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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

FIRST OF AUGUST.

The sale of "First of August Postcards," the proceeds of which will be for the benefit of the fight against the scourge of tubercular disease is in progress.

NEW LEGATION BUILDING IN ROME.

The Federal Council has authorised the Legation in Rome to dispose of their present building, which has become too small for the continually increasing requirements, and to purchase the Villa Monticelli in the Via Barnaba Oriani. The deal will leave a surplus of 300,000 Lire, which amount together with another 20,000 Swiss francs is to be used to put the new head-quarters in proper order.

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION IN PARIS, 1937.

A Swiss exhibition-committee for participation at the international exhibition in Paris next year has been duly formed. Hon. President is M. A. Dunant, Swiss Minister in Paris, President Léon Jungo, Vice-Presidents E. R. Bühler, manufacturer and Henri Muret of the Swiss Office for the development of trade, Lausanne. The following groups will participate: Arts and Crafts, Textile- and Watchmaking, Tourism. A Restaurant will give an opportunity for the practical exhibition of food and provisions. Plans for a Swiss Pavilion will be the subject of a competition between Swiss Architects at home and in Paris.

TOUR DE FRANCE.

At this greatest of all cyclists' races, Paul Egli, who finished strongly in the recent "Tour de Suisse," rather unexpectedly won the first stage Paris-Lille and for the first time in history a Swiss is wearing the yellow jersey.

BELIEVE IT, OR BELIEVE IT NOT.

The Communist Party declares that they are firmly resolved to defend the present militia system of our army against the campaign of the "Journal de Genève" for the creation of a standing army. The latter they stigmatise as a reactionary attempt, violating the democratic principles which form the basis of our constitution. Only an army of the people, an army of citizens, resolved to defend the freedom and the interests of the people as well as the independence of the country against all fascist threats from without or from within, can safeguard our independence, but never a standing army in the hands of a fascist caste of officers. In defending our militia, the Communist Party will do everything in their power in order to forge a truly democratic army, eliminate fascists and reactionaries from the corps of officers, support the democratic officers and work for the election of the officers by the soldiers.

If we may comment on the question of a standing army, on closer examination it will be seen that it is not such an utopian matter as one might at first infer. Most of our principal towns are on or a mere stone's throw from the frontier. Zurich is no more than 20 kilometers from the border. Our army requires at least three days to mobilise. Who is covering the frontiers in the meantime? Landsturm and Grenzschutz, we suppose. But in these days of mechanised armies, would these hastily summoned small bodies of troops be sufficient to stem the tide, until the field army is ready to join forces? The question answers itself. How different, if there were a small standing army (15,000 men have been mentioned), always ready, at a moments notice, to lock and bolt the door.

MOTORISTS STAY-IN STRIKE.

To illustrate the high degree of discipline shown by the Swiss motorists in their recent passive demonstration, it suffices to say, that the 15 control stations of the T.C.S. in Basel noted altogether 20 cars registered in Basel and 50 cars, motor cycles and lorries from other Cantons circulating without a permit. This gives the imposing percentage of 99.7 as representing Basel motorists "on strike."

NEW TRADE AGREEMENT WITH GERMANY.

After prolonged and extremely difficult negotiations it has been possible to arrive at some kind of agreement. As Minister Stucki said, a bad agreement is preferable to no agreement which, in these days of stress, might become extremely serious. A basis has been found which satisfies neither the Swiss nor the German point of view. It is a clear compromise, leaving things much as they were. In short, the export of goods remains as heretofore, imports are to be increased, the tourist traffic reverts to about the same regulations as before the break. The financial creditors are slightly better off, those under the stand-still agreement can register no change. The agreement can be terminated per End of December and therein lies the principal disadvantage.

RAISING OF SANCTIONS.

The Federal Council resolved, that the various resolutions passed on 28th October and 12th November, 1935, concerning export, re-export and transit of war material for Abyssinia and Italy, financial and economic sanctions against Italy, are repealed as from midnight, July 14th, in pursuance of the proposal of the co-ordination committee of the League of Nations, dated July 6th.

PRICE CONTROL.

The prices of tyres for motor lorries were increased as from July 1st by 12½ per cent. by suppliers. The Price Control Board considers such increase unjustified and ordered the immediate withdrawal of the new price lists. The prices fixed on March 1st are to remain in force, until the Board agrees to have same altered.

DEFENCE LOAN.

The delay in financing the large credit voted for the better defence of the country has given rise to certain misgivings. On the other hand, conditions in the money market have not been exactly propitious for launching such a considerable operation. It appears now that the issue of the loan will be delayed until the autumn, when, after the harvest, the liquid means of the country are generally greater than at any other time of the year. An issue of Prize-Bonds is said to be an interesting possibility.

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It is now announced that an issue of a first Series of defence bonds of between 80 to 100 million francs, in denominations from 100 francs upwards, carrying interest at 2½ to 3 per cent. per annum, at par, is contemplated for some time in September. The question of an issue of Prize-bonds is to be examined further, but will definitely not apply to the first Series.

SWISS NATIONAL BANK.

On June 30th, 1936, the gold and gold exchange reserves of the Swiss National Bank amounted to 1410 million Swiss francs; discounts and advances on securities reached 249.2 millions. The notes in circulation (1,301 millions) and the other liabilities at sight (340 millions) were covered by 85.92 per cent. by gold and gold exchange.

INSURANCES IN SWITZERLAND.

Insurances play a very important part in the economic life of Switzerland. It is a well-known fact, for example, that the expenditure of the various forms of insurance are higher in Switzerland, per head of inhabitants, than in any other country. In the course of the last ten years, the volume of insurance transactions in Switzerland has almost doubled. Insured capital with regard to life insurances attained 4,000 millions, e.g., approximately 1,000 Swiss frs. per head of inhabitants. In 1935 the returns of the big Swiss Insurance Companies show that this branch has suffered comparatively little from the depression and that there is a continuous increase in insured capital. 90% of the premiums of life insurance companies are of Swiss origin; on the other hand the large accident and civil responsibility insurance companies, and the re-insurance

companies do a very considerable amount of business with foreign countries. Switzerland possesses the largest re-insurance company in the world, and the largest European accident insurance company. Switzerland's policy of neutrality and general confidence in the stability of its currency have certainly contributed in securing for this particular branch of its national economy this special state of affairs.

TRADE AGREEMENT WITH FRANCE UNDER NOTICE.

The French government has given notice to terminate per 30th September the existing trade agreement between France and Switzerland, in consequence of the great changes in hours and wages caused by the latest events. Steps are being taken immediately in preparing for the pending negotiations.

FEDERAL COUNCIL AND ITALIAN JOURNALISTS.

The Federal Council has decided that the eight Italian journalists involved in that unpleasant incident at the League of Nations' meeting attended by the Negus of Ethiopia, having left Switzerland in the meantime, the matter may be considered as closed. Until a decision has been arrived at by the League authorities as to their re-admission to the League buildings, their re-entry into Switzerland will not be permitted.

The Department of Justice and Police has been ordered to report on the question covering the relationship of the Federal Authorities to the League of Nations in respect of the domestic rights (Hausrecht) as applying to the League buildings.

The Press in Italy has thought fit to make some unsavoury and entirely uncalled for comments acent this decision of exclusion.

FEDERAL GYMNASTIC FESTIVAL.

Winterthur is getting ready to receive the gymnasts of Switzerland. The organising committee is leaving nothing, except the weather, to chance and perfect arrangements await competitors and spectators alike.

SWISS ATHLETIC OLYMPIA TEAM.

The following team has been selected to represent Switzerland at the Olympic Games in Berlin in Athletics: 100 and 200 m: Hänni (Biel); 400 m: Jud (Zurich); 800 and 1500 m: Dr. Martin (Lausanne); 5000 m: Utiger (Luzern); 110 m. Hurdles: Kunz (Solothurn); Javelin: Neumann (St. Gall); High jump: Eggenberg (Bern); Long jump: Studer (Biel); 4 x 100 m. Relay: Hänni (Biel), Seeger (Riehen), Studer (Biel), Meyer (Bern), Jud (Zurich), Marchand (Bern). Marathon: Elha (Lausanne), Beer (Mettendorf). Walking: Schwab (Berlin), Ch. Reiniger (Frenkendorf), A. Aebersold (Zurich). Decathlon: Neumann (St. Gall), Guhl (Schaffhausen), Dällenbach (Langenthal). The delegation will be in the charge of David Moriaud (Geneva), assisted by H. Leutert (Zürich).

DEVELOPMENT OF THE TELEPHONE IN SWITZERLAND.

The use of the telephone is spreading more and more in Switzerland. For every 100 inhabitants, there are 8.8 telephones, and only in the United States, Canada, Denmark and Sweden is the telephone service more extensive. The telephone administration has installed a considerable number of apparatuses in places at a high altitude and far away from the beaten track, as well as on mountain roads, in order to assure the comfort and safety of tourists. The automatic telephone is becoming more and more general; out of 100 local communications, 76 are now automatic. Lastly, Switzerland plays a very important part as a country of transit for international telephone services.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The Henley Regatta heroes, F.C.Z.-Ruderklub, Zurich, received an enthusiastic welcome on their return home. Stadtrat Stirnemann addressed a few words of thanks and congratulations to the victorious crew. He laid particular stress on the great value such "showing the flag abroad" had for Zurich and the whole of Switzerland, transcending by far in effectiveness any other form of propaganda. May this wonderful success induce the authorities to further the interests of sport to better purpose than heretofore, he added. A banquet in the Hotel St. Peter concluded the proceedings.

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At the end of June the population of Zurich stood at 318,353.

BERNE.

An attempted stay-in strike by 600 hands employed by the Selve Metalworks in Thoune was nipped in the bud by prompt and firm action of the management and the authorities. The workers were asked to start work or leave the factory. After a first refusal, the works were evacuated just as the authorities of the town were preparing to take action. The trouble arose out of a proposed 6% cut in the rates for piece-work.

The strike has been settled after a duration of three days on the basis of a 2% wage reduction.

* * *

The town council of Bern has voted a credit of 174,000 francs for the construction of bomb proof shelters.

* * *

After the Spar- und Leihkassen Thun und Steffisburg, a third banking institute of the Bernese Oberland, the Volksbank, Interlaken, A.G., has been granted a two years moratorium.

LUCERNE.

A moratorium for two years had to be granted to the Kreditanstalt, Lucerne.

SCHWYZ.

The commune of Küssnacht is building a new Home for Citizens at a cost of 320,000 francs.

SOLOTHURN.

Judge Hans Stampfli was presented with a gold watch in recognition of 50 years service in Solothurn's judiciary. He commenced his career in 1886 when he was elected Clerk of the Court in Dornach.

* * *

An illicit distillery, manufacturing alcohol from sugar, has been discovered in Grenchen. The delinquent is under lock and key and the still dismantled. A number of "customers" have been traced.

BASLE.

Prof. Dr. Jakob Wackernagel has celebrated his jubilee of 60 years service as University Professor. For 47 years he lectured at Basel University, whence he returned some twenty years ago, after a 13 years stay at the University in Göttingen. He received his first appointment in Basel in June 1876, barely seven months after winning his degree. And still he is giving his lectures. Truly a Grand Old Man.

* * *

M. Hermann Hinderling-Kägi, well-known artist and at one time teacher in drawing and painting to many generations of pupils at the Upper Realschule and the Dewetschule, has died at the age of 83.

* * *

Colonel Karl Vonder-Müllli died at the age of 57. Dr. Vonder-Müllli practised as a barrister in Basel, was for ten years chief editor of the Schweiz. Militärzeitung and in 1926 was given the command of Infantry Brigade 11. During the war he was a member of the General Staff, later in charge of the intelligence service.

ST. GALLEN.

"Chinderfescht?" Magic word to all those who ever held an anxious look-out for the four great flags, flying from the tower of the St. Laurenzen church. Once again the hearts of thousands of happy schoolchildren, from the smallest "Erstgrietz" to the young "Bese" from the Talhof, and even including the proud Cadets from the Real- and Kantonsschule, they all beat higher and carefree, as they were wending their way through decorated streets, thronged by spectators from far and near, up to the traditional site on the Rosenberg. Happy days, unforgettable days! The festival procession, a sight never to be forgotten. The children dressed in white, with banners and flags, garlands and wreaths of flowers, a wonderful spectacle. And the traditional "Bratwurst und Bürli!" Who would not be young again, free from the cares of this world of stern realities, and live, yes live, just for one short day, am Chinderfescht z'Sanggalle!

* * *

The project of a new road along the Wallensee continues to trouble the minds and tempers. Glarus prefers that the existing road along the left border to Mühlhorn and thence over the Kerenzerberg should be improved. St. Gall is convinced that only a new thoroughfare along the right-hand side will adequately solve the problem of better communications, especially from a strategic point of view. The latter argument appears to be unanswerable; in fact it is supported by the opinion of the General Staff.

AARAU.

The new military organisation demands extended accommodation in Aarau. A considerable building programme is under consideration such as a new riding school, stables, improvements in the barracks, etc. The cost is estimated at 103,000 francs.

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The dear Cervelats, or rather the butchers have had to beat a hasty retreat. The increase in price brought such a reduction in demand that the price quickly went back to its former level.

GRISONS.

The cantonal Health department announces that the recent epidemic of infantile paralysis may be considered at an end.

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A great landslide has interrupted all traffic through the Viamala. For a distance of 150 metres a mass of rocks estimated at 10,000 cubic metres covered the road. It will be several days before the road can be thrown open again.

VAUD.

The Montreux-Bernese Oberland Railway reports a loss of 199,000 francs for the year 1935.

VALAIS.

The Grand Council resolved to reduce the number of Councillors from 1 per 1,100 souls to 1 per 1,400 souls. This resolution has to be submitted to the people for approval.

NEUCHATEL.

A delegate of the U.S.A. Foreign Office, Mr. Hickerson, has arrived in La Chaux-de-Fonds, to enter into negotiations with the Swiss Watch Chamber concerning the export of watches to the United States and the conclusion of a new commercial treaty.

GENEVA.

The Lac Leman Steamship Co. closed its accounts for the year 1935 with a loss of 244,432 francs. The debit balance now stands at 1,284,256 francs. Last year was the worst ever, with receipts 66% less than in 1934.

TICINO.

At the Cantonal Shooting Festival in Bellinzona, 1,050 competitors participated. Champion in pistols, with 570 points better than world record, was the 67 years old D. Giambonini, president of the organising committee.

The SWISS VICTORIES at HENLEY and the ENGLISH PRESS.

There is much of a sameness in the reports sent to their respective papers by the "special rowing reporters" who missed no opportunity to interview the captains and trainers of the different crews at Henley. Though after the semi-finals on Friday the Swiss victories were generally anticipated there were only two dailies which previous to that predicted the unparalleled feat of the Zurich crew. The Japanese competitors enjoyed a very good press and added to their well-staged spectacular appearance were favourites for the Grand Challenge Cup; I am told that on the morning of the semi-final the betting was four to one in their favour.

The *Daily Express* reporter, two days before the final, expecting the Leander Club to reach the last stage expresses his doubts as to its ability to "survive the formidable task." This is what he writes on July 6th:

"Zurich sent nine oarsmen to compete.

As I forecast in Saturday's *Daily Express*, they won three of the principal events — the Grand Challenge Cup, the Diamond Sculls, and the Stewards' Cup.

If Captain Arthur Dreyfus, their coach, had not withdrawn the brothers Homberger from the Silver Goblets, I believe Zurich would have won that, too.

Rufli took the Diamonds for the second year in succession; a record for an overseas sculler.

What is the secret of the Swiss successes? Can English oarsmen learn anything from their methods?

Their style of rowing, based largely upon the principles advocated by Mr. Steve Fairbairn — who sent them a telegram of congratulation — is as near perfection to highest English traditions as can possibly be attained.

Where they gained an advantage was in superior physical fitness and ability to get off the mark with exceptional speed.

In all their races they led after the first few strokes, and, having established a reasonable margin in their favour, were able to regulate their pace according to circumstances.

In the final of the "Grand," Laurie, who stroked Leander, made a characteristic spurt after a mile had been covered, but the crew could not "crack" the Swiss.

The superiority of the Zurich men was even more pronounced in the four-oared race for the Stewards' Cup. They led again after the first few strokes, and steered a perfect course. Leander wandered all over the river, and never looked like winning."

* * *

Equally confident was the *Morning Post* after the first heat on July 3rd:

"The beautiful Swiss crew from the Zurich football club beat Cambridge's Head of

the River crew, Jesus, so gently but so firmly that risking one's reputation for the hundredth time as a critic, one gives the opinion that Switzerland are not merely avenged of Jesus, who beat them last year, but are the probable winners of the Grand Challenge Cup.

Never have I seen more perfect virtuosity in an eight-oared boat. The poise in coming forward, the rhythm which the stroke imparts, the delightful drawn out finish become unpopulal with some of our eighties now, told its story to-day."

* * *

The *Daily Mail* (July 4th) has little more to say than "Zurich proved that the fastest stroke in the world cannot compete with that of a normal, physically powerful crew, rowing at a slower rate but with great power and rhythm."

A reporter, however, has extracted "secret" from Capt. Dreyfus, and here it is (July 11th):

"At Croydon airport I encountered Mr. A. Dreyfus, captain of the Zurich rowing club. The Swiss boat had been despatched home by ordinary transport, but the oars which did the deadly work the crew took with them by air.

Mr. Dreyfus imparted the startling news that his all-conquering Zurich crew, which the knowledgeable ones at Henley proclaimed the best in the world, was not necessarily the best at his command.

"I could have filled three boats," he said, "but we had to be so careful not to contravene your rules."

The Amateur Rowing Association, I may explain, decrees that any person who earns a living as a mechanic, labourer, or artisan is not fit to be admitted to the select circles of English rowing.

So Mr. Dreyfus put into his crew eight bank and insurance clerks, university students, a company director, and one garage clerk.

* * *

This is the comment of the *News Chronicle* (July 6th):

"The Swiss club, Zurich, sent one complete eight and a sculler, and their triumph could not have been more complete; they won three events and refrained from competing in a fourth, perhaps luckily from our point of view.

In the Grand and Stewards' Cups they were opposed by the cream of English rowing — Leander, stroked in each instance by the successful and brilliant Cambridge stroke, W. G. R. M. Laurie, whose generalship was perfect, but neither the eight nor the four possessed the pace of the Swiss.

The visitors proved to be expert watermen, for the conditions were difficult; they displayed a style and perfect rhythm which contained no perceptible fault; they exhibited splendid judgment, and the gallant and timely spurring efforts of Laurie did not disturb them.

The manner in which their sculler, Rufli, outclassed our two best Henley men, Warren and Tyler, was rather distressing."

* * *

The *Daily Mirror* (July 6th) is wondering:

"Henley's last day is always Zurich in glamour, and, Rufli speaking, the end of this year's Ascot-of-the-river was as good as any I can remember.

But to be reasonably serious. Many river fans would probably like to know how these great Swiss rowers from Zurich make themselves so fast.

This bronzed, sturdy eight outrowed

Leander in the Grand Challenge Cup, a four of their also put paid to Leander in the Stewards' Cup final, and E. Rufli, needless to say of the Zurich R.C., successfully defended the Diamond Sculls against T. H. Tyler.

Well, Mr. A. Dreyfus, the Zurich captain, tells you: "We take sport very seriously. I never rest until all my men are in bed. Fitness, confidence and grit at the right time have carried Zurich to victory."

Switzerland are the first nation ever to take three trophies away from Henley.

* * *

The Observer (July 12th) melancholy says:

"Only six of the eight trophies at Henley Royal Regatta are open to foreign competition, and four of these have now left the country. Many well-known judges of rowing are saying that it was just as well, from the British point of view, that the Swiss pair, A. Homberger and K. Schmid, withdrew from the Silver Goblets, or otherwise that trophy may now be reposing in Zurich in company with the Grand Challenge and Stewards' Cups and the Diamond Sculls. Be that as it may, there is not the slightest doubt that British rowing