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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

REFERENDUM ON THE BILL FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE STATE (Staatschutzgesetz).

Cantons.	Yes.	No.
Zurich	67,988	85,334
Berne	57,024	92,668
Lucerne	20,383	18,850
Uri	2,909	2,012
Schwyz	5,809	7,252
Obwalden	1,883	2,181
Nidwalden	1,370	1,636
Glarus	4,550	3,696
Zug	3,170	4,006
Freiburg	11,773	12,483
Solothurn	14,238	19,899
Baselstadt	15,142	20,333
Baselland	5,353	15,125
Schaffhausen	4,991	7,541
Appenzell A.-Rh.	3,564	7,558
Appenzell I.-Rh.	1,347	1,229
St. Gallen	25,806	37,087
Graubünden	13,981	9,477
Aargau	28,868	33,626
Thurgau	16,324	15,211
Tessin	18,015	7,430
Waadt	46,925	41,074
Wallis	12,940	8,632
Neuenburg	13,003	13,120
Genf	14,303	16,095
Total	417,659	483,550

The Swiss electorate decided by 417,659 votes to 483,550 against the Government proposal of a law on public safety. The rejected measure was intended to strengthen the hand of the authorities against rioting, popular demonstrations and subversive agitation.

Under the Bill:—

Anyone urging upon any meeting or crowd, either orally or in writing, that it should commit a crime or take action against the State would have been liable to three years' penal servitude or to ordinary imprisonment.

Anyone founding or joining an association which seeks to adopt illegal methods of hindering or frustrating administrative measures, or the due execution of the laws, or anyone who, without authorisation, employed the force which appertains only to State organs, would have been liable to a fine not exceeding 1,000 Swiss francs, or, on a second conviction, to imprisonment not exceeding one year, together with a fine not exceeding 5,000 francs.

Anyone collecting, maintaining, or distributing stores of weapons or munitions would have been liable to imprisonment; if a foreigner, he would have been deported. These last clauses were not to be in force if the authorities had ordered or approved the storing or distributing of weapons or munitions.

The rights of crowds or meetings, in the interests of public order and security, were limited.

A special paragraph deals with the protection of democracy against foreign encroachments; here the penalties laid down were imprisonment, penal servitude, or, in the case of a foreigner, deportation, the offence being defined as follows:—

In the name of a foreign State to perform official acts in Swiss territory without the consent of Swiss authorities; in the interests of a foreign Government to be engaged in Swiss territory in a news service giving information as to the political activities of persons or parties, or to recruit assistance or give other kinds of help to such service. It was to be regarded as an aggravating circumstance if such person incited to acts or provided false news which tended to endanger the internal or external security of Switzerland.

These Provisions having been drawn up by the Federal Administration, it is unlikely that they were conceived in an arbitrary and unreasonable spirit; but they are described simply as "designed to prevent a repetition of the Geneva massacre of 1932" by providing for long terms of imprisonment in respect of crimes against the State or against public order. Incidentally, "massacre" seems a word ill-chosen to recall the events of sixteen months ago, when thirteen persons were killed in the course of street fighting which arose out of a clash between the middle-class Fascist "Union Nationale" and a mixed crowd of Socialist and Communist leanings; though the disorder of that time—which affected Zurich and Lausanne as well as Geneva...was certainly sufficiently serious to occasion general alarm, and even to threaten the stability of the State. Probably, at the time, most people regarded it as serious enough to warrant—or even to demand—exceptional methods of suppression. More potent to-day, however, than fear of any repetition of the rioting of 1932 is the fear lest "crimes against the State" should be taken to include legitimate agitation and legitimate propaganda; and so "the Socialists and the peasantry voted solidly against the new law"—which, as far as one can judge, would have involved no more restriction upon personal liberty than most European States accept as a matter of course. We may take it, probably, that their opposition was not merely party opposition, but that a definite change—if not in administrative practice, then in the legal conception of personal rights—was deemed to be involved; and that the innate conservatism of the race once more asserted itself. That is characteristic of the referendum, a sturdy bulwark against change.

RESIGNATION OF FEDERAL COUNCILLOR HÄBERLIN.

Federal Councillor Häberlin has tendered his resignation. In view of the result of the Referendum of the "Staatschutzgesetz," of which M. Häberlin was the author, this news has hardly come as a surprise; in fact, it was known that he contemplated relinquishing his post, should the electorate decide against this law, and even as far back as last year, rumours of an early retirement were current.

The Federal Council has expressed a wish that M. Häberlin should reconsider his decision, but the latter has categorically refused.

GOVERNMENT SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE FEDERAL SHOOTING COMPETITION.

The Federal Council has decided to send a donation of 10,000 francs to the Organisation Committee of the Federal Shooting Competition at Fribourg.

SWISS PARLIAMENT.

The two Chambers assembled on Monday last for the spring session.

The following members of the National Council have tendered their resignations: Sandoz, Berne (Lib.); Arnold, Basle (Com.); Ehrler, Geneva (Soc.); and Mächler, St. Gall (Lib.).

DEPORTATION.

The Swiss Federal Council has decided to deport from Switzerland a Rumanian Jew, M. Hefter, editor of a daily newspaper, "Le Moment," published in Geneva, on the ground that the editorial opinions expressed are of such a nature as to endanger the foreign relations as well as the internal security of Switzerland.

BASLE BANK DIVIDEND.

Mr. Leon Fraser, the President, presided over the meeting of the Board of the Bank for International Settlements this morning. The British delegation was composed of Mr. Montagu Norman, Sir Otto Niemeyer and Mr. Siepmann.

The assets of the bank at the end of February amounted to 657,000,000 francs (Swiss), an increase of 3,500,000 over the January total. It is understood that a dividend of six per cent, on the year's work was envisaged, but a definite decision was adjourned until the next meeting of the Board on April 9.

SWISS GOVERNMENT'S THANKS TO FEDERAL CHANCELLOR.

The Federal Council has expressed its thanks to Dr. Kaeslin, the retiring Federal Chancellor, for the great services which he has rendered to the country.

SWISS ADHERENCE TO GOLD.

At the annual meeting of the Swiss National Bank, held in Berne on Saturday, two interesting declarations were made by the Chairman of the Council, Dr. A. Sarasin (Basle), and the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Professor Bachmann (Zurich). Dr. Sarasin declared "never before in one year have we had so many changes in the financial and economical situation in Switzerland. The responsible leaders of the Swiss National Bank have proved again that they are absolutely master of the situation. Everything had to be dealt with from quite unexpected angles. The interests of our own country had to be safeguarded against the interests of private industry."

"The monetary policy of the Swiss National Bank will proceed on the lines which are legally provided for and have proved to be the best for Switzerland. We will stick to the agreement we signed with seven other countries to remain on the gold standard. The weak condition of industry and the increasing difficulties of exportation are at present our main problems."

Professor Bachmann, speaking on the future monetary policy of the Swiss National Bank, said: "It is absolutely wrong to say that a money system based on gold is the cause of the present international crisis. The devaluation of the Swiss franc or replacement of the gold standard is out of the question."

"One-seventh of Swiss national property is used as credit in foreign countries. These figures prove the extent of our credit business."

"What would be the effect of a suspension of the gold standard in Switzerland? The industrials might profit and production would be cheaper, but actually the manoeuvre would be a failure, as no country would allow an increased quantity of Swiss goods to be imported."

"Every country that has experimented with its money is in a worse condition than Switzerland. The authorities of the Swiss National Bank will never leave the gold standard, and they hope that the whole population of Switzerland will aid them in their fight against the Swiss crisis."

IMPROVED TOURIST TRADE IN SWITZERLAND.

In the 15,950 square miles of Switzerland there are 8,000 hotels. The industry gives work to about 62,000 persons and comes third in importance, after the building and machine industries, as regards its capacity for employment. In 1929 the capital invested in the industry was 1,935,000,000 francs (£76,724,000), compared with 550,000,000 francs (£21,800,000) in 1900; the English equivalent being taken at the old parities then existing.

At the beginning of the century, the amount of money spent in Switzerland by foreign visitors was computed at 108,000,000 francs per annum (£4,280,000). In 1912-13 this sum increased to 250-275 million francs per annum, and in 1929 it had grown to 600,000,000 francs (£23,700,000).

The foreign element among tourists, which averages 60 per cent, as opposed to the national element, has, however, decreased considerably. Hotel prices have been cut, and the receipts in the hotel industry have fallen to almost half the figure for 1929.

In 1932 the serious outlook caused by the marked decline in the number of foreign visitors, together with the high permanent cost of upkeep, rendered it necessary for the Federal Authorities to assist the hotel industry by means of State aid, a sum of 3,500,000 francs being granted.

After a very bad summer season in 1932, the winter season of 1932-33 and the summer season of 1933 were slightly better, owing to the greater number of tourists, especially English. As prices had to be cut very low, profits were not in proportion to the increased turnover.

SWISS GOLD EFFLUX ENDS.

The weekly statement of the Swiss National Bank issued recently shows that the Swiss gold losses have ceased, and there is a slight increase of gold bills. The gold reserve stands now at 1,824 million Swiss francs, a difference of 12 million francs on last week's return, and is due to usual end-month operations.

Gold cover is 94.59 per cent.—practically unchanged, as last week's figure was 94.2 per cent.

THE PROTECTION OF SWISS CLOCKMAKERS.

The Swiss Federal Council has adopted a decree to protect the Swiss clockmaking industry which will remain in force until the end of 1935.

The decree forbids the opening of new clockmaking factories, the extension or transference or transformation of existing factories, and the export of certain parts of clocks as well as their sale with a view to export. The latter ban does not apply to deliveries permitted by the Swiss Chamber of Clockmakers.

HIGH-LEVEL SKIING SEASON.

Snow has again fallen in abundance on the mountains down to the 3,000ft. level, and, though temperature is not very low, conditions are again good for skiing. In spite of the abundance of powdery snow, the low-level skiing season is nearing its end, and the high-level season is beginning. Skiers have now taken to going higher up the mountains when spring snow becomes too soft in the lower regions, and go skiing on the glaciers and in the higher Alps. The high-level skiing season begins in March and lasts until the end of May.

SWISS RAIL SUBSIDY.

The Swiss Government has decided to grant a subsidy of Swiss Frs. 1,000,000 (£40,000 at par) to the railway company. This amount is to be used for further reduction of railway fares for foreign visitors during the coming season.

The Federal Railways have entered into an agreement with the hotel proprietors whereby the railway company will issue a ticket that includes the railway fare and the cost of a seven days' stay at any resort in Switzerland. This new regulation will be introduced on 1st April next.

VALAIS.

"Tante" Marie Binner, who was for nearly fifty years the barber at Zermatt, has died at the age of 74; she not only shaved the villagers, but many famous men in the tourist world came "under her knife."

Professor Paul Ostertag has resigned from his post as Director of the "Technikum" in Winterthur; his successor will be Professor Hans Krapf.

VAUD.

M. Georges Ador, Chancellor of the Canton of Vaud, has asked to be relieved of his post, on reaching the age limit.

NEUCHATEL.

Dr. Favot, Directeur de l'Ecole cantonale for the last ten years, and one of the oldest members of the teaching staff of that institution, has died at the age of 65.

ZURICH.

M. A. F. Geiser, the senior of Swiss mathematicians, died at Küsnacht (Zurich), at the age of 81. The deceased was for fifty years a teacher at the "Polytechnikum" in Zurich.

The "Kantonsrat" has decided to reduce the membership of the Council from 220 to 180 members.

ST. GALLEN.

The accounts of the town of St. Gallen for the year 1933 close with a surplus of 50,000 francs, instead of a loss of 200,000 francs, as estimated.

LA SITUATION A GENEVE.

Tel est — on le sait — le sujet de la brûlante actualité qu'a traité M. le conseiller d'Etat Albert Picot jeudi dernier, à la Salle Centrale, devant un auditoire considérable.

Le chef du parti démocratique a d'abord relevé le regrettable changement d'attitude qui s'est marqué entre les débuts du nouveau gouvernement socialiste et certains de ses derniers actes — ou plutôt l'absence de certains actes que doit imposer à n'importe quel gouvernement le souci de l'ordre public. Il est vrai. Nous devons cependant à la vérité objective de reconnaître que si le gouvernement s'est laissé aller à certaines manifestations de parti qui l'ont fait savoir réfréner en soi lorsque, de l'opposition on passe à la direction des affaires publiques, le Grand Conseil, en sa majorité bourgeoise, ne s'est non plus prononcé avec toute l'équité désirable sur le projet du Conseil d'Etat, qui introduisait très raisonnablement la notion de la progressivité dans les centimes additionnels. A chacun le sien !

Il nous apparaît, en outre, excessif de reprocher à M. Léon Nicole son attitude dans la question des zones. Nous estimons que les pires procès en politique sont ceux où l'on prétend se faire juger des intentions. Que les socialistes aient en dessein d'exploiter en leur faveur le mécontentement de la campagne genevoise dans le règlement de cette affaire, c'est possible; le fait ne demeure pas moins incontestable que l'agitation ultra nationaliste, qui nous a valu le gain de notre cause devant la cour de La Haye, nous vaut aussi la très médiocre sentence arbitrale rendue à Terriet; un arrangement amiable, tel que l'avaient d'ailleurs conçu puis réalisé naguère les prédécesseurs de M. Picot à la direction du parti démocratique. Gustave Ador et Albert Maunois ont été bien préférable à la satisfaction purement morale que nous avons obtenue, et qui ne nourrit

en nous que la survie d'une hargne contre la France napoleonne d'avant 1844. En disant son désappointement, et en marquant l'intention de revenir à un accord amiable, le chef du gouvernement genevois a exprimé une opinion qui est certainement celle de la majorité de notre population — preuve en soit au surplus le vœu de l'arresté qu'il soumettait au Grand Conseil et qui approuvait son attitude.

Il ne demeure pas moins que le gouvernement socialiste s'est laissé aller à suivre, en quelques circonstances, une politique qui autorisait même ceux qui ne lui font pas une opposition systématique, à douter qu'il eût le sens exact des responsabilités qui entraîne l'exercice du pouvoir. Et cela devait être rappelé.

En présence de cette situation, quels doivent être les devoirs de l'opposition bourgeoise au Grand Conseil — ou cette opposition est d'autreurs en majorité — ce qui rend sa conduite particulièrement délicate, car, majorité, elle incline à faire échec à la majorité gouvernementale renversée par rapport à elle, et, de fait, elle doit se souvenir que le vote massif (et non plus fragmentaire, comme c'est le cas avec la R. P.) du 26 novembre, a indiqué, avec une netteté sur laquelle il serait mesquin d'ergoter, la volonté du peuple genevois de faire une politique, sinon socialiste, du moins accentuée à gauche.

M. Albert Picot recommande d'abord la fin des oppositions sournoises entre les partis bourgeois. L'intention est louable, la réalisation reste chimérique. D'ici que radicaux d'une part, chrétiens-sociaux et adhérents à l'Union nationale d'autre part, puissent se réconcilier autrement que dans un baiser Lamourette, l'âne, le roi, ou moi nous mourrons... Passons.

M. Picot voit les choses de façon plus réaliste en recommandant aux purs Genevois de prendre garde que l'afflux des Confédérés à Genève est un fait dont il faut chercher à s'accommoder au lieu de déplorer en vain, et de récriminer sans cesse sur l'évolution fâcheuse de la politique authentiquement genevoise qui en résulterait. En d'autres termes, il faut vivre avec son temps. Cette recommandation ne nous apparaît pas inutile. L'exaltation du nationalisme ne fera, par choc en retour, qu'apporter de l'eau au moulin socialiste.

M. Picot attend enfin de l'opposition qu'elle agisse de manière intelligente, loyale, dans le cadre strict de la légalité; qu'elle soit cependant absolument catégorique sur certains points non susceptibles de transaction, et qu'elle sache remplir vis-à-vis du pays une tâche positive et constructive.

Tribune de Genève.

"WILLIAM TELL" IS AGAIN PERFORMED AT ALTDORF.

Altdorf, the lovely little town near Flüelen, on the Lake of Lucerne, will, after an intermission of four years, be giving William Tell performances every Sunday from July to September. The presentations of Schiller's stirring drama in which William Tell, Altdorf's gallant archer, plays the stellar rôle, take place in a beautiful playhouse especially erected for this purpose. Many decades ago the people of Altdorf essayed some outdoor Tell performances, and the success of these proved an incentive for the erection of the first playhouse in 1899. Since then performances have been given at regular intervals during the summer months, and the latest Tell theatre, which was erected in 1925, features all modern improvements in stagecraft.

There are about 200 native actors, and each and every one is proud to give his talents — which in many instances are truly remarkable — and his time to a cause which is so intensely patriotic. Altdorf at any time is worthy of a visit, but when "William Tell" is being portrayed within its ancient walls, foreign visitors from everywhere deem it a privilege to attend one of the performances.

Altdorf, the tiny capital of the canton of Uri, lies in a fertile, fruit-growing valley. Mountains rise all around, but its special landmark is the Bannwald, the sacred forest which, since times immemorial, has stood guard against any onslaught of avalanches. In this historic woodland the woodman's axe is forbidden, and a stern legend warns that the hand of any trespasser will in due time grow out of his grave.

It was in the market place of Altdorf where Gessler, the heartless Austrian bailiff, erected his hat, to which every passer-by was required to do homage under severe penalties, and it was in this public square that the famous apple shooting scene subsequently took place. Two octagonally shaped fountains, beautifully adorned with flowers, mark the spots occupied by father and son respectively, and as we survey the distance between them our admiration for this heroic archer knows no bounds. Near the second fountain stands the magnificent Tell memorial, designed by Richard Kissling. The words which Rudolph, Gessler's lieutenant, spoke, according to Schiller's drama, are inscribed in German, and are quoted herewith in their translation: —

"And while these mountains rest upon their base,
So long will the story of Tell be told."

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Altdorf has been visited three times by conflagrations, and each time the Föhn, that treacherous, yet also beneficial south wind, has been the culprit. However, in spite of these fires, a wealth of interesting sights still remains to delight the visitor. There are many fine patrician residences with French roofs and handsome wrought-iron entrance gates, through which one catches glimpses of gardens which are most fascinating with their rich southern vegetation. Although north of the St. Gotthard, they are thriving under the warm breath of the Föhn.

The old Town Hall and the cantonal Historical Museum deserve a visit, and among the several churches, St. Martin's, with its frescoes by Van Dyck and Deschwanden, is quite noteworthy.

Excursions from Altdorf are so numerous and always so enjoyable that many a tourist who originally came to this spot just for a William Tell performance, or a short sightseeing trip, has returned and stayed for a number of days. Post-automobiles start out from here over the scenic Klausen Pass to Linthal, in the canton of Glarus, and ten minutes later their first stop is made at Bürglen, the birthplace of Switzerland's national hero, which consists of a group of friendly peasant dwellings, a sawmill, a venerable church, a school and a tiny Tell's Chapel.

Tradition relates that Tell was born in a châlet which stood on this site. A semi-circular opening in the front of the shrine, covered with an iron grating, affords a survey of its interior, which could barely accommodate half-a-dozen people. The frescoed walls depict the principal episodes in Tell's life, and a beautiful Bible reposes on a rather elaborate altar. Flowers and shrubs all around form a befitting setting for this memorial. It is said that Tell at the age of seventy-five lost his life in the turbulent waters of the nearby Schächlenbach, when, as a last splendour did, he saved a little child from drowning.

The courage and bravery of William Tell have for ever been a personal inspiration to the people of Altdorf and environs, and when they impersonate the gallant, liberty-loving characters depicted in the Tell drama, they re-live each episode themselves, and present it to the outside world in impressive and unforgettable manner. Schiller's William Tell at Altdorf is an intellectual and visual treat, to which a mere description can never do full justice. It must be seen.

WILHELM WYDLER.

The funeral service for Wilhelm Wydler, *huissier* at the Swiss Legation, who so tragically lost his life, took place at the Golders Green Crematorium on Monday last. Pastor C. Th. Hahn conducted the service.

Amongst the congregation was Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, accompanied by Madame Paravicini, Mademoiselle Livia Paravicini and Monsieur Vincent Paravicini, Monsieur Ch. de Jenner, Monsieur W. Rüfenacht, Madame W. de Bouig, Monsieur P. Hilfiker, as well as a large number of the Staff of the Legation.