

**Zeitschrift:** The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

**Herausgeber:** Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

**Band:** - (1932)

**Heft:** 573

**Rubrik:** Home news

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**Download PDF:** 04.02.2026

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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. P. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE LONDON COLONY.

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 9595

Published every Friday at 23, LEONARD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 12—No. 573

LONDON, OCTOBER 15. 1932.

PRICE 3d.

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## HOME NEWS



(Compiled by courtesy of the following contemporaries: National Zeitung, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, St. Galler Tagblatt, Vaterland and Tribune de Genève).

## FEDERAL.

### NOMINATION OF FEDERAL COUNCILLOR MUSY.

M. Musy, the Swiss Finance Minister has been appointed a member of the Expert Commission for the World Economic Conference, this is not only a great honour for M. Musy, but also for our country.

### SWISS-GERMAN COMMERCIAL NEGOTIATIONS.

The Swiss-German commercial negotiations, which some time ago were interrupted, have been taken up again at Berne.

The chief of the Swiss delegation is Direktor Stucki, he is supported by the following members of the commission: National Councillor Wetter, Customs Direktor Gassmann, Professor Laur, National Councillor Schirmer, Doctors Borel and Homberger and Councillor of Legation Dr. Biehl.

### SEE HOW THEY GROW.

By comparing army records from 1884 to 1886 and from 1908 to 1910, statisticians have come to the conclusion that, in a quarter of a century, the average height of Swiss soldiers has increased from 5ft. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  ins. to 5ft. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

### A PETITION.

Switzerland profits heavily by the presence in Geneva of the secretariats and bureaux of the League of Nations and by the long sojourns of large delegations on Lake Leman's pleasant shores. But we are happy to know that these monetary gains do not blunt the consciences of Swiss citizens. Careless of the resentment which their manly action will excite, seven and thirty Members of Parliament and 170,000 Swiss electors have addressed a petition to the President of the Helvetic Confederation begging him to move the League Assembly on behalf of the "tens of thousands of Christians now enduring persecution, barbarism and slavery in Russia." The petitioners boldly say:

*The silence of the Swiss people, or their Government, in these circumstances is not compatible with our institutions, with the dignity of our nation and with our good will to men.*

Further, the Members of Parliament and their 170,000 supporters argue that the stamping out of religion in so vast a territory as Russia's will be "a menace to the moral progress and civilization of other countries." Becoming practical, they remind President Motta that "unofficial intervention" ought not to be difficult, seeing that M. Litvinov and other highly-placed Russian statesmen are frequently coming and going to and from Geneva.

### FAMOUS STAINED GLASS FOR SWITZERLAND.

The famous Sixteenth-Century stained glass windows of Swiss and German origin, which have been a feature of the armour room at Brougham Hall, near Penrith, since the days of the Lord Chancellor Brougham, have been bought by Dr. Gantz for the National Museum of Switzerland.

## LOCAL.

### ZURICH.

The Mayor of Konstanz, Dr. Moericke, together with about 20 members of the town council, has paid a visit to the town of Zurich, in order to witness the flood lighting instituted by the town.

\* \* \*

Four Italian subjects have been arrested in connection with the bomb throwing incident at the Italian Consulate General in Zurich. This brings the number of arrests effected up to seven, all the men in custody are of Italian origin.

\* \* \*

The Hegnauer-Hauser Fund has received a donation of 10,000f. from a Swiss abroad, who has been brought up in Elgg.

### BERNE.

During the manoeuvres of the 3rd division, the quarter-master sergeant of the battery 32 has been robbed of an amount of 5,000f. when in billets in the village of Heimberg.

### LUCERNE.

Through the intermediary of the cantonal finance Dept. an amount of 10,000f. has been sent to the Society for erecting a sanatorium for consumptives, by an anonymous donor.

### BASLE-COUNTY.

A large fire entirely destroyed a barn and stables of the Institution Schillingsrain near Liestal. The damage is considered to be heavy.

### GLARIS.

The movement of the Kilchenstock now threatens to provoke a very serious landslide. For several days now the recorded movement has been about four inches per day. At any time further movement may precipitate thousands of tons of rock and stones into the valley. The cantonal government has issued a warning to the population in the menaced area.

### FRIBOURG.

Serious rioting took place at Fribourg. The trouble began when the police arrested two drunken soldiers on leave who persisted in singing the "Internationale" outside the town hall.

An angry crowd, composed largely of women, gathered outside the police station and demanded the release of the arrested soldiers.

Twenty gendarmes managed to restore order for a while, but as soon as they withdrew, the mob considerably increased in numbers and became more threatening.

The police, armed with swords and truncheons, made a charge and, after a hand-to-hand fight, arrested several people, and drove back the rioters with streams of water from a hosepipe.

About an hour later the mob, still further reinforced and armed with cudgels and other weapons. The gendarmes were driven into the interior of the building, from which they opened fire.

The rioters bombarded the police station with stones and other missiles, smashing every window, and attempted to set fire to the building.

Ringleaders demanded a parley with the police commandant, who afterwards consented to release the arrested men.

### GENEVA.

M. Nicole, editor of the Geneva paper "Travail," who on the occasion of the debacle of the Banque de Genève, conducted a lively campaign against some individual members of the Geneva Government, has been condemned to pay damages amounting to altogether 13,000f. for groundless defamation of character. A sum of 3,000f. each has been awarded to Messrs. Desbaillets, Turrettini and Martin. M. Desbaillets furthermore receives an extra 1,000f. and each of the three prosecutors receives a 1,000f. towards their costs. The verdict has to be published in five Swiss papers. M. Nicole has lodged an appeal.

### NEUCHATEL.

Guinaud, the notorious lawyer, who is at present in prison, has been temporarily liberated, bail has been fixed at 10,000f.

### ST. GALLEN.

From St. Gallen comes the news of the death at the age of 77, of M. J. Rechsteiner-Allgöwer, senior partner in the firm Rechsteiner, Hirschfeld & Co. The deceased has from small beginnings worked up a considerable business, employing over 300 work hands, and with him one of the pioneer's of the embroidery industry disappears.

### VAUD.

The budget for 1933 of the canton of Vaud estimates a deficit of 2.5 million francs.

\* \* \*

The death is reported from Lausanne of M. Henry Bory, editor of the "Gymnaste Vaudois" and the "Gymnaste Suisse." M. Bory was the composer of the "Marche des gymnastes suisses," and a popular member in Swiss gymnastic circles.

### CITY SWISS CLUB.

PLEASE RESERVE  
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25th  
for the  
ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL  
at the  
May Fair Hotel, Berkeley Square, W.1.

### SOLOTHURN.

The government of the canton of Solothurn has voted a new credit of 100,000f. for creating work for the unemployed, up to now an amount of altogether 645,800f. has been spent for this purpose.

### GRAPE HARVEST IN THE JURA.

The traditional festivals in connection with the grape harvest are now taking place throughout Switzerland, despite the havoc wrought by recent storms in a large number of vineyards. These festivals, which attract countryfolk from miles around, not to mention foreign visitors, are many hundreds of years old. They are remarkable not only for their picturesqueness but for the fervour aroused in the participants, who realise that in the success of the vintage lies, to a large measure, their prosperity during the year.

Outstanding among these celebrations is the "Fête des Vendanges" of Neuchâtel, from which district flows one of the best of Swiss wines. The Neuchâtelois boast that during the Eighteenth Century their wine was the subject of a thesis presented by an embryonic doctor to one of the Swiss universities, in which it was maintained that the wine of Neuchâtel produced a state of intoxication far exceeding that of any other Swiss wine, and did not, in modern phraseology, "hide a headache" in any bottle.

### THE MAN'S PRIVILEGE.

Apart from the actual festival there are many traditional ceremonies and privileges attached to the gathering of the grapes. As soon as the harvest begins, students, many of them English boys and girls in the numerous pensions in the district, make their way to the vineyards to assist.

The actual picking is done by the girls, but the heavy work falls on the men who follow the pickers up the long rows of vines carrying the grapes in baskets slung over their shoulders.

The men have a right to claim a kiss for every grape that is left on the vine and are not slow to claim their privilege; and in the prevailing jollity the fair pickers are sometimes apt, quite innocently and inadvertently, of course, to overlook an occasional bunch, leaving it hanging conspicuously on the vine.

The wine of Neuchâtel, pressed from the grapes grown on the sunny slopes of the Juras, is subjected to a special and quite unique treatment. Whilst the French wines reach maturity only after several years, some of the wines of Switzerland are rarely drunk after they are five years old, the best vintages at present being those of 1929 and 1931.

The wine industry is extremely important to Neuchâtel and the product is, therefore, jealously protected by the Cantonal authorities. All wine grown in the district has to be submitted for official approval before being allowed to bear the coveted label. A special municipal cellar is maintained in an old chateau near the city, where the choicest and most mellow brands are stored in enormous casks and where rack after rack of bottles are under the constant guardianship of experts.

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