position, a la Phil Scott! But we can always get up again and boast about what we should have done, had circumstances beyond our control, not prevented us. Etc., etc.

Well now, what shall we write about this week? I wished I knew. The Press Gleanings afford no clue, being few and uninteresting. Switzerland is one of those happy countries which do not figure largely in the sensational happenings of the day.

Of course, I could write about holidays. But then, that makes me feel very sad and gloomy and makes others feel discontented with their lot.

Or again, I might try and chronicle some of the happenings in the Swiss Colony. Or the future ones, like the Swiss Fête in June! Time was, a quarter of a century ago, when that "Swiss Tea" took place at the old Portman Rooms, when, in the interval, there was a buffet which boasted Claret Cup and when we could smoke. Since, one year, I read on an invitation that smoking was not done anymore, the Swiss Tea saw me no more. Mind you, not that I am a heavy smoker. But I don't hold with the namby pambies and will not be dictated too. I dislike smoking in a theatre, but for the Swiss Tea, which is not so much a Concert, as an occasion when Swiss meets Swiss and when local Talent has a chance of showing off a bit, I hold that any restrictions of so childish a nature are un-Swiss. Amen!

Perhaps it is the thundery weather which makes me somewhat garrulous. I am certainly

not amusing and see no earthly chance yet of getting in front of "Ck." I have the inferiority complex to-day and wish someone else would write this article.

If only "Ck's" poetry had not been quite so good, I might find courage to go one better and let lose some of my own rhymes, as for instance:

*Writing for the Swiss Observer is a task,
Sitting in the sun on Sunday with a flask,
Both are occupations, both are nice to do,
One makes you feel thirsty,
the other ditto, too!*

How's that?

Of course, with a bit of training and effort I could do very much better. I can do lyrical things quite easily, provided I have got the right atmosphere. Of course, the thing in poetry is to find "le mot juste," i.e. the very word which will illuminate the whole passage, which will put the reader in the "picture" as it were, at a glance and make him see exactly the shade of thought the poet wishes him to see. Now that requires long study and thought, plenty of wet towels around the poet's fevered brow and deep inspiration—gulps and gulps of it.

We then get something like this:

*Fifful the rays of the moon were shining
Over the churchyard a dog was whining,
Be quiet, my child, your mother is near,
Your father is outside, quaking with fear!*

and so on. You picture the poor wee bairn, sitting in its mother's lap—that's why she is so near! and you picture the father, just returning from the local club at the Pig and Whistle and afraid to go home in the dark, while all the time musique macabre is being rendered by the doggie without!

Next week, if necessary, more and perhaps better!

SWITZERLAND AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM.

The countries of the world are for the most part suffering to a great degree from unemployment, a consequence of the crisis which has been prevailing for over a year now. The situation of the Labour Market has in truth become nearly desperate, filling certain Governments with the gravest concern. This state of affairs is almost general, that is to say that it also extends to those countries, such as France and the United States of America, which, by reason of the relative prosperity they have enjoyed during the past few years, considered themselves as unlikely to be threatened with such a danger as this. In other states, such as England and Germany, where unemployment has been rife ever since the first years after the war, the number of unemployed has steadily increased during the last few years until at the present time the figures are really alarming.

It is evidently very difficult to realise the gravity of the situation in various countries and to put forward even approximate figures. As a matter of fact, the numbers of unemployed registered officially or noted by various organisations do not necessarily include all those who can no longer earn their living in each country. Several countries, such as the United States of America, have for a great many years taken no steps to give assistance to the unemployed from the public purse, but have left it to individuals to come to the aid of those who have found themselves temporarily out of work. However, here are some figures which will give an idea of the gravity of the situation; they are taken from well authenticated sources.

An enquiry which extended to practically all countries, estimates at 40 or 50 millions the unemployed all over the world who receive assistance from the public money or are in some way or other a burden supported by the various states. Here are the figures which concern some of the principal countries. In the United States of America, as far as can be ascertained, the number of unemployed amounts to 5 million, or nearly 10 million according to another estimate. Belgium has 100,000 out-of-work, Australia 175,000, Denmark 44,000, Germany 4.5 million, Italy 530,000, Great Britain 2.5 million, Austria 330,000, Sweden 45,000, Czechoslovakia 150,000, and France 32,000. This last figure is insignificant if one compares it to that of the population of the country.

The causes of unemployment and its remedies have for a long time occupied not only the public authorities but also the different organisations which interest themselves more specially in economic problems and social politics. The International Labour Bureau is also interesting itself in the question. One of its special Commissions is studying the problem, which was the subject, at the beginning of the year, of a report presented to the Administrative Council of this International Bureau.

Unemployment is itself the manifestation of another primary cause, the consequence of the economic crisis, of which the cause are rather difficult to define with accuracy. They might be

financial or the results of overproduction. In recent years production has, in fact, largely exceeded consumption. At all times unemployment has existed to a more or less considerable degree. It has greatly increased with the growing industrialisation of the various countries, the ever-increasing extension of production and the ever-growing difficulties encountered in adapting it to the needs of mankind.

Therefore, among the suggested remedies, it has been proposed to institute a policy of international collaboration in the domain of production, as well as different systems, which, if not capable of doing away with the causes of unemployment, will at least minimise certain of its consequences from a social point of view. Unhappily the numerous misunderstandings which still exist between the various States, if only on the matter of Customs Tariffs, form a great obstacle to the realisation of any such scheme of co-operation.

The figures we have given above show us the gravity of the situation of the Labour Market in many countries, but in some of them it has become really appalling. It is no exaggeration to state that certain countries will not escape deep-seated disorders if they do not succeed in diminishing the numbers of members of their army of "out-of-works."

In this connection, Switzerland has so far been relatively privileged. This winter the number of unemployed has not even reached 28,000, which, for a population of 4 million inhabitants, is not a crushing figure. It is true that the economic crisis made itself felt comparatively late in our country, but it would be rash to pretend that it has already reached its maximum. The situation of our Labour Market was considerably worse about 1922, when the number of unemployed exceeded 100,000, for the assistance of whom considerable sums of money were swallowed up, not to speak of the cost of "unemployed works" undertaken to help national industries as well as to remove from the system of pure "relief" the demoralising effects which it engenders.

At the end of March, the numbers of demands for employment were slightly below 20,000, while those of offers of work were a little over 4,700. It is to be noted that, if the situation is sensibly worse than in the month of March 1929 and 1930, it has improved since December in almost all branches of production and trade. The watch-makers' and jewellers' trade is still very hard hit. This branch is the only one which shows a fresh outbreak of unemployment.

Finally, in the various countries collectively at the end of March 1931, 15.2% of the earners were seeking employment. This proportion was 20.5% at the end of the previous month and 7.7% at the end of March 1930.

The preceding figures show that the question must continue to occupy the attention of our Public Authorities, but that the situation is not yet alarming, except perhaps in certain branches of production. The causes of this relatively favourable position occupied by Switzerland are doubtless to be found in the variety of her industries. Districts which produce only one article are rare, so that a compensating balance is able to be maintained. Furthermore, the comparatively extended development of agriculture and agricultural produce also helps to explain why Switzerland has suffered from unemployment less than those countries which are more industrialised and which confine their industry to the production of certain types of article.

Swiss Industry and Trade.

M. M.

GRUYERE AND ITS CHEESE.

Everyone, at any rate in the grocery trade, is familiar with the name of Gruyère, "where the cheese comes from," just as everyone knows Cheddar first of all as "the place the cheese comes from," and only secondarily as a quiet little village with a fine gorge and some wonderful caves. But, of course, we all know where most of the "Cheddar" cheese comes from; and perhaps we think we know where the "Gruyère" cheese comes from. Well, my advice, to anyone who can, is to go and see for himself.

What a fascination there is about a walled town standing as Gruyère does, on the crest of a hill commanding luscious valleys!

There is much that is interesting in the ancient castle of the quondam counts of Gruyère; and the church, big for the population, is a satisfying, quiet place to be in—delightfully fresh and right in colour and proportion. British visitors will appreciate the excellent tea shop near the fountain; it has a secluded little terrace at the back looking towards the Jura mountains.

Where is the Cheese?

But as for Gruyère cheese, unless you make special inquiries it is very doubtful if you will see or hear anything at all about it in Gruyère. And if you do make a special effort, the most you

are at all likely to see is a place for storing it. You could, no doubt, buy it there just as you could at Golders Green or Goshall, but you are more likely to buy lace or embroidery from the little girl or her granny who sit working it in the street. If you go to Gruyère to see cheese made, as you may go to Poole to see Poole pottery made you will be disappointed.

One day when I had gone out walking from Château d'Oex, a violent storm drove me for shelter into a mountain chalet such as is used to house cattle in summer, with rough sleeping and living quarters for their attendants. It was quite fifteen miles from Gruyère at the eastern end of the Château d'Oex valley.

A Typical Chalet.

Two men sat at a bench drinking a dark brown liquor from a common brown earthenware jug. The younger, who was the "patron" or boss, scooped mouthfuls of thick cream from a can of it. A wood fire burned on the stone floor under the vastest chimney I ever saw, built, as the chalet was, almost entirely of wood. Swung away from the fire on a wooden davit was what to me was the glory of the place—a huge cauldron, its lovely bellying exterior blackened with wood smoke, its interior the rich red of clean, unpolished copper. A stiff yellow liquor, about six inches deep, was stewing therein.

The "Patron" would not talk of cheese, though he talked amiably of other things. Had I ever seen such a chimney before? Did they build such chimneys in England? How excellent it was for smoking bacon.

What is a French Pint?

The other man, the "domestique," presently fetched a bottle of English essence of rennet, asking me to translate "one tea-spoonful to a pint" into French measure. My translation, made after some profound mental arithmetic, seemed to satisfy them; and, when the storm had abated sufficiently to allow me to continue my walk, we parted the best of friends.

The secrets vital to the making of Gruyère cheese are no doubt jealously guarded; but I had at any rate been able to enjoy something of the romance and interest of the conditions under which it is made, for what I saw in that chalet was typical of what is going on in hundreds of similar chalets in the most wild and hardly accessible places on the mountain sides in an extensive district round about the quiet little village from which the famous cheese derives now little more than its name.

Grocery, June Number.

SWISS EMBROIDERY INDUSTRY.

"SCRAPPING" SUPERFLUOUS PLANT.

The situation in the Swiss embroidery industry continues to give rise to much anxiety. According to the annual report of the Fiduciary Society of the Embroidery Industry in St. Gall, 1930 was unfavourable in practically every branch of the industry. Exports declined to a level lower than had been anticipated by the most pessimistic of observers, and showed a decrease of 23,500,000f. in value and 740 tons in quantity as compared with 1929 (1,830 tons and 69,000,000f. as against 2,570 tons and 92,000,000f.).

Since 1920, when depression set in, no less a sum than 80,000,000f. has been written off as a result of the financial reorganization of the industry, and another 40,000,000f. has been lost owing to firms going into liquidation.

The loss of trade sustained during 1930 is ascribed to a great extent to the increase in duties in the United States and in several European countries, and also to the boycott of European goods in India.

During the year, out of the 2,100 shuttle and 2,900 hand-embroidery machines, approximately 50 per cent. remained idle. In consequence, however, of the revival in the use of *broderie anglaise* for summer frocks, and to the present fashion for embroidered collars and cuffs for ladies, it is hoped that there may be a slight improvement in the situation. Moreover, there is a brisk demand for embroidered handkerchiefs.

The systematic destruction of superfluous machinery has been carried out with the help of special subsidies from the Federal Council and States Councils. In 1930 there were destroyed 350 shuttle and 326 hand-embroidery machines, for which 606,722f. was paid out in compensation to the 446 firms concerned.

At a recent meeting of the Association of Swiss Shuttle Embroidery Manufacturers, at St. Gall, a resolution was passed to the effect that a provisional regulation of minimum stitch prices should be carried out by the association. Should this decision not find favour in the eyes of the Embroidery Exporters' Union, the Federal authorities will be invited to fix the prices and enforce their application throughout the Swiss embroidery industry in order to stem the *traffic de perfectionnement* with the Vorarlberg.

T.