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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

THE KING'S TELEGRAM TO THE SWISS PRESIDENT.

King Edward VIII has addressed the following telegram to the President of the Swiss Confederation:

"Ich danke Ihnen auf das herzlichste, Herr Bundespräsident, für die Anteilnahme, die Sie im Namen des Bundesrates und des Schweizervolkes Ihrer Majestät, der Königin, meiner Mutter, und mir selbst, sowie der königlichen Familie, in so gütiger Weise bekundet haben, in dem tiefen Schmerz, der uns und die britischen Völker durch den Tod des Königs, meines verehrten und geliebten Vaters, betroffen hat."

MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR THE LATE KING GEORGE V. IN SWITZERLAND.

Memorial Services for the late King George V. were held all over Switzerland on Tuesday last.

A service was held in Berne at the Minster, at which the Swiss Government was present *in corpore*, together with a large number of high officers and officials. The Diplomatic Corps also attended in full and a large congregation filled the cathedral to overflowing.

The British Minister, Sir George Warner, gave an address, whilst the service was conducted by the English Chaplain in Territet, the Rev. Grier.

SWISS BROADCASTING STATION AND THE DEATH OF THE KING.

The Swiss broadcasting station, when announcing the death of King George V at 12.30 a.m., gave a short appreciation of the King's personality in the three national languages, followed by the King's own Jubilee speech and by a minutes silence. Then the Funeral March was played by the orchestra followed by "God Save the King." The day's programme was entirely altered, only classical music being heard.

SWISS SANCTIONS POLICY.

By 112 votes against one the Swiss National Council, or Second Chamber of Parliament, approved the Government's policy in regard to sanctions. Switzerland is resolved to maintain her perpetual neutrality as recognized by treaty and the League, but she will at the same time take her share of international obligations so long as that does not involve any breach of her neutrality. It is for that reason that Switzerland applied economic and financial sanctions against Italy, but stopped the exportation of arms and war material both to Italy and to Ethiopia.

CREDIT SUISSE.

The Credit Suisse, announces a net profit of Sw.Frs.7,569,000 (£504,600 at current rates), against Sw.Frs.10,125,000 (£675,000) for 1934. Including £81,400 brought in, £586,000 (against £756,000 last year) is available for distribution.

It is proposed to pay a dividend of 5 per cent. on the share capital of Sw.Frs.150,000,000 (£10,000,000). The dividend for 1934 was 6 per cent.

In accordance with the new Act £1,000,000 will be taken from extra-ordinary reserves and allocated to ordinary reserves. After this operation total reserves will amount to £2,000,000 and £1,666,600 respectively. The sum of £86,000 will be transferred to new account.

BASLE PORT TRAFFIC.

Traffic in the Swiss port of Basle, on the Rhine, broke all records in 1935, when 2,216,997 tons of goods passed through it compared with 1,897,903 tons in 1934. While imports totalled 2,149,045 tons, exports reached 67,952 tons. Imports mainly consisted of coal, petrol, oil, and

cereals. Traffic on the Rhine Canal decreased 10 per cent., while on the Rhine itself it increased 100 per cent. over the previous year. The imports which passed through the port of Basle represented nearly one-quarter of the total imports of Switzerland.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Ernst Eschmann, the well-known writer and Editor of "Am Häuslichen Herd" and the "Silvesterbüchlein" has celebrated his 50th birthday anniversary.

* * *

Doctor Oscar Bürgi, Professor at the University of Zurich has been elected rector for 1936/37.

* * *

M. Rudolf Meierhofer, of Dielsdorf, has celebrated his 103rd birthday anniversary and is probably the oldest Swiss living. He took part in two mobilisations, namely in 1856-1857 during the Neuchâtel troubles, and again in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian war.

BASEL.

M. Hermann Müller-Müller, for many years rector of the "Mädchen-Sekundarschule" has died in Basle at the age of 83.

LUCERNE.

Doctor G. v. Deschwanden, Director of the cantonal hospital in Lucerne since 1927, and Surgeon-in-chief of the medical ward since 1917, has resigned from his post for reasons of health, he is 68 years old.

TICINO.

The death has occurred in Bellinzona, of M. Stefano Gabuzzi at the age of 88. The deceased was a former President of the Liberal Radical Party of the canton of Ticino, and President of the Superior Court of the canton of Ticino; he played an important part in the political sphere of his native canton.

GRISONS.

A goods train (Chur-Zurich) collided at the "Ziegelbrücke" station with a stationary engine; one of the officials was killed. The damage caused is estimated to exceed 20,000 frs.

SCHAFFHAUSEN.

A novel "hunger strike" in which city officials were compelled to forgo their meals, has secured for several hundred unemployed consideration of their alleged grievances.

Entering the town hall *en masse*, the unemployed stationed themselves in the corridors and on the staircases. Here they staged an effective "siege," none of the officials being allowed to leave his office.

In this way most of a whole day passed without seriously inconveniencing the officials.

But when dinner time arrived and still no one was allowed to go, the hungry officials began to think the position was a little more serious.

Discussions were hastily started between the municipal authorities and the unemployed leaders. Eventually the unemployed gained their point and the officials went to dinner.

EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS

By

FELIX VALLOTON.

(Open until February 8th).

An Exhibition of paintings by the Swiss painter Félix Vallotton is at present held at the Arthur Tooth Galleries, 155, New Bond Street, W.I.

M. Vallotton, a native of Vallorbe was born in 1865 at Lausanne and died in Paris in 1925. He left Switzerland at the age of 16 to study painting in Paris.

Frank Rutter, the eminent art critic writes in the "Sunday Times":

True to Swiss tradition this young artist was very skilful with a penknife, and first attracted attention by the wood engravings which he cut with its aid. Some of these were reproduced in the "Revue Blanche," together with drawings by Bonnard and Vuillard, with whom this Swiss artist soon became acquainted. Owing to his association with these two painters, some writers have been inclined to count Vallotton as a member of the group known as the Intimists. But despite the charm and high pitch of his colour, the essential Vallotton was not profoundly influenced by any development of Impressionism. His point of departure, as regards painting, may be seen at Tooth's in the picture "Lampe à alcool" (15), painted in 1887. This has been

compared to the painting of Ribot or an early Velasquez, but it already shows that intense concern for conscientious draughtsmanship which caused Vallotton later to be known in Paris as "le petit Ingres."

My own memories of Vallotton's pre-war paintings, as seen in the Galerie Druet, and elsewhere in Paris, are chiefly of portraits and figure subjects, clean in contour, clear and light in colour. Amid the impressionist and post-impressionist paintings of this period of pictures of Vallotton used to stand out as works which were essentially classical in style, despite their modernity.

While landscape and still-life subjects are more numerously represented in this exhibition, characteristic examples of his treatment of figures are the two "Bathers" (Nos. 17, 21), both painted in 1908, and the still earlier "Portrait of the Artist" (24), painted in 1897. But in his figure paintings, his still life, and his landscapes — see particularly No. 5 — we can trace not only respect for classic tradition in the prophy of the drawing, but also a natural tendency towards simplification.

It is this ably controlled simplifying, combined with the charm of his colour, which makes a "modern" of Félix Vallotton and gives him his own distinct place in that "School of Paris" which ranges from Impressionism to Post-Impressionism.

A SWISS LABOUR COLONY.

Students in the Alps.

High up in the Alps are many tiny, isolated villages, so poor, so helpless, so hopeless, that but for the Students' Labour Camps they would surely pass out of existence.

For the last few summers, these camps, splendidly organised and run by valiant students in all parts of Switzerland, have done a most noble work, enabling the villagers to remain in their poverty-stricken homes, and giving them renewed hope. In a country like Switzerland, which is universally regarded as the centre of peace and prosperity, it is difficult to understand just how these hamlets have fallen on such evil times; we can only blame modern and economic conditions and changes. Roads need to be built, pastures cleared and improved, huts and houses repaired. These suffer every winter and spring from avalanches, snows, and frosts. What is done one year must be redone the next, and so the students in Swiss Universities banded together and decided to help. It takes some considerable courage and self-sacrifice to give up three weeks of summer holidays to really hard manual labour, and the labourers are not by any means all Swiss. One may hear German, Dutch, French, Italian, and even English, all spoken in one camp.

Four thousand feet up! No joke when the ascent must be made either on foot or on mule-back, and all stores carried by mules — about three good hours' walk up the steepest of hills! However, once on top the situation and views are magnificent, the gratitude of the peasants quite overpowering, and one's sense of virtue very self-satisfying.

In the camp of which I write — in Ticino, an Italian-speaking canton — there were all during the vacation about fifty men students in residence, and five girls who cooked, washed, and darned under the able direction of an experienced cook from the Swiss Women's Club. The food was excellent if plain, with lots of fresh vegetables. It was some job to tackle the preparation of 50 pounds of potatoes and 50 pounds of carrots, but at least it kept one out of the poky smoky kitchen, and when the mountain of vegetables seemed too appalling there were always the real mountains to contemplate instead. Living was primitive and simple. Bunks in rough wooden huts, picturesquely enough amid the glorious surroundings, long wooden tables for meals, tin plates and tin cups, no china to smash.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

PLEASE RESERVE

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29TH, 1936.

for the

DINNER AND DANCE

at the

HYDE PARK HOTEL, Knightsbridge, S.W.1.