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The Swiss Observer

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FEDERAL.

NEW ARMY COMMANDERS.

Colonel Scheibli, the former commander of the 3rd division has taken over the command of the 2nd Army Corps, and Colonel Prisi has assumed his post as leader of the 3rd division.

NEW YEAR'S RECEPTION AT THE FEDERAL PALAIS.

The diplomats accredited to the Federal Government paid their customary New Year's visit to M. G. Motta, President of the Swiss Confederation, on New Year's day. A large crowd watched the arrival of the various missions.

GERMAN-SWISS TARIFF AGREEMENT.

The Board of Trade Journal reports that as a result of a German-Swiss agreement, a reduced "conventional" duty of 25 Rm. per 100 kg. has been introduced in the German customs tariff for oil coolers for steam turbines or transformers, if imported separately.

RESIGNATION OF DR. BENZIGER.

Dr. Charles Benziger, Chief of the Consular Service of the Foreign Office at Berne, has left his post to take up his new appointment as International Commissary of ports at Danzig. The vacancy thus created has been filled for the time being by Dr. Isler. The latter has been Consul at Shanghai and is well-known to the Swiss Colony having occupied previously a post at the Legation in London. His successor in Shanghai is Dr. Däniker.

NEW HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER STATION.

A syndicate of Swiss and German concerns, in conjunction with the municipal authorities of Winterthur, has applied for a concession to establish an additional hydro-electric power station on the River Rhine, near Rheinau.

NEW SWISS CINEMAS.

The Rialto Cinema, Geneva, which will be inaugurated on February 1, will be capable of seating 1,500. Buffet and bar, modern lighting, comfort, ventilation by a change of air 50 cubic metres per person, per hour, a Western Electric apparatus, and low prices are some of the advantages offered.

The cinema Bel Air, which will be the largest in Lausanne, has been opened last Monday. A variety cinema programme will be offered from time to time.

FIRST SWISS TALKIE STUDIO.

The first Swiss company for the production of talking films has been formed in Zurich.

The director, E. F. Ranauz, after having vainly endeavoured to interest Vienna, Berlin and Paris, finally succeeded in interesting Dr. Weber, of Warner Bros., who is a Swiss.

Dr. Weber decided to place his knowledge and experience at the service of the new company, and he has, since his arrival at Zurich, so advanced matters that in the near future the production of the first purely Swiss talkie film will be commenced. The two well-known comedians, Fredy Scheim and Rudolf Bernhard have been engaged. The head office and studios are at Zurich.

A special section for talkie advertising films has been incorporated in the Articles of the new society.

ALPINE CLIMBING DEATHS IN 1931.

The bodies of two young Italian alpinists, who recently climbed the Matterhorn alone, have been discovered at the foot of a high rock wall in the Dolomites. The climbers fell about 600ft., and were still roped together.

This accident brings to 128 the number of accidental deaths in the Alps during 1931. Such a total has never before been recorded, and has only been approached in 1929, when 109 deaths were recorded.

DISARMAMENT STAMPS.

Postage stamps serve frequently as silent recorders of passing events. Coincident with the opening of the International Disarmament Conference at Geneva, on February 2, new stamps of symbolical design will be taken into use by the Swiss Post Office in substitution for those of equivalent value now current and will remain in circulation for a period of 12 months.

The subjects of the respective vignettes have been selected by an art commission appointed by the Federal Department of Beaux-Arts. The subject common to the postal values 5, 10, 20, 30, and 60 centimes represents the dove of peace alighting on the blade of a broken sword held in a mailed fist and is the work of the Genevian artist, M. Maurice Barrand.

On the one franc denomination, which completes the ordinary postage series, is to be seen the spirit of concord proffering a flaming torch, after the design of M. Georges Fustier. A supplementary set of three stamps for air postage only presents in the modern style a tri-motor commercial aeroplane in full flight, designed by M. Otto Baumberger.

SCHWEIZ. KAUFMAENNISCHER VEREIN.

In 1930, the above Society paid out an amount of 46,000fr. to its unemployed members, and in 1931, owing to the crisis, no less than 173,000fr. in unemployment pay was distributed or 127,000fr. more than in the previous year.

HEAVY SNOWFALL IN SWITZERLAND.

A heavy snow fall is registered from all over Switzerland, both Berne and Zurich experienced an exceedingly severe fall.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The offices of a Zurich building firm were ransacked by burglars, a safe was forcibly opened, and an amount of 7,000fr. was taken. A traveller arriving at the station was relieved of his wallet containing 1,800fr. in notes.

The University of Zurich has conferred the degree of *doctor honoris causa* on M. Ernest Muret, Professor of Spanish Literature and the French Language at the University of Geneva, on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

Dr. Hermann Escher, Head of the Central Library has celebrated his 50th Jubilee as doctor of philosophy at the University. The senate of the University have sent their congratulations to Dr. Escher.

The "Sechseläuten" has been fixed for Monday, April 18th.

BERNE.

Jakob Schmid, a veteran of the 1870/71 frontier occupation has celebrated his 100th birthday.

Msgr. Pietro di Maria, Papal Nuntius accredited to the Swiss Confederation in Berne has celebrated his 25th. Jubilee as a bishop. Msgr. di Maria has been in Berne since 1926.

Counsels for the defence in the Riedel-Guala case have appealed against the verdict given at the Assizes in Burgdorf a few weeks ago. They contend that their client should not be deprived of his practice for the next 4 years. It is rumoured that Dr. Riedel will shortly marry Miss Guala.

LUCERNE.

The death is reported of the well-known Swiss sculptor, Arthur Bertola, at the age of 56. Many of his works can be found all over Switzerland.

The printing works Rüber & Cie. publishers of the "Vaterland" have celebrated the 100th Anniversary of their foundation.

SCHWYZ.

Owing to the crisis, which is acutely felt in the canton of Schwyz, the cantonal Government

has decided to withhold all permits for holding Fancy Dress Balls during 1932.

GLARIS.

The States Council has now sanctioned the project of replacing the existing bridge over the Linth-Escher Kanal between Näfels and Mollis by a modern structure; the estimated cost is stated to be Frs. 132,000.

BASEL.

A sorter at the General Post Office has been arrested, several registered letters were found in his possession.

The Basle composer, Walter Courvoisier has died after a long and severe illness. M. Courvoisier was the son of the famous surgeon Professor Courvoisier, and was himself a doctor of medicine, but after practising for a short time took music up as a profession. He studied music at Munich. Many of his works have been executed at home and abroad, and he ranked amongst the foremost composers in Switzerland.

The jeweller's shop Fromer on the Spalenberg, right in the centre of the town, was raided in the small hours of New Year's day. The operation was witnessed from an adjoining window by a woman who through the noise of the breaking glass was disturbed in her sleep. The burglar got away with about Frs. 25,000 worth of watches and jewels. The police appeared on the scene about three hours afterwards.

SOLOTHURN.

Merry-making during the approaching carnival season is being considerably curtailed by the cantonal authorities. Public dancing licences will be issued for three days only as against ten days in previous years.

GENEVA.

Alphons Chouard, an employee of the State Treasury has been arrested on a charge of embezzlement. The defalcation is estimated to exceed 20,000fr.

FOOTBALL.

There were no matches in the Championship competition in the week ending last Sunday, the 3rd inst., and the programme was restricted to friendly matches and propaganda games with some Austrian teams of repute. Unfortunately, the weather gods proved to be in a mischievous mood, and first extreme cold and then pouring rain spoiled the attendances, causing the various treasurers to look as glum as some we know of in the Swiss Colony in London!

The most interesting games were the following, played on January 1st, 2nd or 3rd:
Zurich: Grasshoppers — Austrian Vienna 2—4.
Geneva: Servette — Rapid Vienna 4—2 (!).
Locarno: Locarno — Bastya Szegedin 3—3.
Geneva: Urania — Blue Stars 1—2.
Lausanne: Racing — Servette 1—5.
Bern: Young Boys — Admira Vienna 2—11 (!).
Aarau: Aarau — Floridsdorf Vienna 1—3.
Zurich: Zurich — Young Fellows 2—1.
Zurich: Rapid Vienna — Floridsdorf 2—1.

This last mentioned match attracted 1,500 spectators only, sure proof that one may have too much of a good thing. This Austrian-Hero Worship has undoubtedly been overdone.

Wonders never cease! I have discovered another Subscriber who reads my article, and he was good enough to suggest that the following conundrum might help to fill my column. I can of course accept no responsibility, if the joke should hurt the feelings of my readers. (That will do! This joke may have been good enough for the Schweizer Wochen-Zeitung and Zurich, but not for the S.O. Ed.)

M.G.