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The Swiss Observer

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FEDERAL.

PROF. PICCARD'S PLANS.

Professor Piccard, the Swiss scientist who, with his assistant, M. Cosyns, is to try to break his own altitude record in the stratosphere of 48,000ft., will not make his attempt before Saturday or Sunday at the earliest.

The ascent will be made from Dubendorf aerodrome, near Zurich, and it is hoped to reach the height of 52,000ft.

To avoid the risk of damaging his delicate instruments Professor Piccard, who is travelling from Brussels to Zurich with his equipment in a motor-lorry, has given orders that its speed must not exceed 20 miles an hour. He will therefore arrive at Dubendorf on Wednesday.

It will then take at least three days to prepare the balloon and to fix the instruments, and as soon thereafter as conditions are favourable the attempt will be made.

According to present plans the ascent will begin an hour before sunrise and the balloon will remain in the air until 6 o'clock in the evening.

The balloon's aluminium body will be covered with a layer of white enamel to reflect the sun's rays, considerable inconvenience from heat having been suffered on the previous ascent. The new car has eight windows so that the occupants will be able to see all around and make observations in the direction of the earth. If the balloon is obliged to alight on water the car will remain watertight.

Short-wave wireless apparatus will enable the explorers to remain in contact with the earth, but amateur transmitters have been asked not to impinge M. Cosyns with long questions.

C. F. BALLY, LTD.

The General Meeting of C. F. Bally, Ltd., which is the holding company of the "Bally" Group, took place at Schoenenwerd, Switzerland, on July 16th, 1932. The net profit for the year ending April 30th, 1932, amounting to 306,193 Swiss Francs, is carried forward to new account. No dividend has been declared.

In the report, the shareholders are reminded that the firm in its present form of a limited company, has been in existence for 25 years, whilst on the other hand Bally's Shoe Factories, Ltd., at Schoenenwerd, has been in existence for over 80 years, having been founded in 1851. During these last 25 years a considerable amount of work has been accomplished in the factories, as well as in the selling organisations, with an aim to producing and selling the right goods at the right prices.

In 1907, when the holding company was formed, the daily output of the factories was 8,400 pairs. Thanks to the opening of new factories in different countries this figure has been considerably increased. It is also worth noting that during these 25 years since the foundation of C. F. Bally, Ltd., the dividends paid average 7 per cent and only twice dividend was passed.

Regarding the last financial year the ever increasing difficulties in exporting, due on one side to tariff politics, and on the other side to monetary difficulties, and the decrease in the purchasing power of the public, have caused a reduction in the business transactions compared with the previous year, and it will mean long work of reconstruction to regain the export markets, partly lost. In Switzerland, on the other hand, thanks to the partial transformation of the factories for the manufacturing of the more current articles, there was a slight improvement of the situation.

COLONEL ROGER DE LA HARPE.

Lieutenant Colonel Roger de la Harpe, member of the administration of the Swiss Red Cross from 1916 to 1918, and the chief of the service

dealing with the interment of British prisoners of war at Mürren, Château D'Ex, and Leysin, has died at Vevey. Colonel de la Harpe, who was 60, was presented by the King with a gold cup in recognition of his war services and was also thanked by his Majesty through the Swiss Federal Council.

NEW SWISS LUBRICATING COMPANY.

With the title of the Verband Schweizerische Schmieröl Importeure, an association of lubricating oil importers in Switzerland has lately been formed in Zurich.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Felix Möschlin, one of the foremost writers and journalists in Switzerland, has celebrated his 50th birthday last Sunday.

* * *

M. Emil Scheller, Founder of the Emil Scheller A. G. in Zurich, has died at the age of 78; the deceased who came from humble parentage, succeeded in building up a successful business. Amongst the many directorships which he held were those of the National Bank and the Federal Bank.

* * *

National Councillor Dr. Hans Sträuli, in Winterthur, has celebrated his 70th birthday, he is one of the best known politicians in Switzerland. For more than twenty years he was town President of Winterthur, he entered Parliament in 1911 and presided over the National Council in 1930/31.

BERNE.

At the first performance of the Circus Knie at Interlaken, a member of the staff was badly mauled by a tiger.

* * *

The Swiss Grand Prix race for motorcycles which was held in Berne was won by Stanley Woods on a British machine, the distance was about 200 miles. The final classification was: 1, Woods (Norton), 2, Tyrrell Smith (Rudge) 3, Haenni (Switzerland) (Condor).

SCHWYZ.

Gersau, at one time the smallest Republic in existence, has celebrated its 600th Anniversary of its entry into the Swiss Confederation, last Sunday.

GLARUS.

The heavy rain which has been almost unceasing in Switzerland for weeks past is causing landslides in many parts of the Alps. Above Linthal, the Kilchenstock known as the "moving mountain," owing to the prevalence of landslides on its slopes, has shown perceptible movements during the last few days. The authorities have advised inhabitants of the region to leave their houses for the time being, and warned them on no account to spend the night in the threatened area.

BASES-COUNTY.

At a delegates meeting of the Liberal party, it was proposed to put forward the candidature of M. E. Rudin, a former Landrats-Präsident, for a seat in the State Council (Ständerat). As the other parties have pledged themselves to abstain from other nominations, it is almost a certainty that M. Rudin will enter Parliament.

GENEVA.

The town Council of Geneva has voted a credit amounting to 1,073,000f. for roads leading to the new building of the League of Nations.

FRIBOURG.

The new arsenal at Bulle was inaugurated last week by Federal Councillor Minger. Colonel de Diesbach, commander of the 2nd Division, for which division the arsenal is to be used was present as well.

ARGAU.

Stadtammann Hans Hässig has intimated, that he wishes to retire from his post at the beginning of October; he has been a member of the Town Council since 1890, and for twenty years its President.

APPENZELL A.Rh.

The "Kantonsrat" has decided to inaugurate a scheme for helping the Unemployed, and also to aid the embroidery industry which is particularly badly hit by the crisis.

TICINO.

The Committee of the conservative party of the canton of Ticino has elected National Councillor Enrico Celio as member of the cantonal government in succession to the late M. Cattori.

According to the constitution, the newly elected member will have to retire from Parliament, and his seat will be taken by M. Angelo Tarchini, President of the Conservative party. — M. Celio was born in 1889, he studied law at the University of Freiburg and was for some time Editor of the "Popolo e Libertà."

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF SWITZERLAND DURING THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF 1932.

It may be stated that never before have the multiple bonds which connect Swiss economy with that of the rest of the world been as apparent as they are to-day. Up to the end of last year, Switzerland was among the few countries whose situation was still comparatively favourable. Although foreign trade reports accused a steady decline, the stability of the home market seemed to offer a sufficient guarantee against the devastating repercussions of the world depression. Unfortunately this situation exists no longer and to-day Swiss economy presents very much the same characteristics as that of other States.

An industrial country possessing no raw materials, without an access to the sea and with unsufficient arable territory, Switzerland is obliged, more than most countries, to rely entirely upon her foreign trade. This factor has made her one of the world's foremost importing countries. In order to pay for her imports (approx. fr. 1200 per inhabitant in 1930), her only resources are those derived from her export trade. Of the latter, 80% are high grade manufactured goods, of which 2/5 are used for the purchase of necessary foodstuffs alone. The importance of her industrial exports, as a counterpart of strictly necessary imports, is clearly set forth by the above quoted figures. The increasing disequilibrium of the commercial balance, which is liable to entail that of the balance of payments, is an alarm signal which should not be taken too lightly. Switzerland has always had a heavily burdened commercial balance, but now the deficit presents such disquieting proportions that neither the aleatory and constantly decreasing receipts derived from tourism, nor any other item of the balance of payments, are sufficient to maintain a normal financial status. The foreign States, which, at the beginning of the crisis, had increased their exports to Switzerland, are now complaining that this country is limiting her imports and is thus following the example of her neighbouring States. But these restrictions are due to no other cause but a decrease of exports and the economic difficulties resulting therefrom. Although Switzerland's economic situation remained for a long time more favourable than that of other countries, such conditions could not last for ever for the law of compensation, whereby every import should be — partly at least — covered by a corresponding export, applies particularly to Switzerland.

It was against her will, owing to the pressure of circumstances, that this country became engaged in a commercial policy along lines from which she would have gladly abstained had it been possible. She would be the first to profit by the lowering of foreign trade barriers and, of all countries interested, Switzerland would be among the first to support, by her example, any such economic orientation, as she was one of the last to yield to circumstances and to enforce import restrictions.

Unemployment as well as production remained stationary during the first six months of this year. This is largely due to certain economic activities connected with the season of the year, and, towards summer, to import restrictions. Further, certain industries were able to compensate losses in their foreign trade by an increased activity on the home market.

As in all other countries having experienced similar developments, these factors were unimportant in Switzerland whose industry is of an essentially exporting character. Therefore, in spite of the above-mentioned increase of activity at home, the index of production is far below that, reported at the beginning of 1926; the decline is greater than the increase registered throughout the prosperous period 1926-1930.

A detailed survey of the situation, branch by branch, shows that, in confirmation of the above, our export industries are the worst off. Watchmaking, the machine and textile industries are

the hardest hit; the chemical industry is the only one which is comparatively unaffected by the crisis.

It would be wrong, however, to depict the situation too darkly, for Swiss economy still presents more than one encouraging aspect. Mention should be made, in particular, of our currency, to-day firmer than ever. The exceedingly large gold reserves at the National Bank are still increasing; they exceed at present 2½ thousand million Swiss francs. The clearing assets of financial establishments on the National Bank are as high as ever; they exceed 1100 million francs. It may be stated that Switzerland is well equipped to cope with any danger which might threaten her currency and that there is not a country in the world with as high a gold standard.

Wholesale prices continue to dwindle and to-day's price index is at 97.7 (1914 = 100), which represents a 13% decrease compared with the preceding year. The index of the price of living continues to drop; it is now at 140% against 151 last year (1900 = 100).

For the first time for a number of years, construction shows a slackening. Whilst the number of apartments finished during the first four months of the year (3700) still exceeds the corresponding figure for 1931, authorizations to construct dropped from 5100 to 3300.

Swiss agriculture is also in a difficult position owing to the drop in price of agricultural products, for which the parties interested demand a stabilization.

Considerable activity is noted in the field of political economy. Switzerland must protect her economic existence and is endeavouring to turn to her advantage the compensation regime forced upon her by other nations. Should international exchanges of goods really become one of the principal elements of world economy and serve as a basis for the further development of the compensation system, Switzerland would be in a position to exercise, in this connection, considerable pressure on various States. The first step has been taken. Imports from the Eastern European States have helped to support Swiss exportation to these same countries and to recover frozen credits. It is not impossible for further progress to be made in this direction but, first of all, events must prove that the advantages obtained are of a durable nature. The least that one may say is, that new possibilities are being opened up.

The export industry places in the foreground of its preoccupations the question of the drop of prices; the latter, which are generally high in Switzerland, make it difficult for this country to compete with foreign markets. Private economy is decidedly in favour of a general decrease, a number of concerns have already introduced a reduction in salary, but the federal authorities seem to approach the matter with great circumspection. For the time being other measures, destined to allay the crisis, are being examined, such as subsidies, work for the unemployed etc. It is doubtful whether this policy will suffice in making a general reduction of salaries and prices unnecessary, as it becomes every day more obvious that unless Switzerland reduces her prices to meet those enforced abroad, no satisfactory solution of her present difficulties can be expected.

The present precarious conditions are not without one bright spot: they have helped to clarify the situation in more respects than one. Both the industry and the authorities of Switzerland will have to adapt themselves to new international economic conditions and this implies the departure from a state of affairs born of an unfortunate lack of comprehension with regard to economic necessities. Such a return to healthier conditions would be sure to meet with the country's approval.

The fact that, in spite of unfavourable world conditions, Switzerland is better off than the majority of other States, justifies the belief that she will surmount her present difficulties. In the course of the preceding century and in spite of the lack of raw materials, Switzerland developed, from an exclusively agricultural State, into a highly industrial one. If industrialization has made her closely dependent upon world economy, it will not prevent her from adapting herself to new conditions of economic existence. The working capacity of the Swiss people; that is the capital with which she not only laid the foundations of her economic power in former days, but which will allow her to surmount the present depression and reconstruct her national economy on a new basis.

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LIMITED. Reception given to the Swiss Delegates to the International Conference on Commercial Education, at Pagani's on July 28th.

One lives and learns; — if someone would have told me that I should have to listen to approximately three hours speech-making on Thursday last at Pagani's, on the occasion of the above mentioned reception, I would have almost felt like shirking my duty, and I feel quite sure, that whoever I would have acquainted with the facts of my imminent ordeal, would have expressed their sympathy with me. Yet, let me tell you at once, that seldom before have I enjoyed *oratorical exhortations* (and I have had to listen to a good many) more than on that memorable evening.

It was, I may almost call it, an intellectual feast for the Gods, and I am convinced, that all those present at this splendid gathering, could have gone on listening for hours. Everyone of the many speakers excelled in the gentle art of after dinner-speaking, and I only regret that the S. O. is unable, owing to lack of space, to publish each speech in extenso.

The dinner was preceded by a reception, which started at 7 p.m., and at 7.30 the company numbering about 80 members and guests sat down to dinner. The loyal toasts were proposed by Monsieur Paravicini, the Swiss Minister, after which M. Lehmann, President of the Society extended a cordial welcome to the Minister, to Dr. Rüfenacht, the delegates to the Conference and to the Press, which was represented by Dr. Kessler (Neue Zürcher Zeitung) and Mr. Stauffer (Swiss Observer).

A double Quartett of the Swiss Choral Society then regaled the company with a few songs, which were much applauded.

Monsieur Paravicini on rising received a hearty reception, he too welcomed the delegates, and in singling out Monsieur Junod, a former Swiss Minister at Petrograd and late President of the International Association for Commercial Education, Prof. Schiess, official representative of the Swiss Government at the Conference, and Dr. Latt, Secretary of the Association, expressed his great pleasure at being able to address such a distinguished gathering, his witty allusions to his linguistic achievements caused great merriment, and the address of the Minister was the worthy forerunner of a series of brilliant speeches.

Mr. v. Bergen, who, if he will allow me to say, is a sort of a *Hofsänger* of the S.M.S., then pleased everybody by the fine rendering of a few *Lieder*, and to be personal again, I may mention that I have never heard him sing better.

I need hardly emphasize that, Mr. Stahelin, the energetic and popular Vice-Chairman of the Council, received a great ovation on rising to address the gathering. He gave an excellent report about the work and aspirations of the college; to render an accurate account of 10 years uphill work in a matter of about twenty minutes, is no mean achievement, and that he succeeded in commanding in a masterful way, the attention of his hearers up to the last word, only proves again, what a great asset the S.M.S. possesses in their Vice-Chairman of the Council. (I am glad to say that this clever *exposé* will appear in full in the next issue of the *Swiss Observer*.)

The long and hearty applause which greeted Mr. Stahelin, on resuming his seat, had hardly died down, when Dr. Latt, the active Secretary of the Association, and an old and trusted friend of the Swiss Colony in London, addressed the company: his reminiscences about his experiences during his séjour in the Metropolis, as Secretary of the N. S. H. some years ago, evoked many pleasant remembrances amongst those who were in close touch with him during those critical times; only lack of space prevents me, from giving a more detailed report. When he sat down, he

was greeted with musical honours, and I fully agree with those who so heartily sang, that *he is a jolly good fellow*.

The double Quartett of the Swiss Choral Society now again rendered some songs, and judging from the hearty applause which was lavishly bestowed on them, it proved that their singing was greatly appreciated, and the term "The Nightingales of the Colony," as they are sometimes called, seems to me fully justified, they sang well and with feeling, without, however, getting too sentimental, quite an achievement, considering that the wine stewards were very efficient.

Monsieur Junod, was perhaps the Star turn of the evening (I trust I shall not be called over the coals for this expression), his eulogies about the S.M.S. school which he had visited some years ago, when the Society occupied humble premises at Henrietta Street, must have filled all those, who were responsible for the ultimate change for the better, with pride. It might be mentioned here, that if the Swiss Government has supported the London Section in such a splendid way, it was greatly due to the recommendations of Dr. Junod, to the proper authorities. Most interesting were the accounts given by Monsieur Junod, on his experiences as Swiss Minister at Petrograd, and the treatment which was meted out to him and his countrymen, when diplomatic relations were broken off between the Soviet and Swiss Republics.

Prof. Schiess of Lausanne, who, as already mentioned, was the official representative of the Swiss Government at the Conference, also made a remarkable speech, "You are doing" he said, "not only good work for the students, but also for your country," he mentioned that many of the delegates who had the pleasure of visiting the College had been greatly impressed, by the splendid results achieved.

M. Bottini, President of the Zurich Section of the S. K. V., brought the greetings of the Central Society, and Prof. Weipel, Rector of the Cantonal Commercial School of Lausanne, thanked the Society, in the name of the guests for the cordial reception accorded to them.

And now for the summing up. — I must congratulate the S.M.S. Ltd., for this most enjoyable and successful gathering, they royally entertained their distinguished guests, and they did it well. Everything went without a hitch, and I wish especially to mention M. J. J. Schneider, the ever smiling Secretary of the S.M.S. Ltd., who seemed to be untiring in looking after the wants of everyone. No small part of the praise for this successful function must go also to Messrs. Pagani's who served an excellent dinner. This evening will no doubt take an honoured place in the memory of many who had the pleasure to attend. It was, to use a Yankee expression, a hundred per cent. success.

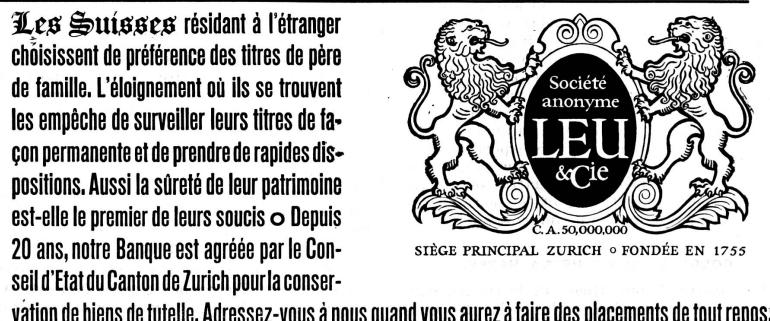
ST.

There were present apart from those already mentioned:

Mlle. Moore, Dr. Burri, Fr. Burri; London. M. Alfr. Chapuis, Dr. C. Müller, Prof. E. Perrin, Dr. Bingueli, Dr. Bumann, Prof. Paul Vouga, Neuchâtel; Prof. Dr. O. Fischer, Mme. Fischer, Mlle. Prof. Oertli, Prof. F. Frauchiger, Dr. Gasser, V. Gnehm, M. Müller, Dr. H. Munz, Dr. S. Huber, Dr. Hess, Fr. Dr. Frauchiger, Mlle. Frauchiger, Zurich; Dr. Waldvogel, Neuville, Dr. Oppiger, Dr. Winkelmann, Bienné; Dr. E. Gsell, St. Gallen; Dr. Brogle, Dr. Oswald, Basle; F. Lieb, Wollishofen; Messrs. De Brunner, Hardmeier, Krucker, Boehringer, Deutscht, Boos, Ch. Chapuis, Pfändler, R. Chapuis, Meier, Walser, G. Marchand, A. F. Suter, Schlatter, Buren, Levy, J. Zimmermann, Grob, Steinmann, Trachsell, Mathys, Renatus, Koenig, Kissling, Scherrer, Streit, Conrad, Berger, Gerber, Beutler, Ritzmann, Seymour, Wyss, Leibfath.

PERSONAL.

We wish to express to M. H. Ungricht, of 21, Georgia Avenue, Worthing, our sympathy, his mother, Mme. Emilie Ungricht-Wiederkehr, having died at Dietikon (Zurich) at the age of 94.



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