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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

SWISS CINEMA LAWS.

The Department of Justice and Police of the Canton of Vaud, has taken up the question of the violation of one of its laws in reference to the cinema.

It has been found that many young people, under 18 years of age, have been permitted to enter cinemas when the film has been certified only for persons above 18 years.

The Cantonal authority has called the attention of all cinema directors, and of the Chief Constables of the various towns in the canton, to the fact that a fine of 500 francs (£25) may and must be demanded from all cinemas which transgress this Cantonal law.

FRANCE BANS SWISS PAPER.

The French Ministry of the Interior has prohibited the sale in that country of the Geneva morning paper, La Suisse.

HEAVY RAINFALL IN SWITZERLAND.

Rain has fallen heavily in Switzerland since Tuesday, March 16th, while an almost unceasing snowstorm has swept over the Alpine regions. The depth of snow is now over 2ft. at the 3,000ft. level, and about 15ft. at the height of 6,000ft. On the Grand Saint-Bernard the Petit Saint-Bernard passes snow is 30ft. deep.

Many rivers have overflowed in the Cantons of Basle, Vaud and Fribourg. On the left bank of the lake of Biel an area of 10 acres of vineyards and fields is sliding down. The main road has been cut off by a huge mass of earth and wreckage, which stopped along the embankment of the railway line.

A curious phenomenon is being noted in the Engadine, where the snow is yellow on account of the presence of African sand carried by the wind.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

At the age of 78 died at Kreuzlingen, Pastor August Sträuli from Wädenswil. The deceased was, for more than 40 years, a preacher of the Scherzinger-Münsterlingen Congregation. The deceased enjoyed an international reputation as a bee-breeder, being the inventor of the "Sträuli-Kasten" which is used in numerous countries.

BERNE.

A large landslide took place near Tavannes on the lake of Biel, when over 1,000 cubic feet of vineyard territory began to move, blocking the road from Biel to Neuchâtel. The material damage is considered to be heavy.

* * *

M. Eugen Keller, a Swiss, has been elected to the post of Manager of the Municipal Theatre in Berne. At one time an actor in Basle, he has for many years held important posts at theatres in Düsseldorf, Darmstadt, Munich, Heidelberg and Würzburg.

* * *

The death is reported from Berne of Dr. Johannes Jegerlehner at the age of 66.

The deceased was for many years a teacher at the "Gymnasium" in Berne, but he was better known as an author, he has written numerous books, principally of the Valais. Dr. Jegerlehner lived for the last few years at Grindelwald in retirement. He reached the rank of Colonel in the Swiss Army.

GRISONS.

An avalanche overtook a train travelling between Fernez and Süs. The coupling broke and the locomotive was thrown into the river Inn. The driver, Bodenmann, father of three children, was killed, whilst Christian Riffel from Schuls, a guard, was seriously injured.

VAUD.

A terrible motor accident occurred last Sunday on the road from Lausanne to Yverdon, between Cheseaux and Romanel, when four cars were involved in a collision.

Two people were killed outright, (M. Tardy, and Miss E. Hodler, both from Lausanne) whilst seven people were more or less seriously injured. The police authorities are investigating into the accident. So far it is said that the accident happened through one car overtaking another without making sure that the road was clear from oncoming traffic.

* * *

M. Ferdinand Porchet, member of the Cantonal Government, has been elected President of the Swiss Peasants Association (Schweizer Bauern Verband).

This nomination has found universal approval as M. Porchet possesses the necessary qualifications for this important post. On the retirement, 10 years ago, of M. E. Chuard, from the Federal Government, M. Porchet was offered his post but he refused, preferring to remain in the cantonal government.

LA POLITIQUE.

Le "postulat" Grimm.

On s'accorde en général à reconnaître que le parlement travaille mal, et surtout trop lentement, selon des méthodes surannées. On ne peut nier non plus que les suggestions démagogiques n'y aient trop facilement de l'écho. Aussi, de divers côtés, dans le camp "bourgeois" notamment, a-t-on réclamé une réforme de cette institution.

Les critiques du régime parlementaire vont parfois trop loin; la passion porte quelques-uns d'entre eux à proférer des accusations injustes, dont ils mesureront eux-mêmes l'iniquité s'ils voulaient bien réfléchir, à tête reposée, à ce qu'est et doit être la représentation populaire. La très grande majorité de nos députés sont de fort honnêtes gens. "Il ne manquerait plus qu'il en fût autrement," répliqueront leurs aristocrates. Evidemment. Mais à lire certains chroniqueurs, on pourra croire, tout de même, que le Conseil national est un ramassis de friponnages et d'imbecilles. Or il suffit d'observer sans parti pris ce qui se passe dans l'hémicycle et dans ses alentours pour être persuadé du contraire. Les préoccupations électorales jouent certes un trop grand rôle dans l'activité des députés; mais c'est là un défaut inhérent au système lui-même; et l'on ne doit pas oublier qu'aucun régime n'est vraiment exempt de cette tare: là où l'on n'a pas à flatter le peuple, on se soucie de plaire au dictateur et à ses courtisans. Quiconque veut un gouvernement parfait doit attendre d'être en paradis. Mais je me demande parfois si, en paradis même, des citoyens difficiles ne trouveront pas que rien ne va comme il faudrait. On disait, pendant la guerre, que lorsque le colonel de Loys, commandant de la 1me division, réputé pour sa sévérité, arriverait dans les régions, célestes et verrait de près les Chérubins et les Séraphins, les Trônes et les Puissances, il ferait une moue de dédain et s'écrierait: "Tout ça manque d'organisation!"

Mis à part les reproches non fondés, qui font peser sur les députés une suspicion peu motivée, il reste ceci, qui est évident: les débats sont trop longs, extrêmement fastidieux, médiocrement convaincants; le contrôle parlementaire est à la fois vétuste et insuffisant. On perd beaucoup de temps à des manifestations de pure forme, telles que les présentations de rapports. Il serait désirable qu'une "rationalisation" intervint.

Mais il ne faut pas oublier que les incontestables améliorations proposées naguère sous les espèces d'une révision du règlement, n'ont pas trouvé grâce devant l'assemblée.

Une initiative populaire demande avec raison que les Chambres ne puissent augmenter les crédits prévus par le Conseil fédéral. Bref, l'idée d'un changement, plus ou moins profond, est "dans l'air." Nul ne conteste qu'il n'y ait quelque chose à faire. En pratique, toutefois, on est loin de tomber d'accord.

M. Grimm, par exemple, a développé l'autre jour un "postulat" par lequel il réclame une simplification de l'étude des projets et rapports, une faculté de contrôle plus étendue pour le parlement, un règlement stipulant dans quelles limites le Conseil fédéral et l'administration doivent renseigner l'Assemblée et ses membres.

Il nous semble que M. Grimm n'a pas tort de souhaiter une procédure plus simple, plus directe, plus expéditive pour l'étude des projets de lois; car la méthode en vigueur, compliquée par la navette entre les deux Conseils, touche souvent de près au byzantinisme. En revanche, nous verrions avec regret qu'on profitât de l'occurrence pour renforcer l'autorité et accroître les attributions des législateurs, au détriment de celles du Conseil fédéral, celui-ci devant rester intégralement le pouvoir exécutif, sans avoir à partager ses responsabilités particulières avec les Chambres, qui ont les leurs, tout à fait distinctes.

M. Motta, président de la Confédération, a déclaré que le "postulat" Grimm méritait un examen attentif et qu'il y serait répondu au cours de la session de juin. Il est désirable que le Conseil fédéral retienne tout ce qui sera de nature à rendre le travail parlementaire plus rapide, et par conséquent plus utile, mais qu'il revendeque hautement le privilège d'être seul à gouverner. Partout où une assemblée législative sort de ses attributions normales et empiète sur celles de l'exécutif, il s'ensuit de graves inconvénients. Rien de bon ne peut provenir de la confusion. Une réforme des méthodes parlementaires est nécessaire: une extension des pouvoirs des Chambres serait détestable.

Léon Savary.
(Tribune de Genève.)

LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND.

Results of 1936 and new prospects.

The general trend of business showed but little change at the beginning of 1936. Although the situation improved in certain direction, it remained unsatisfactory on the whole and became even worse in several fields, particularly in the building industry. The devaluation of the Swiss franc, which took place on 26th September, considerably modified this state of affairs, and thanks to the results acquired in the last quarter — that is to say, in the period immediately following the monetary alignment — 1936 was a better year than its predecessors.

From the beginning of the year there was an improvement in export trade — an improvement which was accentuated as a result of the devaluation. The figures for 1936 show a reduction of 17 million francs in imports and an increase of approximately 87 million francs in exports, the latter figure representing an increase of 11% in value and 22% in quantity. The result of this state of affairs has been a reduction of approximately 104 millions francs to the deficit of Switzerland's commercial balance.

Almost all industries have participated in this export increase. In the textile branch the improvement is particularly noticeable as regards cotton cloth and thread silks, embroidery and hat-braid. The export of clocks and watches increased by 27 million francs. A considerable improvement also occurred in the metal industry, the chemical and pharmaceutical industry, and the foodstuffs industry (particularly chocolate and cheese).

Switzerland's principal suppliers continue to be in the order of their importance, Germany, France, Italy, the United States and Great Britain. Germany heads the list of Switzerland's customers, followed by France, Great Britain, the United States and Italy.

From the beginning of 1936 the Swiss money market was characterised by an increasing liquidity, which assumed exceptional proportion as a result of the devaluation. Not only was the influx of foreign capital intensified, but considerable sums which had been hoarded within the country itself reappeared on the market.

Seasonal unemployment was much less important this Winter than in the previous year, and this improvement can certainly be attributed, in some measure, to the increased activity of the export industries.

Thanks to the energetic measures taken by the authorities with a view to curbing unjustifiable price increases and maintaining the cost of living at as low a figure as possible, the Swiss cost-of-living index rose only from 130 to 132 by the end of December 1936 (1914 = 100).

The tourist traffic also was very favourably affected by the devaluation of the Swiss franc. It was extraordinarily intense during the holidays at the end of the year. The number of foreign visitors doubled in certain districts in comparison with 1935. The visitors who came in the greatest numbers were the English, the Belgians, the French, the Dutch and the Italians.

The increased tourist traffic had a very welcome influence on the situation of the Federal Railways, whose receipts have risen. The devaluation resulted also in bringing Switzerland's railway fares into line with those of foreign countries, and Switzerland can certainly no longer be said to have the most expensive railways in Europe.

Finally, it may be stated that Switzerland's economic situation, which tended to show a worsening at the beginning of 1936, has now undergone a very marked improvement. There is every reason to hope that economic life in Switzerland will continue its present upward course.

CONCERT NEWS.

Mme. Berty Jenny.

Mme. Berty Jenny, the reputed contralto from Basle, gave a *Lieder* Recital at the Grotian Hall, on Friday, March 19th, before a large audience.

This experienced singer is to be congratulated on a programme which was arranged with much care, thus avoiding a certain monotony, which often mars recitals of this kind.

Mme. Berty Jenny is the happy possessor of a deep alto-mezzo voice, and her singing and interpretation especially in the lighter Schubert songs met with unqualified success. Her rendering of Schubert's "Wehmut" and "Der Tod und das Mädchen" proved her to be a singer with an extensive range of emotional expression. She also was an excellent interpreter of Hugo Wolf's songs, her rendering of "Wenn du zu den Blumen gehst" and "Er ist's" left a deep impression.

The two Handel Aria's, "Ah, mio cor" and "Aria of Admeto" revealed that Mme. Jenny is equally at home in the spheres of the *bel canto*.

This talented singer, after rendering a number of Brahms's "Lieder," sang five songs in English without the slightest trace of a foreign accent; in itself a most creditable performance.

Perhaps on one or two occasions a little unsteadiness in tone could be noticed, which was no doubt due to the vagaries of the English climate to which a foreign singer can hardly be expected to get accustomed to in such a short time.

The numerous *encores* with which Mme. Berty Jenny had to satisfy an enthusiastic audience proved that her recital was greatly appreciated. —

George Reeves was at the piano.

ST.

AUSTIN (AUGUSTIN) BERNHER, EIN FREUND DER ENGLISCHEN REFORMATOREN.

Von ARNOLD LÄTT.

Wenn man mich fragen würde, welcher vor allen Auslandschweizern der edelste war, der beste, der frömmste, so müsste ich antworten: Austin Bernher.

Die interessante englisch-schweizerische Korrespondenz der sogenannten "Zurich Letters" enthält von ihm kein Dokument; die "Original Letters" blos einen Brief an Bullinger, datiert von Baxterley, 31. Mai 1552; er befindet sich im Staatsarchiv Zürich. John ab Ulmis, der Thurgauer Student in Oxford, durch den die Korrespondenz eigentlich eingeleitet wurde, war der Ueberbringer des Briefes. Bernher dankt darin dem Antistes für die grosse Güte, die er ihm bewiesen habe, als er in Zürich unter seinem verehrten Präzeptor Wolfius studiert habe. Bullinger sei er insbesondere zu Dank verpflichtet für die freundliche und wirksame Empfehlung, die er seinem Neffen, Alexander Schmutz an den Herzog von Suffolk geschrieben habe. Diesen Alexander Schmutz war, wie John ab Ulmis, einer der Schweizerstudenten, welche an der Universität Oxford Freiplätze und von verschiedenen Grossen des Reiches Stipendien erhielten. Im weiteren sagt der Brief, werde Ulmis Bullinger erzählen, wie es Bernher drüben erginge und wie es mit seinen Studien stehe. — Er war kurz nach Ulmis mit einer Empfehlung von Bullinger an den Erzbischof Cranmer nach England gekommen; so schliesse ich nach Ulmirs Brief an Bullinger vom 27. November 1548. Sicher war er auch an den Bischof John Hooper von Gloucester, den ersten der grossen englischen Schüler und Freunde Bullingers empfohlen. In einem Brief von Ulmis an Bullinger heisst es ausdrücklich, Bernher bedauere sehr, dass er vor seiner Abreise nach England nicht Zeit gefunden habe, sich nach Zürich zu begeben, um sich

Miss Elsa Scherz-Meister.

Miss Elsa Scherz-Meister, a Swiss soprano, made her first appearance at the Wigmore Hall on Thursday, March 18th. *The Morning Post* writes:

"Miss Elsa Scherz-Meister is a singer who can sing, and, paradoxical though it may sound, that is no common accomplishment. Her recital at Wigmore Hall on Thursday consisted of songs by Beethoven (including the "Ah! Perfido" aria), Schubert, Othmar Schoeck, and Richard Strauss. Her soprano voice has a good range and a pleasing, bright quality throughout, rather too vibrant when pressed in the upper register, and somewhat lacking in resonance in the lower; though the style was not impeccable, the flow of tone was continuous, unhampered by lack of breath or difficulties with enunciation. A rather loose attack was the most conspicuous failing. With so much to her advantage, it was a pity that Miss Scherz-Meister's interpretation was not more imaginative. Her voice is not naturally very colourful, and dynamic contrasts were more easily managed than those of tone or texture; her phrasing, though musically pleasing and fairly confident in execution, did not follow the inflections or meaning of the words very closely. A great deal more might have been made of Strauss's "Ständchen" and "Zueignung," and the changes of mood in "Ah! Perfido" were only lightly suggested. Mr. George Reeves accompanied ably."

EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

March 23rd, 1937.

To the Editor of the Swiss Observer,
23, Leonard Street, E.C.2.

Dear Sir,

Your Correspondent's letter, signed UHU, shows to me that my previous letter was misunderstood.

All what I asked for was that our beloved Country should be represented at the coming Coronation because I believe in the Proverb: "If you are in Rome do as the Romans do," and Great and Small Powers will be represented. Each Delegation should and probably will be according to the Country's size, if Neutral or otherwise. Therefore none of us will expect twelve or more Swiss Representatives, but we undoubtedly would all like to read the names of one or two Delegates when the list of the foreign Delegations will be published in the near future in the Press, over the Radio and last but not least in the Official Programme.

Once Switzerland's Representatives being mentioned in the Official list under the heading of "Switzerland's Representatives" we shall all be satisfied, and certainly all of us will be pleased to see the names of our worthy Minister and some of his Staff.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours very truly:
S. M. BRUGGESSER.

persönlich von Bullinger zu verabschieden. Nachdem die beiden Studenten einige Zeit als Professor Trahernes Gäste in Oxford gelebt hatten, führte das Schicksal sie getrennte Wege auf der Such nach Gönnern und Brotheren. Ulmis hatte mehr weltliches Glück. Er kam an den Hof des Earl Grey, Marquis von Dorset, Herzog von Suffolk, dem Vater der schönen Johanna Grey, der unglücklichen "Königin der zehn Tage." Bernher kam durch Vermittlung Hoopers als Amanuensis in den Dienst des Bischofs Hugh Latimer von Worcester. Ohne Zweifel diente ihm der Unstand, dass er von der Zürcher Schule kam, als Empfehlung bei Latimer, dem radikalsten aller englischen Reformator, und wir können uns vorstellen, dass es die schönen Aussichten auf des Meisters Glücksstern waren, die Bernher veranlassten, sich zur dauernden Niederlassung in England zu entschließen, während Ulmis nach vier Jahren heimkehrte. Latimer, dem unter Heinrich VIII. ein striktes Schweigegebot auferlegt worden war, so dass er volle 16 Jahre nicht predigen durfte, wurde bei der Thronbesteigung Edwards VI. zum Hofprediger ernannt, d. h. zum religiösen Erzieher des Knaben bestimmt, welchen der Vater durch seine Reformation zum Fidei Defensor und Oberhaupt der englischen Kirche gemacht hatte. Damals hielt Latimer seine berühmten Predigten, die in der Geschichte der englischen Reformation und Literatur gleichermaßen wichtig geworden sind, ja, die sogar in die ferne Zukunft wirkend auf die Gestaltung der amerikanischen Mentalität einen tiefgreifenden Einfluss ausgeübt haben. Diese Predigten wurden von Latimer meist nur ex tempore gehalten, nur das Argument und die Bibeltexte scheint er notiert zu haben. Die ausführlicheren Texte der späteren Ausgabe seiner "Sermons" gehen zurück auf die Notizen, ich möchte sagen, auf das Stenogramm seines Amanuensis, Austin Bernher. Schon das ist eine Leistung, die genügen sollte, seinen Namen unvergesslich zu machen. Aber das Schicksal hatte ihn für noch Größeres in Aussicht genommen.

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Als mit dem Sturz des Lord Protectors Herzog von Somerset, dem viel zu frühen Tode Edwards VI., der Katastrophe der Johanna Grey und dem Fall des Herzogs von Suffolk alle Pfeiler der jungen englischen Reformation zusammenbrachen und Maria die Katholische, die "Blutige," den Thron bestieg, flüchteten viele der bedeutendsten Vertreter des neuen Glaubens, Erzbischof Cranmer und die Bischöfe Hooper, Ridley, Latimer, als die Führer, konnten natürlich nicht entweichen. Nach langen Verhandlungen wurden sie in Oxford als Ketzer verbrannt, als die ersten und vornehmsten unter den 284 Märtyrern der englischen Reformation. In jenen schweren Tagen der Verfolgung nun erscheint die Persönlichkeit des jungen Schweizers in ihrer vollen Größe. Strype, der Historiker der englischen Reformation, schreibt: "Als am 13. September 1553 Bischof Latimer als Gefangener in den Tower abgeführt wurde, ging Bernher als sein persönlicher Diener mit ihm, und in gleicher Eigenschaft (Servant) war er im folgenden Jahre stets in der Nähe der gefangenen Bischöfe in Oxford" ("Life of Cranmer," p. 492, und "Ecclesiastical Monuments," p. 277). In dieser Zeit war es, dass er, dank eines glücklichen Zufalls oder besser durch Gottes Vorsehung geführt, John Jewel begegnete. "Der gute Bernher, Latimers Diener, fand den auf der Flucht von Oxford begrieffenen Bischof von Salisbury in einem Augenblick höchster Not, als Jewel von Ueberanstrengung auf der Flucht ermüdet und von Hunger und Entbehrungen geschwächt, halb tot am Wege lag, wo er den Häschern der Königin in die Hände fallen musste." Bernher nahm ihn auf sein Pferd, brachte ihn in das Haus der Mrs. Warcup in der Gemeinde Nutfield bei Nettlebeck, wo schon viele andere Unterstützung und Beihilfe zur Flucht gefunden hatten. Hier blieb Jewel einige Tage, und als er sich erholt hatte, begleitete ihn Bernher sicher nach London und an Bord des rettenden Schiffes, das ihn nach dem Kontinent brachte.

(To be continued).