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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

KIDNAPPED JOURNALIST HANDED BACK.

Six months after he was kidnapped by Nazi agents in Switzerland and forcibly taken to Germany, Herr Berthold Jacob, the Jewish-German journalist, has been released. Ever since his capture he has been in prison in Berlin awaiting trial on a charge of high treason.

Herr Jacob was taken to the Swiss frontier by two members of the German secret police and handed over to the Swiss authorities at Basle.

The German authorities, it will be remembered, at first refuted the allegation that Jacob had been kidnapped, but later, under a treaty between Germany and Switzerland, they agreed that his case be referred to an arbitration court.

So overwhelming were the proofs in the possession of the Swiss Government that Jacob had been kidnapped that, rather than risk an adverse decision, the German authorities decided to send him back to Switzerland.

Since March 9th, when the kidnapping took place, the Swiss Government has not ceased in its endeavours to secure Dr. Jacob's release.

In reply to a Swiss Note, the German Government denied any complicity, direct or indirect, in the abduction. The Swiss Government however, insisted upon the responsibility of German Government officials for the act, and, giving further evidence, demanded arbitration.

The Swiss Federal Council have decided that Herr Jacob must leave Switzerland as soon as possible.

NO SWISS MILITARY MISSION TO ABYSSINIA.

Contrary to reports which have appeared in the Press, it is officially stated in Berne, that no Swiss Military Mission is leaving for Abyssinia. According to paragraph 94 of the Swiss Military Code, Swiss citizens, whether they belong to the Army or not, are barred from serving in a Foreign Army without permission of the Government. As such permit has, for obvious reasons, not been given, no official mission has, or will be sent.

SERIOUS ACCIDENT DURING SWISS MANŒUVRES.

Two soldiers (Sergeant Gutknecht and Driver Knecht) both belonging to the "Motor-kanonen Abteilung 7" were killed when a lorry fell into the "Lorze" near the Höllgrotten.

Three other soldiers were more or less seriously injured.

COLONEL MESSMER 60 YEARS OLD.

The President of the Swiss Aero-Club, Colonel Emile Messmer, has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary. Colonel Messmer is one of the pioneers of aeronautics in Switzerland. It will be remembered that he accompanied Colonel Schäck in 1908 on his 73 hours flight, when Switzerland won the Gordon-Bennett Balloon Race.

SWISS UNEMPLOYED.

The number of unemployed at the end of August reached 66,656 or 14,500 more than at the same period 12 months ago.

DEFALCATIONS AT THE SWISS GENERAL CONSULATE IN SHANGHAI.

Sums amounting to over 35,000\$ were stolen by a former secretary at the Swiss General Consulate in Shanghai. The clerk in question, Louis Jacot, son of a University Professor in China is missing.

"SWISSAIR" EXTENDS ZÜRICH-BASLE-LONDON SERVICE.

The Air service "Zürich-Basle-London" of the "Swissair" which was to be interrupted on October 5th, has been extended up to the 31st of October, owing to the great demand for seats on this service.

ITALO-SWISS TRADE.

The trade negotiations between Italy and Switzerland have broken down and the Italian delegates are awaiting further instructions.

Difficulties arose regarding the adjustment of the balance of trade, which has always been largely unfavourable to Switzerland.

Moreover, Switzerland registered a strong complaint of the difficulties which Swiss exporters were experiencing concerning the transfer of the proceeds of their sales.

LEAGUE'S FINANCES.

The accounts of the League of Nations show a slight improvement. The Secretary-General reported to the Budget Committee that the surplus for 1934 amounted to Swiss Frs.3,870,641.

Contributions for 1935 amount to Swiss Frs.30,639,664. Up to the 31st August Frs.19,064,461 had been collected, or 62.22 per cent. of the total, as against 44.74 for the corresponding period of 1934.

Arrears of contributions for Frs.4,686,637 have also been collected.

Aggregate revenue amounts to Swiss Frs.23,751,099, or 77.51 per cent. of the total, against 65.73 per cent for last year at the corresponding date.

THE CONSUMPTION OF TOBACCO IN SWITZERLAND.

During 1934 Switzerland imported more than 6,700 tons of raw tobacco, to the value of nearly 14,000,000 francs. It is estimated that half of this amount is employed in the manufacture of cigars, 2,000 tons in the making of cigarettes and the remainder in the production of pipe tobacco, etc. As in all other countries the treasury benefits by this big consumption the fiscal revenues having increased during 1934 to more than 39,000,000 Swiss francs.

The cultivation of tobacco, concentrated in the Cantons of Fribourg, Valais and Vaud, which in 1930 occupied 287 hectares, has increased in 1934 to 770 hectares. At the same time the crop increased to 1,500 tons in 1934.

AUTOMOBILES IN SWITZERLAND.

At the end of 1934, the date of the latest statistic, Switzerland numbered 70,000 motor-cars, 19,000 lorries, 1,500 motor-buses and 34,500 motor-cycles; making a total of 125,000 motor vehicles. Switzerland has an average of one vehicle for every 32 inhabitants, but this density varies considerably according to the districts. The town of Geneva leads the list with one vehicle for every 13 inhabitants.

SUGAR PRODUCTION IN SWITZERLAND.

Swiss agriculturists have asked the authorities to authorise the creation of a second sugar-works. This request has been refused. On the other hand, it has been decided to enlarge the installations of the only sugar-works in existence in the country, that of Aarberg, which will be capable of transforming 1,000,000 quintals of beetroot yearly.

Switzerland, nevertheless, remains an importer of sugar. In 1934 her purchases amounted to 18,500,000 francs.

IMPORTANCE OF THE TELEPHONE IN SWITZERLAND.

Switzerland is one of the countries which has the greatest telephonic density. There are, in fact, 364,000 telephonic installations, or 8.81 per 100 inhabitants. This density is only superceded by the United States of America, Canada, New Zealand, Denmark and Sweden. The town of Zurich has a telephonic density of 20.45 per inhabitants, thus making it rank 12th in the world's statistic and surpassed only by the big American towns.

DEVELOPMENT OF BROADCASTING IN SWITZERLAND.

At the beginning of the month of August 1935 there were more than 380,000 holders of licenses for wireless sets in Switzerland.

M. MOTTA ON CHRISTIANITY AND PEACE.

One of the principal speakers at the Catholic Congress at Freiburg was M. Motta, the Foreign Minister, who read a paper on "Christianity and Peace." Christianity, he said, was essentially a religion of peace. Revolution, disorder and hatred were alien to it. Its ideals were peace in the family in the first place, and as a consequence peace in society and in the State, and, finally, peace between States. Peace within the State found its highest expression in the respect due to proper authority and in the observation of the law. "If the State is a democracy, that is to

say, if it is based on the sovereignty of the people, and if the people have the power to reform at any time, by their own will, the laws of the constitution, there is no possible excuse for the employment of violence." All the popes down through the Church's history, said M. Motta, had urged the settlement of disputes by arbitration. Benedict XV in our own time exhorted peoples and governments to renounce war as an instrument of their national policy. This solemn demand was made by the Pope in his capacity as Vicar of Christ and head of the Catholic Church. "Why," M. Motta asked, "are there Christians who have failed to understand the profound significance of the League of Nations, and are so indifferent in the great crisis which it is now considering?" He continued: "I have always understood the points of view of hostile and even of unfair critics of the League, but I cannot understand those who merely sneer at it. On the day when the League of Nations acknowledges itself beaten by the complexity or the enormous weight of its task, Christians and all other men of good will will have reason for sorrow. It would be a calamitous day for every State if this happened, but above all for less powerful ones. It must be clearly realized that if the Leagues of Nations ceases to exist, the very idea of international organization will be dealt a terrible blow and will be paralysed. The only law of the world will be that of violence."

GLIDER AIR MAIL STAMPS.

Glider air mail stamps are shortly to be issued by the Swiss Government. This is the first time that a special series has been issued for such a form of transport.

QUEEN ASTRID'S CAR.

The car in which Queen Astrid of the Belgians was killed is to be brought back to Brussels from Lucerne to be destroyed.

TOO MANY GERMAN TOURISTS IN SWITZERLAND.

Switzerland, which is partly depending on the tourist industry, and has been facing severe depression owing to the decline in traffic, is now suffering from a "glut" of tourists from Germany.

Instead of reaping a profit from the influx of German visitors, the Swiss are being called upon virtually to subsidise these visitors.

Under the Swiss-German clearing agreement, Switzerland bought German coal, and the sums due for these imports furnished the advances to German tourists. This was supposed to work well for both sides.

Experience has shown that the estimates were wrong. By July 31 German visitors had had advances totalling 45,000,000 Swiss francs, while the Swiss had bought only 18,000,000 francs' worth of coal.

The Swiss complain that some of the visitors have engaged in sharp practices. Many, it is said, changed their money in Switzerland and left for Italy, which is cheaper for the tourists. Others changed their advances of francs into marks at a profit and returned immediately to Germany.

Switzerland is now convinced that the clearing agreement favours the German Reichsbank too much, and the Federal Council is to discuss means of getting it modified.

LOCAL.

BERNE.

The "Landwirtschaftliche Schule Rütli" in Zollikofen, has celebrated its 75th anniversary. About 2,000 former pupils and guests attended a Banquet at which speeches were made by States Councillor Moser, Professor Lauer, and National Councillor Held.

* * *

The Cantonal Government has appointed Dr. Alex. von Muralt, at present lecturer at the University in Heidelberg, to be Professor of Physiology at the University in Berne, in succession to Professor Asher.

BASLE.

From Basle comes the news of the death of Dr. h.c. Christian Buchmann-Schardt, for many years Manager of the "Handwerkerbank" at the age of 77. Dr. Buchmann was for 27 years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Basle.

SOLOTHURN.

Mrs. Annemarie Vögtli, Née Schäfer in Hochwald has celebrated, last Sunday, her 100th birthday anniversary.

LUCERNE.

The perpetrator of the theft of securities amounting to over 25,000 frs. from a farm at Sursee, was arrested at the moment when he tried to sell some of the securities at the Volksbank in Emmenbrücke.

NEUCHÂTEL.

Dr. Edmond Lardy, a noted surgeon in Bevaix, has died at the age of 75. Dr. Lardy was at one time surgeon-in-chief at the French Hospital in Constantinople.

Mme. Julie Barbezat, the oldest inhabitant of Les Verrières, has celebrated in good health her 100th birthday.

TICINO.

M. Brenno Berton, States Councillor will not stand again at the next Parliamentary elections.

AARGAU.

M. Richard Zschokke, since 1919 a member of the National Council, has expressed the wish to vacate his seat.

GRISONS.

M. A. Vital, advocate in Fetan, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary. M. Vital was from 1893 until 1902 a member of the Cantonal Government. He sat in Parliament (National Council) from 1899-1920.

Two well-known climbers of Davos, M. K. Prochaska and M. E. Adler, who were attempting to climb the Tizzenhorn (10,377 ft.) above the Aela Hut on Sunday by a new route, were killed by a boulder which broke loose and fell on them.

NACHTFLUG NACH LONDON.

Von Walter Mittelholzer.

Kaum war ich am Donnerstag von der regulären Swissair-Linie Zürich-London nach Hause zurückgekehrt, so klingelte das Telefon aus London. Die grossen englischen Zeitungen fragten an, ob wir nicht in der Lage wären mit den Fotografien des verunglückten belgischen Königspaares während der Nacht nach London zu fliegen. Natürlich sagten wir zu und starteten um halb 10 Uhr abends mit einer unserer Douglas Maschinen in die Nacht hinaus. Mit mir an Bord befand sich noch Ing. Gsell sowie einer unserer Bordfunken.

Nach 20 Minuten zog das prachtvolle Lichtermeer Basels unter uns vorbei. Schon liegt vor uns, hellerleuchtet, Mülhausen; aber dahinter ist die schwarze Nacht. Die Vogesen sind in Regen und Nebel eingehüllt, sodass ich gezwungen bin, durch diesen hindurch bis auf 3200 Meter Höhe anzusteigen. Im Nu war unsere Maschine von Eis weiss überzuckert, die Kabinfenster hart zugefroren; über uns funkelte die Sterne.

Die nächsten 250 km sind dunkel. Welch ein Kontrast gegenüber dem schweizerischen Mittel-land mit seinen Tausenden von Lichtern. Doch wir kümmern uns nicht um die Bodensicht, sondern machen Eigenpeilungen mit den Radiosendern von Paris und denjenigen Englands und unsere Rechnung ergibt, dass wir genau auf dem Kurs liegen, also die kürzeste Gerade von Basel nach London befliegen. Zeitweilig prasselt dichter Regen mit lautem Getöse über unsere hellerleuchtete, wohlglühend geheizte Führerkabine. Nach 1½ Std. liegt Reims auf Backbord, während auf Steuerbord im Norden fern Gewitter mit Blitzfeuern den Horizont fantastisch erleuchten. Ueber dem Pas de Calais kommen wir in eine unruhige Gewitterzone hinein. Es blitzt links und rechts von uns, Regen klatscht von neuem an die Glasscheiben. Während wir eine böige Regenwolke in 100 m Höhe passieren, sprühen von den Metallpropellern blaue Funken in die schwarze Nacht hinaus.

Wir befinden uns umgeben von zwei sprühenden Flammenaureolen, die mit uns mit einer Geschwindigkeit 280 km dem Aermelkanal zusteuern. Es ist dies die gleiche Erscheinung, wie die Elmsfeuer im Gebirge, nämlich das Ausstrahlen von Elektrizität in die feuchte Atmosphäre hinaus.

Bereits tauchen überall die Blinkfeuer der Küste zwischen Boulogne und Calais auf und hinter einem pechschwarzen Streifen Wasser, diejenigen Englands. In sieben Minuten ist der Kanal übersprungen. England ist gut beleuchtet, sogar vier Luftfahrtfeuer zeigen uns den Weg nach dem Flugplatz Londons, nach Croydon. Doch wir haben sie gar nicht nötig, den unsere Peilungen auf die Funkstation in Croydon stimmen genau überein und zudem sehen wir die Helle der Weltstadt schon aus 100 km Entfernung. Immer mehr kommen wir London näher, ein unermessliches Lichtermeer aus dem die blauen Quecksilberdampflampen der modernen Strassenbeleuchtung ausserordentlich intensiv auffallen. Gegenüber dem Dunkel grosser Teile Frankreichs habe ich das Gefühl im helllichten Tage zu fliegen. Eine Runde über dem Flugplatz und

nach 3 Std. und 20 Minuten setzten wir im Lichterschein starker Scheinwerfer kurz vor 1 Uhr nachts ab.

Unsere Bilder werden uns weggerissen und während wir uns den wohlverdienten Schlaf gönnen, arbeiten fleissige Hände damit der geruhssame Londoner zu seinem "early tea" bereits in seinem Leibblatt die neuesten Bilder der Weltereignisse beschauen kann.

Am Freitag Morgen flogen wir in 2 Std. 40 Minuten aus dem schlechten Wetter und Nebel auf 4000 m Höhe emporsteigend, über ein blendendes Wolkenmeer zurück nach Zürich.

MR. HERMANN FREDERICK ROOST †.

Mr. H. F. Roost is no more. He passed away peacefully at his residence in Muswell Hill, after a long, though only recently severe illness, which he bore courageously. Only a few weeks ago he returned from Vittel in the Vosges followed by a short trip to his beloved Switzerland, a journey he undertook in his latter years for the benefit of his health, invariably accompanied by Mrs. Roost. This was to be his last visit to the Continent.

It will have come as a great shock to all his many friends, when they heard that this true Swiss with the debonair and ever courteous manners is now a memory only.

Born in Montier in 1872, the son of dearly beloved parents, the father rather austere, Mr. Roost joined the Technical College in Bienne, immediately after leaving school; he specialised in the study, design and manufacture of watches, gaining practical experience in a modern Swiss factory, which he largely extended during a stay of several years in America, working there incessantly in all departments of this industry. The Longines Factories in Switzerland recognising his sterling qualities and thorough mastery of the industry employed him as a designer and engineer. For some 8 years Mr. Roost was responsible for the production of the precision plant for their factories.

The World renowned Zenith Watch factories next gave him an opportunity of really fully employing his ability as designer and manufacturer. The many Swiss and foreign patents which stand to Mr. Roost's credit and the fundamental designs for which he made himself responsible as Chief Technician of the Works will always be remembered, when coming across the excellent testimonies which the Zenith watches secured in world-wide competition at exhibitions, observations, etc. Inward satisfaction shone out of his steady gaze when he related how the first prizes and highest awards were accorded to the standard models of Zenith watches at Kew and elsewhere. It was then that one could appreciate most that Mr. Roost dearly loved his work. After some 10 years, Mr. Roost established the London offices of the Zenith Watch Co. and until he decided to retire in the Spring of last year, he directed the destinies of this concern, which he brought to a very flourishing position. His high standard of business morals and absolute integrity secured to him the confidence of the trade. There is no representative of a Swiss watch factory, who is more highly spoken of than Mr. Roost. His word was his bond and his bond was accepted without question. No wonder therefore that Mr. Roost also made a mark beyond his immediate field of activity. His straight-forward sound common sense was much esteemed in the counsels of his friends and acquaintances. His modest and rather retiring personality prevented many of the best points in Mr. Roost's character from becoming more widely known. It is a fact, however, that he was not only ready to give good advice, but within his means a large measure of positive help. The quiet and unobtrusive way in which he assisted many a young man on the first rungs of the ladder, or people in need, will make his memory live in many quarters. His friends will not only deplore that fate decreed that he was not permitted to enjoy many further years of happiness in the midst of his family, but they, too, have lost so sincere and lovable a companion.

W.G.

LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND.

The Economic Situation.

(Continued depression, but several signs of improvement).

Balance of the first half-year.

Speculators having to buy Swiss francs in order to fulfil their engagements, it resulted in a return of gold into Switzerland. Therefore the reserve of the National Bank was strengthened and the short term money market has thus been relieved.

Conversion loans, for more than 300,000,000 frs., have been issued during the first half-year of 1935; in consequence of the uncertain situation created by the public vote of 2nd June upon the "Initiative de crise" very few loans without conversation have been issued during the same period.

At the end of the first half-year of 1935, there were in Switzerland nearly 18,000 Joint-Stock Companies with a nominal capital of 8,250,000,000 francs. Since 1931 the number of companies has considerably increased, whilst the capital has had a tendency to decrease.

For the moment there is no marked improvement in the retail trade, for which the trade figure for the first half-year of 1935 is about 4% less than that of last year. On the whole the situation in the Swiss labour market has been less satisfactory than during the corresponding period in 1934, which is partly due to the building construction situation. In fact, the building industry, which in previous years has been characterised by great activity and which assisted the labour market in a great measure, has been relatively little occupied during the first six months of 1935. The number of apartments constructed has only attained 3,800 in towns of more than 10,000 inhabitants, against 5,600 for the first six months of 1934.

The number of bankruptcies continues to remain high. It has totalled 464 against 484 during the corresponding period of 1934. The economic depression also shows itself in the traffic returns, especially those of the railways. On the other hand, the Postal Transport Service shows a marked improvement when compared with the previous year. Telephonic traffic also continues its upward tendency.

Foreign trade shows more and more a tendency towards a decrease of the deficit of the Swiss foreign trade. During the first half-year of 1935, imports have reached 622,000,000 against 712,000,000 in 1934, whereas exports have only decreased in a slight degree: from 405,000,000 to 402,000,000. The overplus of imports amounts to 220,000,000 francs against 307,000,000 for the first six months of 1934.

One of Switzerland's most characteristic industries, watchmaking, has increased its exports from 43,000,000 to 49,000,000. This figure well brings out the steady, but real progress of watchmaking exportation which had been particularly affected by the crisis and which now seems to be progressing towards a better future. The number of watches exported is the highest since 1930.

Other industrial branches such as cotton-cloth, cotton-thread, woollen thread and woollen texture, certain branches of the machine industry, the aluminium industry and that of pharmaceutical products also show an increase of exportations. The exportation of breeding cattle is also in a progressive state.

During the first six months of the year, the principal countries supplying Switzerland with goods have been, in order: Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain and the United States of America, and her principal clients; the same countries in the same order.

UP-TO-DATE ADVERTISING.

The following advertisement appeared in a recent issue of the "Mid-Pacific," which has been sent to us by the courtesy of a reader. — "HONOLULU IS SO HEALTHY that people don't usually die there, but when they do, they 'phone in advance to HENRY H. WILLIAMS, 1374 Nuuanu St., 'phone number 1408, and he arranges the after details. If you are a tourist, and wish to be interred in your own plot on the mainland, Williams will embalm you; or he will arrange all details for interment in Honolulu. Don't leave the Paradise of the Pacific for any other, but if you must, let your friends talk it over with Williams."

CITY SWISS CLUB.

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