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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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## HOME NEWS

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### FEDERAL.

#### SWISS GENERAL ELECTIONS.

Activity is great in Swiss political circles in anticipation of the coming Parliamentary election. Little change is expected in the composition of the Council of States — or first Chamber of Parliament — in which each Canton has two representatives, and which has a more or less Conservative character. The struggle is concentrated on the National Council — or Second Chamber of Parliament — which is elected on the proportional principle, each Canton being entitled to one deputy principle, in 20,000 inhabitants.

The Socialist Party hopes to conquer a larger number of seats in the National Council and possibly to outnumber the Radical Party, which is the most powerful and has had a majority in the Government since 1848. The House at present consists of 52 Radicals, 44, Roman Catholic Conservatives, 30 Peasants, 10 Liberals, 49 Socialists and 3 Communists. Dissensions among the bourgeois parties and the creation of new political groups in German-speaking Switzerland may result in Socialists progress in that region, but it is rather unlikely that the Socialists will secure more than 54 to 56 seats. The Radicals — though they are a Left Wing party — have refused to ally themselves with the Socialists.

#### Balancing the Budget.

Recovery from the economic crisis and the restoration of Federal finances are the avowed policies of all the parties. The Socialists are mainly insisting on the necessity of balancing the Federal Budget by new taxes and not cuts in expenditure. The bourgeois parties, on the other hand, are advocating a general reduction in State expenditure. According to the latest estimates the Federal deficit for the current year is likely to exceed 50 million francs, while the deficit of the Federal railways will be over 45 millions.

In a recent statement in Parliament, Federal Councillor Meyer, chief of the Federal Finance Department, outlined the financial programme he intends to submit to the new Parliament. He proposes to make a total saving of about 24 million francs by further reductions in State salaries and wages and by a 10 per cent. cut in all State subsidies. He also intends to obtain nearly 42 million francs by further increases in Customs duties, by the levying of a tax on bank deposits and by an increase in the "Crisis Tax."

#### ALLEGED KIDNAPPINGS ON SWISS FRONTIER.

Two curious cases are the subject of inquiry in Switzerland. One concerns the wife — resident in Basle — of a German Communist, who has been in prison in Germany for the past two years. She recently received a letter from Wyhlen, six miles from Basle, asking her to meet a German acquaintance who had urgent messages for her. As she herself could not go, she sent a Swiss neighbour, the mother of three children, who left Basle last Friday for Wyhlen. When she did not return after several days the Basle police inquired at Wyhlen and at the police headquarters of Loerrach, where they received the reply that nothing was known about a kidnapped person. On Wednesday, however, the Loerrach police informed the Basle police that the woman had been arrested on suspicion of being a political spy. The Basle police have filed a protest through the Foreign Ministry in Berne.

In the other case Frau Wilhelm, a native of Freiburg (Germany) but married two years ago to an Alsatian, of Huningue, near Basle, and therefore a French citizen, was induced, as the result of a postcard, to cross the frontier bridge near Basle and was immediately arrested by the German Gestapo. The Mayor of Huningue has lodged a protest with the Prefecture of Colmar, who will forward it to Paris.

### SWISS NATIONAL BANK.

During the week ended October 15th, the gold reserve of the Swiss National Bank increased by 6,000,000f., and reached 1,380,800,000f. On the other hand the bank note circulation was 1,271,000,000f., a decrease of 25,000,000f. over the previous week. On October 15th the gold reserve and gold currencies abroad represented 86.27 per cent. of all the engagements of the bank.

### CENSUS OF TURKISH POPULATION UNDER SWISS SUPERVISION.

A census of the population of Turkey was carried out under the supervision of M. Bruchweiler, Chief of Statistics of Switzerland. The whole population had to stay indoors from dawn till 3 p.m., while specially appointed officials visited every dwelling-place and registered the answers of every inhabitant to 16 questions on age, nationality, religion, profession, literacy, &c.

#### HEAVY SNOW FALL IN SWITZERLAND.

The Alpine passes, which were reopened to vehicular traffic on October 4th, are now almost all blocked by snow, which in the St. Gotthard Pass is 3ft. deep. Snow has fallen abundantly down to the 3,500ft. level.

#### ZURICH BORROWS IN LONDON.

The Zurich Corporation is moving an urgent resolution confirming a loan of £1,300,000 from a London finance house. The loan will be for 30 years at 4½ per cent. per annum. The issue price is 93 per cent. Public dealings in the loan are forbidden.

This move follows an abortive attempt by the Zurich Corporation to raise a loan in Switzerland.

#### OXFORD GROUP IN SWITZERLAND.

The Oxford Group concluded its seven weeks' campaign in Switzerland at Zurich with a large house party at Rheinfelden.

In all audiences of more than 50,000 have attended public meetings in Geneva, Berne, Basle, and Zurich, and an international team of 1,000 drawn from 30 nations, including 250 from Great Britain, have taken part in the campaign, which will now be continued in Switzerland under trained Swiss leadership.

#### SWISS RAIL DEFICIT.

A deficit of about £4,630,000 is estimated by the board of the Swiss Federal Railways for the year 1936.

Owing to decreased tourist traffic, indifferent economic conditions and road competition, the railways suffer a loss of about £6 10s. a minute.

### LOCAL.

#### BASLE.

M. Walter Rebsamen, a former member of the Engineering staff of the Swiss Federal Railways and Brown Boveri and Co., in Baden, has been appointed Manager of the Municipal Tramway Administration. M. Rebsamen was born at Thalwil in 1896.

#### ZURICH.

The Aerodrome of Dübendorf has celebrated its 25th anniversary, the first meeting having taken place on the 22nd of October, 1935.

#### LUCERNE.

At the General Meeting of the Pilatus Railway, which was held at Lucerne it was decided to start at once with the electrification of the line. The costs for changing over are estimated to be 1,100,000 francs.

The death is reported of M. Walter Döpfner, proprietor of the Hotel Gotthard-Terminus at the age of 58. The deceased was for many years President of the Hotel Association in Lucerne.

### CITY SWISS CLUB.

PLEASE RESERVE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22nd

for the

ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL

at the

Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W.1.

Admission by ticket only, obtainable from

Members of the Committee.

### BERNE.

Dr. Béguin, advocate in Geneva was condemned by a Bernese court to a fine of 200 francs for slandering two of the General Managers of the Swiss Federal Railways. An appeal against the verdict was lodged by Dr. Béguin.

### GRISONES.

The death is reported from Chur of M. Joseph Schüttler, President of the "Bündnerischen Gewerbeverbandes," the deceased was at one time a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Grisons.

### FRIBOURG.

Dr. Emile Bourquin, a medical practitioner in Lausanne, was hurt and his brother, M. André Bourquin seriously injured, when his car collided at a level crossing near Courgevaux, with a railway engine.

### VAUD.

The criminal court of the district of Moudon has passed a sentence of 4 years imprisonment on Théophile Tanner, a former manager of the firm Tanner frères, S.A., in Lucens for embezzling various sums amounting to 268,230 francs.

### ART TREASURES IN LUGANO.

When coming from the North, the traveller is struck by the incomparable beauty and entirely southern landscape of Lugano, and it is not surprising that so many people visit this town on account of its wonderful Italian setting.

Evidently, Lugano is little known as a city of art treasures, which is most regrettable, as it possesses two churches that represent the essence of the great Art of the Italian Renaissance. They are the Cathedral of San Lorenzo and the Church of Santa Maria degli Angioli.

The Cathedral San Lorenzo retains parts which date from the Romanesque Period. The interior, revealing Early Gothic frescoes and even traces of Romanesque decorations, obtained its present form in the XIIIth Century, while some vaults were probably added in the beginning of the XVIth Century. At that time the youthful Renaissance Art had already spread from Florence to all parts of Italy, and gorgeous church façades, such as those of the dome of Como and the Certosa of Pavia, were now being constructed in Lombardy. Thus Lugano decided that its Cathedral should not stand behind, and in 1517 the magnificent marble façade of San Lorenzo was built. This is a perfect example of the harmony in all its proportions of the Renaissance style, including a grand frieze and three splendid portals. The ornamentation belongs to the finest creations of the Early Renaissance of Lombardy. The entire façade compares very favourably with that of the Certosa of Pavia, as the former is characterized by a noble simplicity, while the ornamentation of the latter is rather overdone, especially for the taste of our times.

Almost fifty years before this façade was constructed, i.e., in 1470, the Franciscan convent of "Saint Mary of the Angels" was founded at Lugano, the church of which has recently been renovated, together with the famous frescoes of Bernard Luini. The great Passion Fresco covers the entire wall of the roodloft, being 40 feet wide and over 32 feet high. According to his biographer, the great painter was born at Luino, on Lake Maggiore, and was engaged in decorative work at the palace of an Italian nobleman named Pelucchi, when the only daughter of his employer, Laura, fell in love with him. She refused to marry a young nobleman of her parents' choice and was put into the convent of St. Mary of the Angels, at Lugano. Luini had gone to Milan, where he became acquainted with the works of Leonardo da Vinci, but returned soon after and painted the figure of Laura into a fresco of Saint Catherine. Thirty years later, he was commissioned by the Convent to paint the Passion of Christ in the church, which had been built as an annex to the Convent. Living in a cell he was very near his former love whom he never forgot. In the magnificent fresco he is recognised in the guise of a young saint, while Laura figures as the Virgin Mary on a separate painting which was ordered by the Ladies' Convent, and which now adorns the first chapel on the right. She too is pictured in the beauty of her youth.