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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS



FEDERAL.

NEW RADIO STATION.

The new Sottens station has been testing on 403 metres during the past two weeks, and results, especially in this country, surpass expectations. The Swiss Obertelegaphen-direktion, who furnished information regarding this, hopes that the new station will be ready to be taken over from the constructors sometime during April. Sottens is situated 17 km. north of Lausanne, and is 775 metres above sea level. The aerial masts are 125 metres in height and 200 metres apart. The aerial power used is 25 kW. unmodulated, which means something like 40 kW. according to the new formula used. The station is British-built. It is interesting, and gratifying, to note that the second Swiss high-power station, 60 kW. in aerial, at Beromünster, which will be testing by the time these lines appear in print, is also British made. Sottens is testing on 403.8 metres, the present Berne wave, after Berne has closed down. But this arrangement will only last till Beromünster begins tests, probably during the second week in March, on Zürich's wave 459.6 metres.

NESTLE'S TRADING REPORT FOR 1930.

Although the trading results of that important enterprise, the Nestle and Anglow-Swiss Condensed Milk Company, for 1930 were practically equivalent to those of the preceding year, special provision for depreciation has had to be made on account of the exchange crisis, notably in Australia and Spain. Consequently the net profit is nearly 4 million Swiss francs lower than that for 1929 at 26,382,777 francs, though this figure is well above that for 1928. The Directors maintain the dividend on the Ordinary shares at 16 per cent., but cut down the reserve allocations by four million francs, the appropriations this time being 1,100,000 francs to the statutory reserve and 4,000,000 francs to special reserve. Last year's transfer to pension and provident funds of 1,500,000 francs is repeated, but the carry-forward is reduced from 5,697,021 francs to 5,327,570 francs. British capital is interested in the company to the extent of £2,000,000 in 8 per Cent. £1 Preference shares. The dividend on these shares is covered more than six times, and the price stands in the neighbourhood of 30s.

SWISS COINAGE.

The National Council adopted last week unanimously the new fiduciary law, which follows practically identically the decisions of the States Council. The principal feature of the Bill is the introduction of a new standard piece of five francs, the diameter of which will be 31 millimeters, instead of 37mm., while two-franc, one-franc, and fifty centimes coins will also be minted in silver. Twenty and ten-centime pieces in nickel, and one and two-centime pieces in copper. The monetary unit will be the franc, containing theoretically 9/31 grammes of fine gold.

M. MOTTA IN PARIS.

On March the 23rd, M. Dunant, Swiss Minister in Paris, gave a tea party at the Legation in honour of M. Motta, Federal Councillor, who is at present in Paris, attending the "Commission d'études pour l'Union Européenne. Amongst the numerous attendance were a large number of Press representatives.

In the evening a splendid banquet was held at the Hotel Astor, which was offered by the various Swiss Societies, and over which Monsieur Dunant, Swiss Minister, presided.

ARMY PROMOTION.

National Councillor, Dr. Rud. Miescher, of Basle, has been appointed Commander of the 4th Division, in succession to Colonel Favre, who has resigned his command for reasons of health. It is reported that M. Miescher will resign as Member of Parliament.

LOCAL.

LAUSANNE.

M. Auguste Roux, Professor at the University in Lausanne, died at the age of 60. T.G.

BASLE.

Prof. Dr. Villiger, a well-known medical practitioner has died in Basle at the age of 61. The deceased was for many years "Schularzt."

LUCERNE.

Mrs. Marie Treichler-Huber, who died in Lucerne, has left an amount of 545,000fr. to various hospitals and institutions situated in the canton of Lucerne.

BERNE.

A fire destroyed the Park Hotel Bellevue, in Abelboden. Fortunately there were but few residents staying. The damage caused is considerable. N.Z.

Legacies to charitable institutions amounting to over 300,000fr. have been made by Mrs. Elisa Schwab who died in Berne recently. N.Z.Z.

A landslide is reported from Rüschegg, near Schwarzenburg, where part of the mountain is sliding down and menacing a village. Large cracks opened in the pastures and in the forests, underground rumblings were heard, and about eight acres of forest began to slide down. Two chalets have already been destroyed, and the mass of earth is beginning to block up the Schwarzwasser brook. Many houses which are in danger were evacuated. T.

ZURICH.

The Italian General Consul, Signor Biancchi, who, as reported previously was shot at by an Italian subject, has left the cantonal hospital. N.Z.Z.

FRIBOURG.

A group of children were enjoying themselves by throwing snow-balls at each other at Corserey, when the twelve-year-old boy Winiger arrived. He had just left the stationary shop where he had purchased three pen nibs; eager to join in the battle, he put the nibs, which he was holding in his hand into his mouth. In the excitement he swallowed the nibs. He was taken at once to the hospital where it was found that one of the nibs had got stuck in his lung, whilst the other two had found their way to his stomach. A specialist was called in who succeeded in extracting the nib from the lung, but the two others could not yet be got at. V.

ICE HOCKEY.

GROSVENOR HOUSE CANADIANS BEAT AROSA.

The Arosa team was beaten last Wednesday at the Park Lane Ice Club, by three goals to two. Arosa scored first and had decidedly the better of the play which was remarkably fast. After the first twenty minutes the Swiss team led by two goals and hopes ran high amongst the small but enthusiastic supporters of the Arosa team. At the end of the second twenty minutes the Canadians drew level, this success was due to rush tactics adopted by the Canadian's first line and which seemed to have taken the defence of the Swiss team by complete surprise.

During the third period of play our compatriots made frantic efforts to win the match and the Swiss attack played magnificently, but shortly before the end the Swiss team had to concede another goal. Lintner and Torriani were outstanding in the attack, and Fringer in goal made many clever saves.

Clode, Brown and Mr. Ewen were the star players in the Canadian team. Unfortunately, it was a game of many fouls and rather on the rough side and without wishing to find an excuse for the defeat of the Swiss team, we cannot but mention that the Canadians were none too anxious to strictly adhere to the rules of the game. The Referee, Mr. Kellough dealt very leniently with the offences of the Canadian team and at least one flagrant foul, on one of the Swiss defenders was totally ignored, whilst the slightest break of rule by the Swiss team was penalised. We should have thought that the organisers of this match would have been able to find a referee who has no direct connection with the team which opposed our compatriots, as we understand that Mr. Kellough is playing for the very same team which defeated the Swiss team. There were quite a number of Swiss amongst the spectators, who heartily cheered the Arosa six. Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, the Swiss Minister, was amongst the onlookers and was seen to congratulate the Swiss team on their plucky fight. The Swiss team consisted of:

E. Fringer, goal: A. Rudolf, E. Sprecher, defence: A. Kuhn, O. Linter, H. Torriani, forwards: B. Mettier, B. Fuhrer, alternative forwards: Team Manager, Mr. Buchli.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

Les Décorations:

A Storm in a Tea-cup.

The Swiss people have decided that the acceptance of foreign decorations of any sort shall not be permitted by any one engaged in politics in Switzerland. That is the short and long of the recent plebiscite and the only interesting thing to note besides is that only about 38% of the total electorate took the trouble to vote and that even so, 17 Cantons were for the interdiction and five against.

In the Bulletin Suisse d'Egypte, 18th February, 1931, are published a series of press-views of the Swiss press ament the above decision and I refer here especially to the one by the President of the Swiss Press, M. Bourquin who writes in the L'Impartial de la Chaux de Fonds, as follows:—

"Ce qu'on aurait voulu éviter à tout prix est arrivé. La Suisse allemande a voté en bloc contre la Suisse romande et elle l'a majorisée. L'isolement de Genève, Neuchâtel, Fribourg, Valais et Vaud en présence du bloc confédéré est caractéristique. Il est même trop impressionnant pour qu'on songe à attacher désormais le moindre doute au sens profond du scrutin....

Le scrutin du 8 février est une taloche sur les doigts des Romands. C'est une leçon des Suisses de première cuvée aux "Welches" qui ne sont que des Suisses de seconde cuvée. Malgré un siècle de vie en commun, et certaines combourgeoises plus vieilles, la confiance ne règne pas encore.

Personnellement, nous doutons fort que le scrutin du 8 février, qui est une atteinte au fédéralisme et à la liberté individuelle, renforce l'unité suisse, fait de compréhension mutuelle et de tolérance. Au contraire."

Mr. Bourquin forgets a few things. He forgets, for instance, that Switzerland is a family of various brothers with various inclinations and temperaments. In such a family UNITY can never exist on all matters. There can only be unity of ATTACHMENT to the MOTHER, in this case to Helvetia. But, among the brothers with their different outlook on life, their different aspirations, their different ideas as to how to fulfil their ambitions, there must necessarily be clashes.

It is idle talk therefore, to write about the reinforcement of a UNITY which is plainly not only impossible of attainment but even undesirable. Switzerland would lose tremendously if ever unity was achieved among her many and variously gifted children.

Mr. Bourquin considers that the Welches have been isolated and "majorisés." Does he not remember the Absinth prohibition, which became possible only by a similar process or is he still sorry that that "atteinte à la liberté individuelle" should have come to pass?

In a family of many children occasions arise now and then which make it necessary for the majority rule to operate. It is clearly easy to understand that there must be a few children whose temperament, etc., make them natural allies against their brothers. It is not always the most gifted of the children which are the best. It does not follow that, because the Teutonic element in Switzerland can and does at times "majoriser" our Latin brothers, that the Teutonic element is the best, or the most gifted. On the contrary, in many respects I think we all agree that our "Welches" are much more gifted than we Teutons. Besides, they are quicker and much more polished, as a rule, but we get it.

But, our "Welches" will also agree I think, that we Teutons, as a rule, are more robust in our outlook, more tenacious and, if we are slower, we are more persevering and have a habit of finally getting what we want. It takes us longer, but we get it.

These are fundamental differences and, as I wrote above, it would be a calamity, if these fundamental differences were to disappear. Why do we love our Latin brothers so? Is it not because of their sprightliness, their quick wit, their ability of doing and saying things ever so much nicer than we can?

And, if you asked one of them, one of our Romans why he likes us, would he not answer, because we are simple and because he always knows exactly where he is with us?

And so, it is perhaps just as well that we of the Teutonic element should predominate. Not to "majoriser," not to enforce our will on our brothers, but to keep the balance between the various temperaments. And just because we are slower and not so gifted, is it necessary that there should be more of us!

If Mr. Bourquin will take the trouble to look at the matter in this light, he will find much consolation. He will surely realise that he is trying to break through a wide open door, when he storms against that "atteinte à la liberté individuelle." So much is being said about the individual liberty and the expression often is used to cover all sorts of sins, like that famous word Patriotism. And yet, did not Goethe once describe the unbridled individual liberty as the licentiousness of the swine? We Swiss, above all others, ought to have learnt from our History that individual liberty is possible only if it is hemmed in on all sides and that otherwise it degenerates into licentiousness which ruins any State in which it is rampant.

In the same "Bulletin Suisse de l'Egypte" I find the following opinion by M. G. Rigassi, Directeur de la Gazette de Lausanne:—

"Le contre-projet de l'Assemblée fédérale a été accepté à une forte majorité par le peuple et par les cantons. Ainsi que nous l'avions prévu, le contre-projet a été rejeté, à des majorités variables; par les cinq cantons romands de Genève, Neuchâtel, Fribourg, Valais et Vaud, tandis que tous les cantons de la Suisse allemande l'acceptaient avec d'impressionnantes majorités. Dans le canton de Vaud, le projet a été repoussé par 42,360 non contre 29,418 oui. Tout permet de croire que la majorité rejettante aurait été plus forte encore chez nous si l'attention des électeurs n'avait pas été absorbée par la campagne pour et contre la R. P. et si l'opinion avait été mieux informée de la grave atteinte à la souveraineté cantonale que comporte cette revision constitutionnelle.

Quoi qu'il en soit, l'issue de la votation fédérale, qui oppose d'une façon si tranchante la Suisse allemande à la Suisse romande, confirme entièrement nos appréhensions, à savoir qu'il s'agit en l'occurrence d'une offensive aussi déplaçante que futile envers la population suisse de langue française."

Now we will discount at once the Latin temperament which induces M. Rigassi's feelings to run away with his cool appreciation of facts. But even so, I think, we must find him guilty of gross exaggeration when he allows himself to write of a "perfectly misplaced manifestations on the part of the German Cantons to teach the "Welches" a lesson of helvetic patriotism, as unmerited, as it is offensive."

I have taken the trouble to count the figures cast in the five welche Cantons, viz. Vaud, Neuchâtel, Fribourg, Valais and Geneva and I find that the total of votes are: for prohibition of decorations 44,344

AGAINST: ditto 66,175

So that even in the above mentioned five Cantons the voting showed an at least very respectable number of Welches who voted against the decorations. Those 44,344 electors are not, I take it, all of German-Swiss extraction and some of them, I take it, are highly respectable Romans!

Again, as you see, the storm in a tea-cup! And again, as you see, the latin temperament which, instead of bowing to the verdict of the electorate, lets its feelings get the upper hand.

But, as I have said at the beginning: were it not for the great diversity of characters, of talents, of ideas and ideals which all live together in and make Switzerland the model democracy it is today, we should have cause to be very sorry indeed and, instead of regretting these outbursts, we feel that we should be welcoming them. They prove to us at least and if nothing else, that the "majorisation des Welches par les Cantons Germaniques n'a pas réussi à écraser la fière liberté individuelle de nos Welches!"

GROCK, DOCTOR "HONORIS CAUSA."

Grock, the world famous clown, who is no doubt known to most of our readers, for his numerous performances on the London and Provincial Music Halls, has been made a doctor "honoris causa" by the University of Vienna. Grock, is a native of Bienna and his name is Wettach. In 1914 he returned to Switzerland to join up. What about "Sir Charlie Chaplin" now?

"FUNNY CUTS."

Conversation in the T. (r) opies.

Friend to Member of Cuban Social Club: "I would like you to propose me a Member of your club."

Member of the C.S.C.: "Certainly, only too pleased. Why not stand for President?"



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La Légion Etrangère et la Suisse.

Dans quelques jours, la Légion étrangère va fêter, à Sidi-Bel-Abbès, le centenaire de sa création, et un monument y sera inauguré, en grande solennité, à la gloire de cette phalange dont le sang généreux a déjà coulé à tous les confins de la France d'outre-mer, et de 1914 à 1918, dans les secteurs d'attaque les plus variés du front Ouest.

Ce fut le gouvernement de Louis-Philippe qui, par ordonnance du 10 mars 1831, institua la Légion étrangère pour conserver au service de la France plusieurs centaines de Suisses, licenciés par Charles X, après les journées de Juillet 1830; la tradition, vieille de 350 ans, de fidèles et loyaux services sous les couleurs françaises, se trouvait ainsi renouée, après une interruption de quelques mois.

Les trois bataillons formés au début se composaient uniquement de Suisses, et ils furent placés d'abord sous le commandement du colonel Stoffel, du canton Thurgovie.

En 1854, au moment de la guerre de Crimée, Napoléon III créa une nouvelle légion suisse, forte d'un millier d'hommes. Nous voyons ensuite la Légion au Mexique, puis en France, durant la guerre de 1870-71; on elle se fit tuer sur place autour de Coulmiers et de Montbéliard, et à la défense d'Orléans.

A cette époque, seuls les Suisses et les Alsaciens étaient acceptés à la Légion, mais un décret du 26 juillet 1880 autorisa l'engagement des étrangers de toute nationalité (v. *Historique de la Légion étrangère* par un officier du 2^e Etrangers).

Il serait beaucoup trop long de dresser la liste de tous nos compatriotes dont les noms sont restés, dans les annales de la Légion, synonymes de bravoure et de fidélité aux engagements contractés.

Au hasard rappelons la mémoire de deux officiers supérieurs, d'origine suisse, intimement mêlés à l'occupation de l'Algérie: le maréchal de camp et chef d'état-major de l'armée d'Afrique, de Perréaux, un Neuchâtelois tombé en 1833 sous les murs de Constantine, et, durant la Restauration, le lieutenant-général baron Voirol, de Tavannes. Un village d'Algérie (département d'Oran) porte le nom du premier, et un monument a été élevé en souvenir du second près d'Alger, donnant même à un coquet faubourg de la ville blanche, la dénomination de "Colonne Voirol".

Le général Bernelle a déclaré, en parlant des Suisses au service de la France: "Ils s'y firent remarquer par toutes les qualités qui distinguent le véritable militaire."

A l'heure actuelle, à la Légion, les Suisses continuent à donner le bon exemple de la discipline et de l'attachement au devoir; leur réputation glorieuse s'est maintenue intacte au moment des coups durs de 1924 et 1925, au Maroc. Il se trouve encore là-bas, ainsi que dans le Sud-Oranais et en Tunisie, environ 1.200 de nos compatriotes, et, parmi eux des officiers de grande valeur, des sous-officiers et des soldats de métier qui ont fait leurs preuves, et bon nombre de héros ignorés. Si vous questionnez leurs chefs, ils vous répondront qu'ils apprécient les Suisses à cause de leur courage réfléchi, de leur calme au feu, et de leur patience tenace durant les heures souvent pénibles des campagnes dans l'Extrême-Sud.

La *Gazette de Lausanne* a donné, il y a longtemps déjà, un raccourci saisissant, une définition parfaitement exacte de la Légion:

"Sous l'uniforme aux tons neutres qui la fait sembler à la piste brûlée, la Légion passe. C'est la grande errante des routes maudites, c'est l'anonyme moissonneuse de gloire. Ils n'ont pas, les Légionnaires, comme les beaux régiment d'Europe, le panache ou le cimier. Ils ont comme ces troupes d'orphelins, que l'on rencontre

parfois le long des sentiers, mornes, vêtus de choses tristes. Chacun porte en soi un pesant mystère, ignore le nom de son voisin, tait celui de son père et va chercher sa tombe qui ne dira pas au passant son secret.

"Ces hommes ne ressemblent à aucun type de guerriers...ils ne grognent pas comme les grenadiers de la Grande Armée; ils ne chantent pas comme le petit troupière de la France; ils parlent rarement, comme pour mieux écouter les voix tumultueuses qui grondent dans leur cœur indompté. La Légion c'est le monastère aux maisons de toile, c'est le cloître moral au seuil duquel le soldat dépose sa personnalité, comme le moine dépose ses passions à l'entrée de sa cellule.

"Les officiers sont graves. Ils aiment leurs hommes avec une rudesse généreuse, qui plait à ces soldats de fer. Ils les aiment d'une sorte d'affection intérieure pour les souffrances qu'ils devinent et n'ont pas le droit de consoler. Et sans un mot, les chefs et les légionnaires se comprennent et, tacitement échantent le serment de ne s'abandonner jamais à l'heure du danger!"

Il faut savoir gré aux chefs qui commandent actuellement la Légion étrangère de bien vouloir commémorer prochainement sa création et son passé de gloire, et nous réjouir de ce que tels chefs, qui sont des connaisseurs, s'accordent pour dire que les Suisses n'ont rien perdu des qualités sur lesquelles fut fondée jadis la réputation militaire de leur patrie, la nôtre.

R. CHARLES LEE.
Journal Suisse de Paris.

BUCHBESPRECHUNG.

DAS WERK.—Zeitschrift für Architektur, Freie—u. angewandte Kunst. Verlag: Gebm. Fretz A.-G., Zürich.

Der neue Jahrgang steht seinen Vorgängern in nichts hinsichtlich der Gediegenheit der Ausführung nach. Wir werden zuerst mit den Arbeiten zweier in Paris lebender Schweizer Künstler: Jean und André Lurçat bekannt gemacht.—So dann folgt eine Auswahl von Gemälden des jungen Zürcher Malers Gotthard Schuh (Text von Walter Kern, Davos), die einen in Erstaunen setzen müssen. Ebenso verwunderlich ist der commentierende Text. Man sehe sich nur die griechische Plastik an!!! Dass ein Mann es fertig bringt zu solchen Erzeugnissen noch einen so merkwürdig beladenen Text zu schreiben, ist allerhand. Es ist wirklich nicht Rücksichtigkeit, wenn man diese Malerei verabschauen muss. Wenn es jedoch dem Verlag daran gelegen ist, den Lesern des "Werk" diese Kunst plausibel zu machen, so wäre es nur billig, wenn das eine oder andere Bild farbig wiedergegeben würde. Das rein Zeichnerische ist abscheulich. In einer Besprechung mit Beziehung auf Schuh's Werke heisst es: "...die besonders eindringlich in eine dunkelgetönte Welt einsamer Menschen, seltsamer Tiere und nächtlich-phantastischer Bauten führen, über der ordnend und erhellend plötzlich das Erlebnis der griechischen Landschaft und Antike aufgeht." Es wäre wirklich interessant das Urteil mehrerer Leser zu erfahren.—Peter Meyer schreibt über die Stuttgarter Tagung des Deutschen Werkbundes: Prof. Bernoulli über den "Dritten Internationalen Kongress für neues Bauen" in Brüssel.

Das Februarheft ist interessant. Paul Ganz führt die Plastiken des in Paris lebenden Schweizer Arnold Huggler vor. Es folgen Skizzen und Ferienhäuser in den Bergen mit ausgezeichneten Illustrationen.—Es wird ferner eines Bahnbrechers der modernen Architektur: Adolf Loos in Wien gedacht. Der Ausstellung von Französischem Kunstgewerbe im Kunstgewerbe Museum Zürich ist eine eingehende Besprechung mit Abbildungen gewidmet.