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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 NATIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL IN BASLE:**  
JUNE 29TH—JULY 9TH.

When in 1842 the Swiss National Choir Association was founded in Aarau, 500 men represented about a dozen of men's choirs. Now this Association counts over 200 choirs with 15,000 members, of whom at least 13,000 will attend the Festival at Basle shortly. It will not be easy to lodge these visitors in the old Rhine city, which only possesses 1,800 hotel beds. The large concert hall of the Industries Fair of Basle can seat 10,000 persons, which is a great advantage for such functions.

The opening concert will prove of special interest. Haendel's "Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Music" will be followed by a performance of a Festival Play "Motherland," by Dr. Karl Weber, set to music by Walter Müller. The societies will compete in 4 categories, in three of which the song or hymn is only handed to the choir one hour before the performance. In the fourth category such difficult pieces as Schubert's "Salve Regina" and Wagner's Parsifal choirs are demanded.

One of the older choirs, entering these competitions, already existed in 1620 in St. Gall. The great activity and numerous compositions of Hans Georg Naegeli, in Zürich, a hundred years ago, gave a mighty impetus to choral song in Switzerland, and many men's choirs were founded in those times. A special Swiss feature is the fact, that their National Choir Association was formed "in order to add a stone to the temple of Swiss Unity and National feeling." Ever since its foundation, the festivals, which are held once in 6 or 7 years, have been regarded as patriotic demonstrations of true Democracy, where all classes of the people, all the four languages as well as all political and religious parties and groupings are visibly united in the name of Music.

**CONSUL-GENERAL RECEIVES.**

On the occasion of the opening of the new offices of the Swiss Consulate-General at Bank of Ireland Chambers, 1-3, Westmoreland Street, Dublin, a reception was given to Press representatives at the offices by Dr. C. G. Benziger, Consul-General for Switzerland, and Madame Benziger.

The new offices occupy four well-lighted and attractively-furnished rooms on the fourth floor of the new building.

Those present included:—Mdlle. Thyrta Benziger, Master E. Benziger, Mons. O. Schneider, Chancellor of the Consulate-General; Mdlle. Edi Waldsburger, Secretary; Mr. T. F. Hennessy, Assistant General Manager, Bank of Ireland, and Mr. A. G. C. Millar, architect, who designed the new building.

**FEDERAL ACCOUNTS APPROVED.**

The National Council has approved the Federal Accounts for 1934, showing a deficit of Frs. 26,600,000 (about £1,770,000).

Dr. Meyer, head of the Federal Finance Dept., reaffirmed during the debate, the strong determination of the Federal Council to adhere to its present monetary policy, in other words, the Swiss franc would be maintained on its present gold basis. The National Council also dealt with proposals for supplementary credits amounting to 34,000,000 Frs. (about £2,265,000).

**SWITZERLAND NOT TO BE REPRESENTED AT OLYMPIC GAMES.**

The National Council rejected by 82 votes to 57 a grant proposed by the Government for Swiss participation in the Olympic Games at Berlin.

M. Huber (Socialist) who moved the rejection of the grant, said that Switzerland could not send representatives to a country where there were no guarantees of political or social liberty. Moreover Herr Jakob was still in prison, and Switzerland has lost millions of francs in Germany. In these circumstances the Socialist Party was of the opinion that Switzerland should have nothing to do with the Olympic Games.

The result of this vote will be that Switzerland will not be represented at the games in Berlin.

**MORATORIUM FOR BANQUE COMMERCIALE DE BALE.**

The Federal Council has granted the Banque Commerciale de Bâle a moratorium for part of the bank's liabilities until June 30th, 1937.

Rumours have been in circulation for some time that the bank, which is one of the leading concerns, was struggling to retain financial equilibrium. The Swiss National Bank, together with the Swiss Banking Committee and the Federal Loan Office, have now reached the conclusion that it will be best for the public to grant a moratorium. As not all bank's liabilities are included in the moratorium, it will be able to continue its business within certain limits.

The greater part of the bank's capital had been invested in Germany and other countries with exchange restrictions. This frozen capital is believed to be responsible for the present difficulties.

**FUNERAL OF MINISTER VON SEGESSE.**

The funeral of M. von Segesser, Swiss Minister at Warsaw took place last Friday at Lucerne. M. Motta, head of the Federal Political Dept. and the Polish Minister were amongst the congregation.

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**PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT RECEIVES SWISS ENVOY.**

Minister Stucki, the head of a Swiss Economic Mission was received at the White House by President Roosevelt, Mr. Hull, State Secretary, was in attendance.

**SWISS NATIONAL BANK.**

During the week ending June 7th the gold reserve of the Swiss National Bank showed a decrease of, roughly, 26,000,000f. to 1,173,000,000f. On the other hand, the banknote circulation at 1,269,000,000f. showed a reduction of 32,000,000f. The gold reserve represented 77.3 of the engagements to the Bank.

**BRITISH PLANES FOR SWITZERLAND.**

A trial order for a new type of fighting aeroplane has been given to two British firms by the Swiss Government.

Reports are circulating that negotiations for the construction of these machines under licence in Switzerland are in progress.

**SWISS OFFICER AS ARBITRATOR.**

A Swiss citizen, Colonel Frederick Iselin, has been appointed by the League Council as neutral president of the joint commission set up by the British Indian Governments and by the Chinese Government to determine on the spot the undemarcated part of the frontier between Burma and the Chinese province of Yenan.

Colonel Iselin was formerly Chairman of the Commission of inquiry into the delimitation of the frontier between Iraq and Syria. It is proposed that the new boundary commission should begin work early in November.

**THE SNOW-LINE AS THE BOUNDARY FOR AGRICULTURE.**

It is a curious fact that the snow-line, even in such a small country as Switzerland, varies very much. By snow-line we mean the boundary line separating the Alps from cultivated or at least arable land. In the Silvretta region of the Grisons the snow-line is at 2,700 metres above sea-level, in the Bernese Oberland at 2,900 m. and in the Canton of Valais on an average as high as 3,100 metres.

The tree-line generally reaches a height of 1,750 m. on the northern side of the Alps, yet in the Bernese Oberland it is mostly at a height of 1,830 m., in the Valais at 2,200-2,300 metres, so that rye is still grown there at 2,000 m., while cembra-pines and larches are still found at 2,500 m. above sea-level. In the Münster Valley (Grisons) barley is grown at 1,900 m. Potatoes and various kinds of vegetables are grown in the

Engadine, and the hostelleries of the Bernina and of the Great St. Bernard (2,400 m.) have their cabbage gardens. And one marvels at the pluck of the vine in the Valais and Ticino cantons, where it flourishes and ripens at heights of 1,000 and 1,200 metres above sea-level.

**LOCAL.****BERNE.**

The death has occurred in Lyss of M. Arnold Bangerter, senior partner of the "Cementwaren und Kunststeinwerke A. Bangerter and Co., at the age of 79.

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Dr. R. Furrer, General Manager of the Federal Post and Telegraph Administration, has been appointed Director of the International Railway Office in succession to Dr. Emile Lohner, who has relinquished his post on reaching the age limit.

\* \* \*

Dr. Emile Lohner, the retiring Director of the International Railway Office, has recently celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary; he was from 1909-1928 a member of the cantonal government, and a member of Parliament for 26 years (National Council). During the war Dr. Lohner was President of the Swiss Liberal Party.

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The Orphanage in Berne on the Waisenhausplatz has been sold for the amount of 1,350,000 frs., and will be used in future as the Municipal Police headquarters.

**VAUD.**

Dr. Karl Heiz from Menziken (Aargau) has been appointed Secretary of the Federal Tribunal at Lausanne, in succession to Dr. H. Morf.

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The death is reported from Ouchy of M. Otto Egli, Manager of the Grand Hotel Beau Rivage Palace in Ouchy, at the age of 55.

**NEUCHATEL.**

Whitsun holidays in Switzerland were marred by a terrible motor-car accident which occurred near Malvilliers (Val de Ruz), where six people lost their lives, and twenty-two were more or less seriously injured.

A motor-coach, containing thirty passengers all belonging to a choir society in Burgdorf, who were on an excursion to the Doubs Valley, collided with a tree, when going round a sharp bend. So far, the deaths of the following passengers are reported: E. Liechti, Mrs. Sommerhalder, Miss Schlöfli, Miss Hänni, Mrs. Grüning and Mr. König, but it is feared that the death toll will be increased, as some of the passengers lying at the hospital at Cadolles are in a serious condition. The chauffeur of the motor-coach sustained only slight injuries.

**VALAIS.**

The new aerodrome at Sitten was opened last Sunday in the presence of members of the Cantonal government, the Army and the Clergy. Various demonstration flights by well-known pilots were executed.

**BASLE.**

Two workmen were killed and one severely injured when a shaft on the Bruderholz suddenly collapsed.

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M. Simson Goldberg, the well-known portrait painter, who lives at Birsfelden has celebrated his 80th Birthday anniversary.

**GRISON.**

One of the dams of the Pretschee gave way with the result that enormous floods of water intermingled with big rocks descended on the village of Litzirüti. Fortunately the inhabitants could save themselves in time, but much damage was done to their houses, and for miles the meadows surrounding the village were covered with débris.

**TICINO.**

Three policemen arriving from Chiasso were arrested at Como, and charged with smuggling. Investigations made have proved that the policemen, who went for a days outing were unaware that the taxidriver was using his passengers as a screen for smuggling goods, which he had hidden in a secret locker. The policemen were released but the chauffeur has been arrested.