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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

(Compiled by courtesy of the following contemporaries: *National Zeitung, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, St. Galler Tagblatt, Vaterland and Tribune de Genève*).

FEDERAL.

TRIAL OF WESEMANN.

The trial of Hans Wesemann, who is accused of having induced Dr. Berthold Jakob to go to Basle last year from Strasbourg for the purpose of handing him over to the German secret police, has begun last Monday, before the criminal tribunal of the canton of Basle. There is no jury, but the tribunal is a mixed one consisting partly of professional judges and partly of ordinary citizens by popular vote.

The exact charge against Wesemann is that of "Freiheitsentziehung" (depriving a person of his liberty), and as the deprivation of liberty in this case lasted more than a week the maximum penalty is eight years' imprisonment and the minimum six months'. Wesemann has been in prison since his arrest in March of last year, and if he is convicted the term that he has already served will be deducted from his sentence.

Dr. Jakob is a German refugee who settled in Strasbourg, where he contributed to a local paper and started the "Independent News Agency," giving information about Germany. He was so successful in getting authentic information that he incurred the bitter hatred of the Gestapo.

Wesemann, who about ten years ago was for a time Geneva correspondent of the "Vorwärts" and other German Socialist papers, went to London after the Nazi regime began as a Socialist refugee and was accepted as such by members of the Labour party and others. He made the acquaintance of Dr. Jakob in the summer of 1934 and ordered articles from him for several English papers. It is alleged by the prosecution that Wesemann was really an agent of the Gestapo in London and that some time in 1934 he conspired with two other German police agents, Dr. Walter Richter, alias Becker, and Captain Hans Manz, to get hold of Dr. Jakob. It is further alleged that on February 26th, 1935, Wesemann, Richter, and Manz met in Basle and decided to entice Dr. Jakob to Basle on some pretext, and then carry him off in a motor-car across the frontier into Germany.

It was alleged at the time in some papers that the Swiss Federal Government had agreed, as a condition of Dr. Jakob's release, not to allow the complicity of the German authorities in his kidnapping to be revealed during Wesemann's trial, but the Swiss Federal Government categorically denied this and declared that the release was quite unconditional. Some interesting revelations in the course of the trial are expected.

On going to Press we learn that Wesemann has been sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

GERMAN VISITORS TO SWITZERLAND.

As was expected, the German Government have denounced the agreement regarding the admission of German visitors to Switzerland. Under the agreement the expenditure of the tourists was ultimately met by German consignments of coal to Switzerland. As coal consignments were last year smaller than usual the balance of payment is against Switzerland. Germany intends to reconsider the system set up for her payments to Switzerland, but it is probable that she will further restrict the tourist traffic, a fact which is causing much concern to the Swiss hotel industry.

WEST HAM TO PLAY IN SWITZERLAND.

West Ham United are to play three matches in Switzerland. They will oppose the Swiss National team at Zurich on May 19th, and will take part in local matches at Kreuzlingen and Lausanne on May 16th and May 24th respectively.

LEU AND CO.'S BANK.

Three commissioners have been appointed to supervise the reorganisation of Leu and Co.'s Bank, of Zurich. This bank is the first of Switzerland's "Big Seven" to undergo a reorganisation in accordance with the banking reorganisation decrees which came into force a few days ago.

It will be recalled that Leu and Co.'s Bank was granted a three months' moratorium at the beginning of January last. The directors, however, were unable to reorganise the bank during the period the moratorium was in force, and the moratorium had to be extended until the end of October next.

According to the new decrees, one of the first tasks of the commissioners will be to work out, in co-operation with the bank, a plan of reorganisation which has to be submitted to the Swiss Banking Committee.

If by the end of October the bank's reorganisation is not completed, the moratorium is automatically extended.

SWISS MOTOR-CYCLING GRAND PRIX.

James Guthrie, the British Tourist Trophy rider, gained two notable successes in the Swiss motor-cycling Grand Prix races, which were competed for by riders of ten nations on the Bremgarten circuit in excellent weather before a crowd of 15,000.

Guthrie, riding a Norton in each class, won both the 500c.c. and 350c.c. events. In the former he led from start to finish to gain an easy victory with an average of 142.305 k.p.h. (approximately 89 m.p.h.). He covered the thirty-lap course of 219 kilometres (approximately 137 miles) in 1hr. 32min. 20.2sec. In covering the second lap in 3min. dead for an average of 146 k.p.h. (over 91 m.p.h.) he broke all records for the course.

Guthrie also broke a record in winning the 350c.c. event run over the same distance in 1hr. 38min. 48.2sec. for an average of 132.991 k.p.h. (approximately 83 m.p.h.).

SWISS NAVY.

The much exploited joke about the Swiss Navy is definitely tabu. Not only has Switzerland quite a stately fleet of lake steamers, but she has, in a modest manner, of course, now joined the rank of seafaring nations. A new motor ship "Albula" has recently been inaugurated for direct and regular service between Basle and London via the Rhine route, and a sister ship "Bernina" will be launched shortly. The introduction of this direct Switzerland-England freight service is of tremendous importance to the Swiss nation and plans are already being made for the expansion of direct Swiss freight service to other ports.

SWISS MOUNTAIN ROADS.

There are more than 3,100 miles of mountain roads in the Swiss Jura and the Alps, including the famous passes, which are used in summer by innumerable cars and are equipped with S.O.S. telephone call-boxes, water service stations, etc., to meet the requirements of motorists. Moreover, the touring Club of Switzerland maintains a free road patrol organization to assist automobilists. Their scouts patrol all the important highways on motorcycles.

SWITZERLAND VERSUS SPAIN.

The Swiss National Football team was beaten in Berne by the Spanish National team. The score was 2:0; over 25,000 spectators watched the game.

SWISS AIRMAIL WRECKED.

After two days of fruitless search the missing Swiss mail aeroplane was found by a rescue party on the Rigi at a height of 5,000 feet. The aeroplane, which had crashed, could be reached only by rope. The pilot, captain Gerber, and the wireless operator M. Müller, were dead. The mail was intact and has already been forwarded. The pilot had evidently lost his way in a dense fog.

M. Ernst Gerber, Flight-Captain of the Swissair was born on the 3rd of April, 1900, in Olten; he was a citizen of Langnau (Berne). In the year 1925, he entered into the services of the "Ad Astra" Aero A.G. in Zurich, as a pilot, later on when the above company amalgamated with the "Balair" and ultimately with the "Swissair."

he was retained as a pilot. M. Gerber held the rank of a captain in the Swiss Flying Corps, he was one of the most experienced pilots on the staff of the "Swissair," and he would have shortly accomplished the "one million kilometers" standard. Captain Gerber was an authority on "blind flying" and by his untimely death, the "Swissair" loses one of her best pilot's. He was married and leaves a widow and two children.

M. Arthur Müller, wireless operator of the "Swissair" was born in Gränichen in 1910, he entered the services of the Company in 1930. He was one of the most experienced operators in the service of the Company. M. Müller was not married, his death deprives the "Swissair" of a very efficient member of the staff.

LOETSCHBERG TUNNEL JUBILEE.

On March 31st last, the Bernese Alps Railway celebrated the 25th anniversary of the completion of the boring of the Lötschberg tunnel. Work was begun at Kandersteg on October 15th, 1906, and at Goppenstein (at the southern end) on the following day. Progress was made at an average rate of 10 m. daily, and the maximum attained was 12.8 m. This rapid advance was due to the use, for the first time, of compressed air borers of a new type. Unfortunately, the undertaking did not prove such a straightforward matter as had been expected. On July 24th, 1908, at 2.30 a.m., the end of the solid rock was reached on the north side, and within ten minutes the tunnel was filled with water, stones and gravel for about a mile of its length. Twenty-five Italian workmen lost their lives, and work was suspended for several months. A portion of the tunnel was finally stopped up by a wall 10 m. thick and abandoned, and a fresh heading was made, avoiding the dangerous zone. The completed tunnel has consequently three curves and is 800 m. longer than as originally planned.

In spite of this alteration to the alignment of the tunnel, the calculations made by Prof. Bäschlin proved so exact that there was a difference in alignment of 25 cm. only when, on March 31st, 1911, the two headings of the tunnel met. This happy event took place at 4 a.m.: M. Moreau, who was in charge of the southern heading, passed a bouquet to Herr Rothpletz, the engineer for the north side, and later clambered through the opening, after which champagne was served to all the workmen in the tunnel. In April, 1912, the masonry was completed, and on July 15th, 1913, the whole of the new line from Frutigen to Brigue was opened to traffic, with electric traction on the 15,000-V. single phase system. The total length of the tunnel, which is for double line throughout, is 14,612 m. (9.1 miles) in length. From an altitude of 1,179 m. at Kandersteg, the line rises to 1,243 m. in the tunnel and descends to 1,220 m. at the southern entrance, Goppenstein: 4,419,305 bore holes and 960,918 kg. of dynamite were used in its excavation.

DEVELOPMENT OF DOUBLE-TRACK MILEAGE.

A recent article by Mr. H. Nydegger in the *Swiss Federal Railways Bulletin* gives interesting figures regarding the doubling of lines since the formation of the Federal Railways system in 1901-1903. Of a total length of 1,105 km. (686 miles) of double track at the end of 1935, only 532 km. (330 miles), or 48 per cent., were double when taken over from the private companies, and 573 km. (356 miles), or 52 per cent., were subsequently doubled by the Federal Railways, at a cost of 216 million Swiss francs. These figures do not include the double-track connecting line between the Basle and Zurich routes east of Olten station, nor the double-track deviations between Basle Swiss station and Basle—St. Jean, and between Zurich Main station and Wollishofen. The aggregate route length of the Federal system at the end of 1935 (excluding the narrow-gauge Brünig line) was 2,845 km. (1,766 miles), of which 1,739 km. (1,080 miles), or 61 per cent., are single-track.

It is intended to proceed with doubling where it is most urgently required, as soon as financial conditions permit. At present, the only single-track gap in the transversal line from Geneva via Berne and Zurich to Romanshorn is between Romont and Fribourg, but the Gotthard route is single from Emmenbrücke to Lucerne, Lucerne to Immensee, Brunnau to Flüelen, Riviera-Bironico to Lugano, and Melide to Maroggia, a total distance of 57 km. (35 miles).

R.G.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Winterthur will be hostess to the Federal Gymnastic Festival from July 17th-20th. Participation in this great national fête promises to even eclipse the splendid attendance figures which Aarau, scene of the last event in 1932, could show.

The latest statistics of the Federal Gymnastic Association indicate that the organization has again grown. It now includes 1,854 societies with 162,091 members, of which 65,081 are on the active list. There are in addition 18,744 "Junior Gymnasts."

* * *

Dr. Gottfried Schaertlin, since 1894 Managing-Director of the "Schweizerischen Lebensversicherungs und Renten Anstalt" Zurich, has retired from his post. Dr. Schaertlin enjoyed the reputation of an authority in Insurance matters and he was often approached by the Federal Authorities for advice.

BERNE.

Doctor E. Hugli, Professor of mineralogy at the University of Berne, will shortly resign from his post.

* * *

Practically the same cast of 350 native actors, as in previous seasons, will be seen in the open-air William Tell performances, scheduled to be given at Interlaken on Sunday afternoons from July 12th to September 13th. While the auditorium is covered the stage itself is entirely open. The rural scenes show alpine life in the early days, and the colourful costumes were all designed by the late Rudolf Minger, foremost authority on heraldry and medieval dress in Switzerland.

SOLOTHURN.

A terrible motor-car accident happened at Langendorf, near Solothurn, costing the loss of three lives. A car driven by Max Füss, a mechanic, at an excessive speed, ran into a wall, the petrol tank exploded and the car was soon enveloped in flames. The driver and two passengers were killed outright, whilst a third passenger has received serious injuries. It has been established that the driver was under the influence of alcohol.

THURGAU.

Dr. F. Hagenbüchle, since 1920, President of the Superior Court of the canton of Thurgau, has died in Frauenfeld at the age of 66. Dr. Hagenbüchle was for over 22 years a member of the Court.

VALAIS.

The 1st and 2nd division of the Swiss Army have for some years made successful experiments with dogs for the dispatch and sanitary services. Results have been so satisfactory that a permanent station for army dogs has recently been established in the fortress of St. Maurice in the Rhone valley, where the animals will henceforth be bred and trained.

* * *

M. Cyrille Pitteloup has been elected head of the government of the canton of Valais for 1936/37.

BASLE.

The death has occurred in Gland, of M. H. Maerhofer-Campart, a former Manager of the "Basler Handelsbank" at the age of 59.

GLARUS.

Dr. Joachim Mercier has been elected a member of the States Council (Ständerat) in succession to the late Dr. Philipp Mercier.

LUCERNE.

The death is reported of M. Alois Müller, President of the "Eidgenössischen Turnvereins," at the age of 57.

THE STOCK EXCHANGE OF ZURICH.

(By Leu and Co.'s Bank Limited, Zurich).

Zurich, 4th May, 1936.

With the beginning of April the Zurich stock exchange entered into a new period of great instability which spread from New York over to all European markets. This was the more impressive and somewhat unexpected as such a complete change of tendency in Wall Street did not seem to be very logic, especially since the economic improvement of the United States is keeping on. The reasons given are more or less convincing and probably lie in the combined influence of certain events that already took place or are going to do so in the nearer future, namely elections in France, election of a president in the United States, new tax-bills in England as well as in America. Furthermore indefinite rumours about possible belligerent complications in central Europe, etc., added to the general nervousness. By and by, however, the situation was viewed more calmly and with the exception of a few special stocks the majority recovered slightly from their bottom prices. Under these circumstances it is comprehensible that the losses in American railroad shares were considerable both as far as turnovers and prices were concerned. Baltimore and Ohio sold for 48½ as against 66 and Pennsylvania for 87 as against 107. From the other groups Swiss trust companies proved

to be very sensitive. Fortunately, however, the decline kept within reasonable limits. While Elektrobank fluctuated between 437-405-418, Motor-Columbus was traded occasionally as low as 156 against 172 one month ago. At times Indelec sold for almost 20 Francs less, Saeg for about 5 less. Transportwerte (ex div. 11.28 Fr.) for over 10 less etc. Also foreign shares such as Hispano and Royal Dutch encountered a weaker disposition, the latter having been able to overcome it entirely in the meantime. Bankshares were moderately lighter on the whole line, while industrials proved to be highly irregular and in most cases cheaper. Almost as an exception Aluminium and Nestlé remained stable at 1790 resp. 840 and were traded finally at 1730 resp. 812 after deduction of the coupons (60 and 28 Francs). A small annual deficit by Sulzer Brothers may be the reason for a decline of this stock (405-355), while Saurer in contrary showed no red figures in its balance-sheet and consequently remained more stable (159). Brown, Boveri, Fischerstahl, Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon, Lanza, etc., they all sold for less than at the beginning. Insurance-stock encountered small interest and little transaction could be registered to practically unchanged conditions.

With the bond market Swiss Federal railways and governmental securities maintained their previous level, while foreign bonds were decidedly weaker. Especially French ones were suffering since weeks in regard to the elections of last Sunday. A slump in 7% Polish Stabilisation loan on account of transfer restrictions in this country was of more recent date and brought a decline of 8% to 52%. Monotonous was the development of German bonds and not even the announcement that for the time being a 2% cash transfer will be effected instead of fund bonds alone, proved to be attractive enough to cause some rise.

SWISS ART IN BERNE.

Under the above name a series of performances, lectures, concerts and exhibitions will be held in Berne, from May 9th — May 23rd, featuring the work of some of our most prominent artists.

In connection with an exhibition of the works of Ferdinand Hodler and the XIX National Art Exhibition, there will be afforded an opportunity to hear the compositions of a number of our best-known composers, such as Othmar Schöck (Penthesilea), Willy Burkhard (Das Gesicht Jesajas), Fritz Brun, Fr. Klose, Volkmar Andrea, Gustave Doret, W. Geiser, Albert Moeschinger, Arthur Honegger, Frank Martin, Conrad Beck, Jacques-Dalcroze, Paul Burkhard (Hopsa), Emil Frey, Fritz Brun, L. Balmer, etc.

Works of authors, amongst them some of our foremost writers will be performed, we mention only a few: K. Heinrich David (Jugendfestspiel), Otto v. Greyerz (D's Schmöckerli), Cäsar v. Arx (Der heilige Held), John Knittel (Protektorat), Peter Hagenmacher (Die Venus vom Tivoli), Walther Lesch and Robert Blum (Hansjoggel im Paradies), etc.

The Federal Department of the Interior, and the community of Berne have given their support, as well as the Municipal Theater, the "Heimatschutz Theater," Berner Liedertafel, Uebischi Chor, Orchester und Theater Verein, Caecilienverein, Kunsthalle, Kunstmuseum, Musikgesellschaft and Radio Berne.

These arrangements which have been made with the greatest care, will give a vivid picture of Swiss Art as it is to-day, and should any of our readers happen to be in Berne during this time, we would warmly recommend them to pay a visit to this Festival. Prospectuses can be had on application.

61e FETE FEDERALE DE GYMNASTIQUE A WINTERTHOUR.

Winterthur, Avril 1936.

Chers Confédérés!

Winterthur a assumé l'organisation de la Fête Fédérale de Gymnastique qui aura lieu du 17 au 20 Juillet 1936.

La tâche que nous avons prise sur nous est belle, mais difficile et lourde de responsabilité. Nous avons en effet à recevoir et à donner l'hospitalité à plus de 900 sections comprenant environ 22,000 gymnastes. Nous mettons tout en œuvre pour que notre fête, tout en restant dans les limites modestes qu'imposent les conditions actuelles, soit néanmoins en tous points réussie.

Depuis des mois les jeunes gymnastes et athlètes se préparent par un travail constant et méthodique à cette fête, d'où chaque section et chaque participant espère revenir couronné et chargé de trophées.

Les frais occasionnés par une semblable fête sont énormes et nous obligent à faire appel à la générosité d'une population dont l'esprit de sacrifice ne c'est jamais trouvé en défaut, lorsqu'il s'agit de maintenir une belle tradition nationale et de faire preuve de sympathie envers nos jeunes gymnastes. Nous osons espérer que cette fois encore notre appel ne sera pas vain.

Dans le but d'unifier autant que possible les prix distribués, nous serions très reconnaissants à nos généreux donateurs de vouloir bien nous adresser leurs dons en espèces — mais nous n'en serons cependant pas moins reconnaissants pour tout envoi en nature.

Dès maintenant nous pouvons vous assurer de notre gratitude et de celle des gymnastes pour les versements que vous voudrez bien effectuer à notre compte de chèque postal No. VIII b 271 et pour le dons en nature, qui devront être adressés à M. Karl Schneider, concierge du Stadthaus, Winterthur. Permettez-nous prier de ne pas attendre au dernier moment pour nous adresser vos dons, afin de faciliter notre tâche et nous permettre de prendre nos dispositions.

Au nom du Comité des dons

Le Président : J. Kessler.
Dr. G. Schoellhorn.

450 MILES ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

(Continuation).

At 100 km. from Croydon, on course, North Foreland lies 37 M., and by then the Croydon—Pulham—Lympe ground-stations are near enough to give exact fixes, which are used for the rest of the journey. A last check on the North Foreland is always taken at 50 km. from Croydon (West of Cranock) and the minimum signal MAF should then be on 75° M. A quick glance at a table then gives the E.T.A. Croydon within half a minute.

The Sperry pilot has been holding a steady descent for the past 20 or 25 minutes and the pilot has been entirely free to get his navigation checked and counter-checked. The pity is that Plymouth broadcasting station works on 203 m. because it would give an excellent cut if its wavelength were within the 300-2,000 band.

Along the route the time between two cross bearings is taken with a stop-watch, so as to get the ground speed to within 1 m.p.h. Two or three such readings, agreeing, soon give the crew confidence. If they are travelling fast with a helping wind they reduce motor speed and save a lot of petrol.

For instance, 1,700 r.p.m. on the Douglas at their height gives 285 k.p.h. (178 m.p.h.) and 320 litres (70 gallons) per hour, but 1,500 r.p.m. gives 240 k.p.h. (150 m.p.h.) and only 185 litres (40.7 gallons) per hour. If the ground speed is the same the saving on the three-hours trip could be 405 litres or 89 gallons or about £6 15s.

Vibration-dampers on the crankshafts have made low r.p.m. possible and Swissair hope to get down in the region of 200 litres (44 gallons) per hour, whereas in 1935 they averaged 340 litres (74.8 gallons). Throughout the trip a chart is used to correlate height, boost pressure, r.p.m. and throttle.

This navigation is acceptable to most pilots in every detail except the final descent through cloud and perhaps through an icing layer.

The method of approaching Croydon seems sound enough, for in Q.B.I. (which means Fog Control in force) the machine has a monopoly of the controlled-zone frequency; and the aerodrome may be approached from any side and without a beacon if there is a reasonable cloud-base, because there are no actual hills close by. The hill just beside Basle aerodrome (Birsfelden) is not so easily dealt with, and the approach must be on the line 137° M. So Basle is avoided in really thick weather, and passengers are given free rail tickets back from Zürich. But it hardly ever happens.

Zürich (Dübendorf), despite its sub-Alpine surroundings, has such a good approach beacon that it is practically always open. The course from Basle is 108° M. But the pilot flies on 95° M. for exactly 16 minutes at 240 k.p.h. (150 m.p.h.) and strikes the marker beam, which is on 151° M., 24 km. from Dübendorf. He takes a QDR every four minutes to make sure he is still on 95° M.

While the 16 minutes are ticking away the pilot puts on headphones and tunes in on nine metres to the beacon. Gradually he hears the dashes which tell him he is to the right of the approach line. At 16 minutes he gets the continuous signal, turns into it and checks whether his compass says 151°. All is set for the final approach. When the remote marker beacon is passed he changes the airscrew pitch in case the first approach should prove unsatisfactory. The Sperry pilot is still flying the machine, and is cut out before the second marker is passed. If he sees the ground in the last 50 ft. the pilot is satisfied. If not he climbs away on 151° M.

All this demands long flying experience, good equipment and practice — but nothing else.

(The Aeroplane).

Drink delicious "Ovaltine"
at every meal—for Health!