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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

THE FEDERAL LAW COURTS PROTECT RAILWAY INTERESTS.

Recently the Federal Law Courts in Lausanne examined the question whether the Grisons Road Traffic Act was empowered to prohibit freight traffic on roads. The enactment referred has, since 1922, allowed all valleys without railways to introduce freight automobile services as far as the nearest railway station. This restriction serves as evidence that the law desires to protect the railways (which in this particular case are not State-owned, but private undertakings with public subventions) against road competition. The Federal Courts had to decide whether this regulation of competition did not encroach on the principle of equal rights guaranteed by the Federal constitution in respect of law, trade and commerce. It is interesting to learn that the decision of the Courts, which is of the greatest importance in this country, sanctioned the regulation of the Grisons Road Traffic Act. It is pointed out that the prohibition is justified by the fact that it is in the interest of the general public to protect the roads of the mountainous Grisons canton, and that the working of the railways — even when these be privately owned — must be regarded as a matter of public utility and interest.

In this connection it may be mentioned that Switzerland will shortly be promulgating a Federal Road Traffic Act covering traffic regulations and third party insurance, but containing no provision for the regulation of competition. A special law will be passed licensing commercial road traffic.

R.G.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS ENVOY KILLED.

Colonel de Reynier, who was on a mission to Irak on behalf of the League of Nations, was killed in an aeroplane accident. Colonel de Reynier was during the war "Directeur de la Société Suisse de Surveillance" in Paris, and was entrusted after the war with many important missions on behalf of the League of Nations. His untimely death has caused deep regret in Switzerland.

ST. GOTTHARD TUNNEL'S FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY.

The famous St. Gotthard Tunnel, in Switzerland, was opened fifty years ago next May. A well-known Swiss author (C. von Arx) has been asked to write a special play commemorating the occasion. This will be broadcast from Beromünster in May.

SWITZERLAND WANTS A NEW NATIONAL ANTHEM.

Switzerland is holding a national plebiscite to obtain an official national anthem.

Each canton is voting on a number of songs, and the song receiving the most votes will be selected.

The results will not be announced for a year.

SWITZERLAND AND THE DANUBIAN CONFERENCE.

A report appearing in Paris that Switzerland had asked to take part in the Danubian Conference is semi-officially contradicted here, but at the same time it is explained that the formation of a Danubian Federation with a mutual preferential regime would have a very great bearing on Switzerland's commercial policy, and opinion in Swiss political quarters is that Switzerland ought to be consulted.

BOOTS FOR THE SWISS ARMY.

The Federal Council has voted a credit of nearly 2 million francs for boots for the Swiss Army; the orders have been placed amongst the various Boot Manufacturers in Switzerland, and will provide work for some of the factories which have been particularly hard hit by the crisis.

SWISS FRONTIER STATION DESTROYED.

Fire has destroyed several buildings at the station at Delle.

The station-master's office, the frontier police commission's office, the Customs buildings and the buffet have been burned down.

Fire brigades from Boncourt, in Switzerland, and Belfort, in France, rushed to the scene, but mastered the blaze only after fighting the flames for several hours.

The damage is estimated at several thousands of pounds.

AEROPLANE INVENTION.

The first aeroplanes in Europe with retractable under-carriages will be seen this summer in service on the air liners from Switzerland.

They will be used to speed up the transport of European mail carried by transatlantic liners to Cherbourg.

These machines are low-wing monoplanes of the Lockheed "Orion" type, and when in flight the pilot can wind up the undercarriage and tail wheel so that they disappear into the fuselage.

This enables the machine to increase its speed, and the Orion machines are actually capable of 224 m.p.h. at 7,000 ft., carrying a pilot and six passengers in a comfortable cabin and mails.

To withdraw the under-carriage takes 35 seconds, and to lower it 15 seconds. Signal lights on the dashboard warn the pilot when the undercarriage is retracted.

DAVIS CUP.

The match between Belgium and Switzerland, in the first round of the Davis Cup, will be played on the courts of the Royal Leopold Club at Brussels on May 3rd, 4th, and 5th. The winners meet the winners of the Monaco-Norway match in the second round.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

M. H. Boli-Nievergelt, a well-known manufacturer, died in Zurich; one of the streets is named after him.

BERNE.

M. Rudolf Brun, editor in chief of the "Zürcher Volkszeitung" has resigned from the editorship after 12 years.

BERNE.

The widow of A. Hess, brewer in Berne, who has died recently, has left an amount of 60,000 francs to the "Bernische Radiumstiftung."

BERNE.

Four passengers travelling in a motor car had a narrow escape, when the vehicle left the road between Bönigen and Iseltwald, and was totally wrecked. The passengers suffered some minor injuries.

BERNE.

An ice rink at a cost of nearly £40,000 is proposed to be built in the Dählhölzli on the border of the Aare.

BERNE.

Burglars entered the offices of the town chancery in Berne and carried away a cash box containing nearly 100,000 francs worth of stamps for duty and tax paid. (Printing costs about £10) as well as two silver cups valued at 40 francs. No money was kept on the premises.

LUCERNE.

Director O. Widmer, a collaborator of long standing of the "Vaterland," has died at Wangen at the age of 77.

LUCERNE.

Last Saturday the 79 years old Jeweller, Anton Kronenberg, was found murdered on his premises at Dagmersellen. The head of the victim showed terrible wounds which were caused by a hammer. Four people have been arrested by the cantonal Police as suspects. A great amount of jewellery, money and securities are missing.

SCHWYZ.

Two adulterators of milk at Küssnacht were convicted to 4 and 19 days imprisonment respectively, and fines amounting to 1,000 francs.

GLARUS.

A collapsible boat overturned on the Walensee and M. Rohr, son of the proprietor of the Hotel Bahnhof in Weesen, was drowned.

BASLE.

For the first time a woman lawyer appeared at the Courts; Mlle. Sophie Bovet acted as Public Prosecutor in a case which was brought before the Justices.

* * *

Dr. W. Meile, Director of the Basle Fair, opened the Exhibition last Saturday in the presence of about 300 press representatives.

ARGAU.

The shareholders Meeting of the Electricity Works at Laufenburg took place last week. A dividend of 10 per cent. will again be paid.

* * *

For the 3rd time within 18 months, a fire occurred at the "Kartonfabrik Knoblauch," in Muhen. The damage caused is serious.

* * *

Dr. Ernst Lüscher, a member of the Grand Council, and a well-known advocate died at Mooserau; Dr. Lüscher was commander of the 55th Infantry battalion.

NEUCHATEL.

Owing to the crisis, the Motor-Works Martini, S. A. at St. Blaise, have gone into liquidation, the greater part of the staff were already dismissed some few weeks ago.

ST. GALLEN.

The Budget for 1931 closes with a deficit of \$23,048f., which is considerably more than anticipated. A budget forecast, estimated the deficit at 137,450f. A sign of the acute crisis which is visiting the Industrial concerns of this part of our country.

THURGAU.

The Directors of the Adolph Saurer Works propose a dividend of 5% for 1931 (1930 — 6%).

SCHAFFHAUSEN.

The oldest inhabitant of the town and canton of Schaffhausen, Mme. Verena Schudel, has died at the age of 100.

GRISONS.

The Government of the canton of Grisons has granted a credit of over 1 million francs for the building of roads.

VAUD.

Over 180 cases of the "Flu" have occurred at the Barracks at Lausanne, so far two cases have proved fatal.

* * *

The council of the community of Vevey has voted a credit for the erection of a harbour for yachts on the Sina-Quai.

INFORMATION OF THE SWISS NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE.

Jubilee Trips Through the Gotthard and Simplon.

On the occasion of the 50th and 25th celebrations of the St. Gotthard line (tunnel finished in 1880) and the Simplon line (bore in 1905), schools and other institutions (boarding-schools, private educational establishments, cadet corps, Boy Scouts, etc.) will be allowed an *extra* reduction on the already greatly reduced fares, *i.e.*, half of the latter. *Non-Swiss-schools* will be allowed the same reduction. Such trips may be undertaken at any time up to the end of 1932, except on Saturdays and Sundays, public holidays, Witsunfeide and during July and August.

A brochure with regulations for school trips, prices, accommodation, etc., is obtainable from the publicity office of the Swiss Federal Railways at Berne and its foreign agents, at all Swiss ticket offices, and from the Swiss National Tourist Offices at Zurich and Lausanne and its foreign agents. The booklet is issued gratis in German, French and Italian. For lodging accommodation apply to the "SESA," Zurich, Railway Station Enge.

Sport.

The Swiss regatta calendar for 1932 contains the following items:

May 29th Regional Lake of Zurich Regatta in Richterswil.

June 5th International Regatta at Rorschach. Lake Léman Regatta in Montreux.

June 11/12 International Regatta in Lucerne.

June 24/26 International Regatta in Zurich.

July 12th Swiss Championship Regatta in Neuchâtel.

August 14th National Regatta in Stansstad.