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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS



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FEDERAL.

PROFESSOR PICCARD'S NEW PLAN.

A daring plan to ascend into the stratosphere near the Magnetic Pole has been prepared by Professor Piccard, who last year ascended 10 miles into the air in a special balloon.

Professor Piccard proposes to make his second ascent into the stratosphere from Zurich soon. If this proves successful he will go to the Hudson Bay region to make a third ascent to study cosmic rays and the aurora.

"I am taking practically the same scientific apparatus as before," he said in an interview, "only we shall add a wireless set, by which we should be able to signal our whereabouts from hour to hour, and especially the point at which we shall land. We don't want to repeat the adventure of our last trip, when we were forced to land on a glacier, miles from anywhere, without any means of communication. This time we go armed with two parachutes."

It is hoped to start from Zurich in the second half of this month.

ST. GOTHARD TUNNEL STAMPS.

Switzerland will celebrate with an issue of three postage stamps the fiftieth anniversary of the opening on June 1st, 1882, of the St. Gotthard railway. On the 10 centimes stamp, printed in brown, is a portrait of Louis Favre, the engineer in charge of the construction of the tunnel, who died of heart failure before the completion of his work. The portrait on the 20 centimes red is that of the Swiss statesman, Alfred Escher, director of the St. Gotthard Railway from 1817-1878; while the 30 centimes blue portrays Emil Welti, chief of the Swiss department of posts and railways, who was an active supporter of the project. The stamps will be sold by Swiss post offices for two months only, but will remain valid for postage till the end of this year.

NEW SWISS CENSOR LAWS FOR FILMS.

The Conseil d'Etat of Switzerland has decided to alter the law of 1927 in reference to cinemas and film depots by the institution of county authorities for the control of films.

In future, the Department of Justice and Police and the municipal authorities will be competent to refuse permission for the showing of a film or part of a film. These authorities have also the right to prescribe measures to safeguard public order, and to forbid admission to a cinema in their area to children under 16 years of age, even when accompanied by an adult.

They have the right to demand the suppression of scenes, texts (spoken or written) and printed or illustrated publicity. A complete prohibition of a film must be immediately notified to the Federal Department of Police. The right of appeal to the Conseil d'Etat is reserved.

A County Commission will be nominated in the various counties, and it must notify the Department of Justice and Police of any film which it desires to place under restriction. The Commission is composed of seven members, one of which is a woman.

THE SWISS OBER-AMMERGAU.

Though not, by a very long way, so old as its Bavarian counterpart, the Selzach Passion Play has already made the name of that picturesque village widely known beyond the frontiers of Switzerland. Lying close to the foot of the Jura mountains, Selzach is within easy reach of Solothurn; its two thousand inhabitants are either engaged in the traditional Swiss industry of watchmaking or working on the land. As at

Ober-Ammergau, the villagers themselves are the actors and actresses in the play, lending themselves to its preparation and performance with a devotion which gives it an immensely impressive sincerity. It is in three parts, of which the first is taken from the Old Testament, carrying the story as far as the Ten Commandments and the Brazen Serpent. The second begins with the Herald Angels and the Birth of Christ, and ends with the Entry into Jerusalem. These two parts occupy the morning performance. The third, in the afternoon, tells of the Passion and Death of our Lord, closing with the Ascension. The villagers have built their own theatre, one which seats 1,200 people, all of whom are under cover, and the cast for the play numbers 300. It is to be given this year, at intervals of a few days, from June 5th until October 2nd.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Colonel Fritz Zuppinger-Meynadier has died at the age of 57 in Zurich.

BERNE.

Dr. G. Beck, for many years Editor of the "Berne Tagblatt" has celebrated his 80th birthday.

ZUG.

The death is reported from Zug of Dr. Fritz Imbach, chief medical officer of the Bürgerspital.

BASLE-COUNTY.

The elections for the "Landrat" ended in a victory for the socialists who have gained 7 seats. The new Council has been constituted as follows:

Freis. and Bauern	33	before	42
Evangel.	5	"	5
Kath. Volkspartei	10	"	10
Bürger und Bauern Partei	2	"	0
Sozial Demokraten	27	"	20
Kommunisten	3	"	3

THURGAU.

The electors of the canton of Thurgau have by a big majority refused the vote to women in church matters.

SUCCESS OF THE 16th SWISS INDUSTRIES

FAIR 1932.

The Swiss Industries Fair, which was held in Basle from April 2nd to April 12th, proved to be a full success.

The number of exhibits formed an impressive output of Swiss production. Not only was there no reduction in their numbers, but there was an actual increase: 1,123 exhibitors as against 1,110 last year.

The attendance by the home country reached a new record. The final result of the total issue of admission tickets was as follows: 77,194 as against 75,599 last year.

The number of visitors from other countries remained on the same level as that of the previous year, a fact which goes to prove that the Swiss Industries Fair enjoys a good reputation abroad. Reduced attendance by some states was counterbalanced by an increased number from others.

Judging from the business done it may be said that the 1932 Fair shows a highly satisfactory result of the practical solidarity in the history of the Fair and in that of Swiss economies.

The success of the 1932 Swiss Fair is such as to give the Swiss Industries confidence that great obstacles can be overcome if the good will and energy of all concerned are put to the service of a common cause.

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SWISS SPORTS AT HERNE HILL.

SATURDAY, MAY 28th, 1932.

It looks as if Jupiter Pluvius harbours a secret grudge against the Swiss; once again, the Swiss Sports have been held in pouring rain, and it seemed to me that this year we had been blessed with an extra dose: I do not think it ever left off for a minute right from the beginning to the end. A Sports meeting without the sun is like roast-beef without dripping, and yet, considering the terrible weather conditions, the attendance was better than one could have expected, and between 350 and 400 competitors and spectators were present.

Many a bright hope must have been dashed to the ground on Saturday morning, when the sun persistently refused to send its radiant rays over an expectant community of youngsters, and I can well imagine the solicitous enquiries of the little ones, whether Daddy or Mummy would take them to the "Sports."

Sharp at 2.30 p.m. a pistol shot rang out, thus announcing that the first event had started, and in rapid succession the Flat Handicap races for men, boys and ladies followed each other. As the results of the various events will be given at the end of this narrative, I will, with a few exceptions, desist from commenting on the achievements of each individual performer. As usual these races and competitions were followed with great interest by the onlookers, and the winners each received a great and well merited ovation.

The Committee this year again dispensed with engaging a band, and the musical programme was provided by an Ampligram, which was fed from Mr. Newman's inexhaustible stock of Swiss gramophone records, the familiar tunes at once created a homely atmosphere, and the organisers and Mr. Newman ought to be heartily congratulated on this venture, which, already last year proved to be such a success. The announcing of the various events was done with the aid of a microphone, and I wish to compliment the operator for the very efficient way in which he handled this instrument, it was a great improvement on the megaphone used in former years.

Unfortunately, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, the Swiss Minister, and his daughter were unable to honour the Meeting with their presence, owing to a last minute engagement, but Monsieur de Bourg, 1st Secretary of Legation, was present. The popular President of the Swiss Sports Committee, Monsieur Ch. Barbezat, did the honours in his usual charming way. In spite of the deplorable weather conditions he refused to look gloomy, and his bewitching smile made all and sundry forget the pranks which a typical English climate plays sometimes. He was again the keeper of a certain key, which locks the door to some delicious secrets, which I might devolve later on.

A special interest was created by the 120 yds. Veterans' Handicap, which was won by Mr. H. H. Baumann, (Swiss Mercantile Society) who at the age of 44 seems to get younger and younger every day, it was a most creditable performance, especially as he reached the post well in front of his competitors.

This event was followed by the Veterans' 440 yds. Walking Handicap, (Men over 40) which is always somehow a star turn. I was very much interested in this event, firstly because, on account of my age, which, however, I loathe to disclose, I should be entitled to join these venerable gentlemen, and secondly, on account of one of my oldest friends taking part in it.

I felt somehow tempted to join in, but only the same morning I had been warned of the fearful consequences that might befall me. I was told that I might drop dead instantaneously, and one very good friend of mine (not a doctor) told me, that he was certain that my heart would never stand the strain: I did not wish to be rude, but I consider that my heart has stood me in good stead for the last (I nearly gave the game away), it has harboured many sweet remembrances, and weathered many a storm and strain, and after all, I think I ought to know best: still as I did not wish to deprive any of the competitors of their laurels I nobly stood down, but it made my blood boil, when the Gentleman, who had spoken in such disreputable terms about my heart, proudly lined up for the very race.

Now they were really a jolly crowd, those veterans, and they did not look a bit their age; some seemed to get a little nervous when the shot rang out, nerves at forty and over, do get a