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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

SWISS FRONTIER VIOLATION BY NAZIS.

An inquiry has been opened by the Swiss Attorney-General into the circumstances of the violation of the Swiss frontier on Tuesday near Basle by a party of uniformed Nazis, and it is expected that at its conclusion the Federal Government will address a very strongly worded protest to Berlin.

All shades of opinion in Switzerland are unanimous in demanding that the Government shall make it quite clear that incidents of this sort shall not be repeated, and it is feared that if strong measures are not taken against incidents of this kind the frontier between Germany and Switzerland will become as troubled as the other frontiers separating Germany from small States.

The local Nazi Press reported that the watchman whose house was searched on the Swiss side of the frontier, had rendered himself suspect of Communism, because last Sunday he had quarrelled with a Nazi.

The quarrel was caused by the man's walking through the grass belonging to the Nazi while on his way to the river to bathe. The total amount of forbidden literature found and seized by the Nazis at his house comprised one copy of a Communist newspaper of last year's date, and the calendar of a sports club.

The German Minister in Berne has handed to the Swiss Federal Government a Note expressing the regret of the German Government for the violation of the Swiss frontier near Basle by a party of Nazis in uniform last week. The Note adds that the German Government is making an inquiry into the case and that the Nazis concerned acted without authorization.

The Swiss Government has received the communication with satisfaction, but has declared to the German Legation that it expects that once the official inquiry is completed disciplinary measures will be taken against the culprits.

NEW FRONTIER INCIDENT.

The question whether an island picnic resort in the Rhine near Basle belongs to Germany or to Switzerland has been raised by the arrest by German Customs officials of two Swiss holiday-makers who were accused of having Communist literature on them. The two arrested men belonged to a party of 40 Swiss trippers who went out in punts to the island on Sunday for a day's outing.

The island, called Augst, is actually nearer the German bank of the river and was largely created by a weir used for hydro-electric purposes. For many years Swiss trippers have used it for picnics and bathing parties, though it is said that there were once boards up warning people off. The two arrested Swiss were taken into German territory and placed in jail at Lorrach, in German territory, near Basle.

So far there has not been any Swiss protest, but in view of the incident last week when Nazis raided the house of a German night watchman of an electricity works situate half in Germany and half in Switzerland — about which the German Minister in Berne apologised — the position is being watched with interest.

NAZI ABUSES SWISS PRESS.

Dr. Edgar Schmid, a Swiss by naturalisation, and a German Press agent at Zurich, is furnishing his papers with articles classifying the Swiss Press (for present and future use), according to their attitude to the German Nazis.

The papers of the different "fronts" are highly praised, the others just as violently abused. The "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" is called "the mouthpiece of the French Government," the

editor of the "Bund" is "bribed," papers like the "Basler Nachrichten," "National Zeitung," which represent the best Liberal and Democratic parties, are called "Jewish and Marxiste."

The Swiss Press Association, in an open letter has retaliated by calling Dr. Schmid a traitor. The other day the unfortunate doctor was recognised on the Zurich bathing beach, and chased by a crowd of about 200 people.

ROBBERIES IN ALPINE HUTS.

The Swiss Alpine Club spends over 300,000fr. (more than £17,600) a year on the improvement and upkeep of its mountain huts. These huts, which used to be regarded as almost sacred by all climbers and by the public at large, are no longer protected against the attempts of thieves and housebreakers. There even seems to exist among the younger generation of Alpinists a tendency to break into the mountain huts and "forget" to pay after having used emergency food supplies and implements.

Recently some unknown persons broke into the Planura and Clariden Huts, in Canton Glarus, and stole wood and food. Last winter some persons went to the Chanrion Hut (Val de Bagnes), and managed to open a gap in the concrete wall of the newly built chamber where blankets, emergency food supplies, and implements are kept while the hut is closed, and carried away a number of articles.

SWISS TOBACCO DUTIES.

The Federal Government proposes to substantially increase the duty on tobacco, cigars and cigarettes in Switzerland. Present Federal taxes on tobacco yield an annual sum of 25,000,000 Swiss francs (£1,000,000 at par).

The pipe tobacco and cigarette manufacturers agree to the proposal, but the cigar manufacturers, through their association "Ucifa," have started a counter-agitation. They say the extra duty will throw out of work 6,000 people now engaged in the Swiss cigar industry, as the public will cease to buy cigars.

THE SWISS FRANC.

Reports from Switzerland confirm the intention of the Banque Nationale Suisse to maintain the franc on the gold standard. During the past few years the bank has strengthened its position considerably and should the need arise could doubtless count on the support of other nations against whose interest it would be for the Swiss franc to depreciate.

BANK FOR INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENTS.

The situation of the Bank of International Settlements as at July 31 showed a total of 716,300,186 Swiss francs, which represents an increase of 4,000,000fr. as compared with the total at June 30. It is to be noted that for the first time the situation shows a holding of gold by the bank amounting to about 5,000,000fr., this holding being offset by a corresponding liability to sight depositors. Earmarked gold held in custody for the account of central banks has never been included in the situation. The deposits of the central banks for their own account have increased by about 7,000,000fr., while their deposits for the account of other depositors all show small increases. The profits allocated for the distribution, amounting to about 9,700,000fr., were duly disbursed on July 1.

The above-mentioned gold bar deposit opens a new field of activity to the Work Bank, acting as the bank of the central banks. Banks that have a gold surplus may now deposit it at the B.I.S. to be re-lent to other central banks having a transitory need of gold for the seasonal pressure during harvest time. As the B.I.S. operates as the bank of central banks, assistance of gold clearing may thus be developed.

FIRST ALPS NIGHT FLIGHT.

The first night flight across the Swiss Alps was made by the Swiss aviator, M. Robert Fretz, who was accompanied by Herr Herzog, director of the Altenheim aerodrome.

Flying in magnificent moonlight the aeroplane took 90 minutes to complete the journey from Milan to Zurich, a distance of 130 miles.

25,000 FEET PARACHUTE DROP.

Last Sunday the Swiss parachutist, Bohlen, jumped out of an aeroplane at a height of 8,300 metres (about 25,000 feet) and landed safely in the neighbourhood of Basle. He claims this as a world record.

The previous record was that of a Frenchman, of about 22,000ft.

NEW SWISS CINEMA LAW.

Following the decision of the Conseil d'Etat for the Canton of Vaud to refuse admittance to children under 16 years of age, even when accompanied, to ordinary cinema shows, the whole of the 23 cantons (with the exception of Bale-Campagne) have now made similar decisions.

Geneva adopted the by-law two months ago, and now Vaud brings the number up to 23.

One of the complaints brought against the old rule of placing certain films in the category of "interdit aux enfants" is that the Commission de Censure were only responsible for the supervision of the principal film, and very often parents taking their children to the cinema were shocked by the additions to the programme particularly the specially selected scenes of the film for the following week.

Public and Press have approached the cinema directors with a view to obtaining the reservation of the Wednesday and Saturday matinees for films of an artistic, comic, educational or instructive value which have been passed by the Scholastic Commission.

In the case of a town where exhibitors are not willing to organise these matinees it is suggested that occasional shows to be organised by the "Cinemas populaires romands," who have already a big stock of suitable films and travelling projectors.

THE RICKEN TUNNEL.

Less well known, probably, than its more important and more lengthy Alpine neighbours, such as the Simplon, St. Gotthard, Lötschberg, Mont Cenis and Arlberg tunnels, the Ricken tunnel, 5½ miles long, nevertheless forms an important link between the populous St. Gall region of Switzerland and the upper end of the Lake of Zurich. In March last it celebrated the completion of its first 25 years of existence. Considerable difficulties were experienced during its construction, owing to the percolation into the workings, without smell, noise or pressure, of a dangerous inflammable gas. Interruptions so occasioned in the work of boring prolonged the construction to a total of nearly 5 years. But the worst tragedy connected with the Ricken tunnel was in October, 1926, and resulted primarily from the steepness of its inclination, which is 1 in 66½ throughout. On this date, in exceptionally bad atmospheric conditions, a freight train stalled on the rising gradient, and the fumes from the locomotive asphyxiated no fewer than nine men — the six men forming the train crew, as well as three men accompanying the breakdown train from Wattwil. Immediate electrification of the route was thereupon decided on by the Swiss Federal Railways administration, and electrical operation was brought into use in the following year.

SWISS MACHINERY EXPORTS DECLINE.

Exports of spinning, weaving, and knitting machines from Switzerland during the period from January to May, 1933, decreased in each case as compared with the same period last year. As the following table indicates, exports of spinning machines fell by 55 per cent., of weaving machines by about 27 per cent., and of knitting machines also by about 27 per cent. It will be noted moreover that exports of weaving machines were less than 50 per cent. of those for 1913 (January-May). The one hopeful feature is afforded by the knitting machinery branch, whose exports were very much greater than the 1913 figures.

	January to May		
	Quintals		
	1913	1932	1933
Spinning and twisting machines.	5,866	11,407	5,149
Weaving machines	27,056	18,077	13,346
Knitting machines	1,176	3,717	2,776

VETERAN'S ASCENT OF MONT BLANC.

On Sunday M. Henri Brulle, although 80 years of age, successfully climbed Mont Blanc (15,781ft.), accompanied by two guides, Raymond and Chapelland, and came down by way of the Grand Mulet to Chamonix.

SWISS CYCLIST FOR HERNE HILL.

Among the cyclists who are to compete in the international meeting at Herne Hill on Saturday is Fritz Kratt, of Switzerland, who is a newcomer to this country. On the Continent Kratt has just recorded his fifth consecutive win in the Amateur Motor-paced Grand Prix de Vincennes.

Kratt is coming over to London to make a bid for the Grand Prix of London (motor-paced).

"NEBELSPALTER" PROHIBITED IN GERMANY.

The Swiss humoristic Paper the "Nebelspalter" has been prohibited throughout Germany. (We have always maintained that the Nazis have no sense of humour).

INTERNATIONAL GOITRE CONFERENCE.

Federal Councillor Häberlin opened the International Goitre Conference in Berne on the 10th inst., he welcomed the 150 delegates who have come from all corners of the globe, on behalf of the Swiss Government, expressing his wish that the deliberations may bear fruits in combatting this devastating disease. The Conference lasted four days.

SWISS BANKERS' ASSOCIATION.

The Annual Meeting of the Swiss Bankers' Association will take place on September 9th at Brunnén. Dr. Max Stahelin, President of the Swiss Bank Corporation, will read a paper on "Swiss Finances."

AUTUMN MANOEUVRES OF THE 2ND DIVISION.

Owing to the state of health of Army Corps commander Sarasin, the autumn manoeuvres of the 2nd division will take place under the command of Army Corps Commander Roost, chief of the General Staff.

FAREWELL PARTY AT THE GERMAN LEGATION.

On the occasion of the retirement of the German Minister, Dr. Müller, a reception was held at the German Legation at Berne, at which several Federal Councillors and high officials were present; as well as the members of the diplomatic corps. Dr. Müller will spend his retirement at Merlgen on the Lake of Thun.

DEATH IN THE MOUNTAINS.

The lure of the Edelweiss, that white Alpine flower which so many climbers like to pluck from its often almost inaccessible niche, has just cost three more lives.

A Lausanne tourist named Meystre, who was climbing the Argentine peak, above the Rhone Valley, with some friends, tried to obtain a specimen on the face of the cliff, but lost his footing and was dashed to death 1,000ft. below.

Meanwhile, another climber on the Chamosaire, an adjoining peak, was similarly killed; and a third lost his life on the Alpstein, in the Canton of Appenzell.

Besides these, a young Swiss named le Bourgogne, climbing the Salève peak, fell 1,000ft. to death.

ROYAL VISIT AT THE FEDERAL PALAIS.

On the occasion of a short visit in Berne, the King of Bulgaria has paid a private visit to M. Motta, Foreign Minister and Doyen of the Federal Council. The Swiss Government offered a luncheon, at which all the Federal Councillors at present in Berne, took part, as well as Minister Stucki and the Bulgarian Minister, accredited to the Swiss Confederation.

MEETING OF SWISS DIPLOMATS.

The Annual Conference of the Federal Council with its foreign representatives will take place on September 2nd.

LOCAL.**ZURICH.**

M. Huldreich Baer-Appli who recently died at Zurich, has left an amount of 200,000fr. to various charitable institutions.

The collection which was made amongst the former students of the University of Zurich, on the occasion of its Jubilee, has reached the amount of 760,000fr.

BERNE.

The Interlaken region was devastated on Saturday by a violent thunderstorm.

Not since 102 years has anything like this occurred. The whole valley from Stechelberg to Trümmelbach and as far as Zweilütschine is partly covered with stones and mud, big lumps of rock, boulders, bridges are torn away, the railway line undermined and at places hanging loose with the foundations washed away from underneath. The Inn at Stechelberg is up to the windows surrounded by stones, the water ran through it, up to the first story. The electric power station is ruined, full of rocks, trees and mud. A tree was driven right through the dynamo. The works manager in his attempt to telephone, was caught up to his armpits in mud, and had to be dug out, his wife and children had to be released by a gang of men roped together, all the windows and doors were blocked.

Six cows were washed down from the Schiltalp, (a great distance) and were found at the power station at Stechelberg. For 18 hours the water came rushing down the valley. It must have been terrible to hear the roar and to be amidst all this for so many hours in the dark.

National Councillor, Dr. med. Rikli has died at Langenthal at the age of 70. The deceased was for many years chief surgeon of the 3rd division, and was well-known in political circles.

LUCERNE.

Dr. Jakob Siegrist, member of the cantonal government has celebrated his 25th anniversary as "Regierungsrat," he entered the cantonal government in 1908 as successor to M. Schobinger, who was elected a Federal Councillor.

Dr. Jakob Bucher, since 1930, 1st Public Prosecutor of the Canton of Lucerne, has died at the age of 46.

GENEVA.

The Geneva poet M. Henri de Ziegler has received the "Prix littéraire des Alpes françaises" for his book "Idylle." The prize consists of an amount of 2,000fr., and has been given by the "Petit Dauphinois" for works glorifying the French Alps.

The 18 years old Henri Debougogne from Geneva, fell over a rock when climbing the "Roche Pourrie" and was killed instantly.

THURGAU.

The Swiss steamer "Rhein" grounded last Sunday on the Horn, near the Konstanzer Bay, the passengers numbering about 250 had to be transferred to another steamer, who landed them safely at Romanshorn.

GRISONS.

M. Werner Keller, a twenty-two year old student of Frauenfeld, was killed when traversing the Bianco-Grat in the Bernina district. A rescue party, consisting of several guides from Pontresina managed to locate the body on the Tschierwa glacier. M. Keller was the son of the rector of the "Kantons Schule" at Frauenfeld.

Large forest fires have occurred in the valley di Ley, which, owing to the scarcity of water have assumed alarming dimensions. The fire brigades of Zillis, Andeer and Ferrera have been mobilised.

VAUD.

The death is reported of M. Monneron, one of the managers of the Swiss Bank Corporation at Lausanne, at the age of 67. M. Monneron was secretary of the Lausanne Stock Exchange, and for many years a director of the "Gazette de Lausanne."

M. Jules Séchaud, head of the well-known Chocolate firm Séchaud has died at Montreux.

TICINO.

M. Tobia Pertelacchi, who recently died at San Francisco (U.S.A.) has left an amount of 15,000 dollars to the cantonal hospital at Bellinzona.

**IN SWITZERLAND.
SOME NEW EXPERIENCES.**

By "HOB CARTON."

Each day one has some new experience: little things they may seem on the surface, but often they express a great deal of the soul of this wonderful country.

Take, for example, the other evening. I was in the public room of the hotel and my landlady pointed out to me eight natives who had come in for a chat and perhaps a quiet game of cards.

She whispered to me their occupations giving a short character sketch, in excellent English, of some of them. You would surely very rarely if ever see such a collection of men meet together in England on a common basis of friendship.

I jotted down in my notebook the list of trades and profession and here they are: — a cabinet maker, a butcher, a banker, an architect, a chimney sweep, a teacher, an ironmonger, a chauffeur. She added that very often the local Judge (a sort of Stipendiary Magistrates I imagine) and Doctor also came, and they all play cards together.

I was glad to have such an excellent account of the Doctor, who, I learned, did much work for love and helped with food and clothing.

Democracy in Action.

This small incident seems to explain much of that real fraternity and friendship which one finds all over Switzerland. Surely it is real democracy in action. Perhaps it is one of the reasons why the Swiss can do so much in the way of big schemes — engineering, educational and social — they are used to combine and discuss freely together, they consider the good of the country, and the country benefits and they benefit individually.

Of course, their national hero is William Tell, and the great play by Schiller is produced here once a week all the summer.

One day I went to this play. It is quite different from anything I have ever before seen — and most, perhaps, resembles a W.E.A. play at its best.

Interlaken is only a small town, yet here before were some 200 people producing this national play in the open air on an enormous natural stage which is actually part of the forest adjoining the town. They were local people and acted for love not pay.

The audience were protected from the weather by a large awning. The play lasted three hours, and though in a foreign tongue one followed the acting and the plot quite easily. A country

wedding with singing guests all in national costume; the cattle coming from the hills into the hamlet; the building of the cruel Gessler's castle; the home life of William Tell in his small chalet — his wife and son, Walter, and finally the shooting of the wicked Gessler; and then formation of the Swiss nation, now freed from the yoke of the Austrians was all produced to the life.

Of course, the great scene was the famous apple incident, where Tell refuses to salute the cap of Gessler and is taken prisoner and commanded to shoot an apple from the head of his boy Walter (a perfectly charming flaxen haired lad of twelve).

The dramatic emotion is intense, and the rabe of Gessler (acted by a local veterinary surgeon) on his prancing charger is terrific. The people defy him, and his humiliation is increased when one of his nobles goes over to the Swiss side. The gallop into the forest by Gessler's troupe of charges is thrilling.

The final rejoicings are very real and one felt that there was national history and spirit behind the play and the people had entered into another happier, freer and better state.

Another day we heard a jodelling exhibition.

The Jodel.

Now many other mountain peoples "Jodel" but I never heard of anything of the kind at Wasdale or Buttermere! However be sure they jodel here. It is not all like the imitation "stage" jodelling one may sometimes hear at home, though much of it is so. The great beauty is the curious echoing effect in rich, deep, solemn tones all in their respective part of tenor, bass, and baritone. The volume of sound gradually dies away, just as the music of the Alpine horn sounds, echoes and re-echoes and finally dies among the ice and perpetual snow of the high Alps.

And speaking of the high Alps reminds me that last week I have never seen much new ground.

One is deeply impressed by the grandeur of the ice-capped Eiger, Monch and Finsteraarhorn, Jungfrau and Silberhorn, of which enough can hardly be said, but some of the Waterfalls are world famous too.

How many people in England, after a visit to Switzerland, speak of the wonderful Staubbach fall and how many hundreds have that very beautiful fall in brilliant print form (they are rarely subdued tones!) framed and hanging over their dining room mantelshef? You have all seen such rattier hackneyed and garish productions, but I assure you the real thing makes one want to remember it in every detail for all time. There is the stream pouring over a thousand foot precipice into the green valley below. At the top it is a torrent of water, half-way down it spreads out three times its original width and at last it falls to the ground in a wide spray little denser than mist, while opposite is a steep crag, and beyond, filling in the picture is the dazzling white of the "The Lady of the Snows."

A waterfall of quite another kind is the much advertised Trummelbach falls which you see produced in posters at the railway stations and where the most marvellous rainbows show.

Well the reality is much better and a good deal different from the advertisements.

A Spiral Watershoot.

It is best described as an enormous spiral watershoot, crashing from side to side down its "staircase." The noise of the falling waters is awe inspiring; the cool spray is most welcome after a very hot walk in the valley with the afternoon sun heating the rocks which reflect their accumulated heat on the walker; most beautiful of all is the spray rainbow at the foot of the falls which plays gently over the dashing roaring waters.

You may be interested in hearing which, of all the walks we have enjoyed here has been most generally popular.

There is no doubt that this is the woodland walk of Mürren.

You can go, as we did, up the great valley leading to Lauterbrunnen by train and here you change into the funicular which hoists you up, very slowly some 2,000 feet.

Here you are in another atmosphere, for the heat of the valley has gone and a sharp dry, clarified air blows right off the precipices of those great snow mountains standing in a row and over 13,000 feet high—the Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau, down whose sides perpetual avalanches roar. For 4½ miles you walk through a pine forest with the most amazing views at every turn of little mountain brack and beds of wild flowers blue, mauve, pink, yellow and white all seeming to revel in the sun with blue sky above and the sleepy narrow valley below. The scent of wild thyme and other hill flowers is ever with you.

At last you reach the little hamlet itself which is a collection of wooden chalets and farms with three modern hotels. The main street ends abruptly in a mountain brack and above are rich cow pastures, full of flowers and called in fact the Blumenthal or as we should say in English "the valley of flowers."

But such places must be seen to be believed.

West Cumberland News.