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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

FUNERAL OF WALTER MITTELHOLZER.

The funeral of Walter Mittelholzer took place on Thursday, May 13th, at the "Fraumünsterkirche" in Zurich, not a seat was vacant when the service began.

The floral tribute to the late aviator was magnificent, amongst the hundreds of wreaths were those of the Federal Council, the Swiss Minister in Vienna, the Austrian Cabinet, the Swiss Aero-Club, the Municipal Council of Zurich, Swiss Alpine Club, Swissair, Pilots of the Swissair, Deutsche Lufthansa, Fokker Works in Amsterdam, Italian Government, etc., etc.

The Federal Council was represented by Colonel Isler, Director of the "Eidg. Luftamt," the Zurich Government sent two of its members, Dr. Hafner and Dr. Briner, the town of Zurich delegated its Mayor, Dr. Kloeti. The German "Reichsluftministerium" sent a delegation consisting of "Generallieutenant" Milch with three Adjutants, Austria was represented by "Generalmajor" Deutmoser and the Austrian Minister in Berne.

A large number of officers of the Swiss Flying Corps, headed by Colonel Bandi, as well as the pilots and personal of the Swissair paid their last tribute to their colleague.

During the service an echelon of military machines flew over the church sending last greetings to their late comrade-in-arms.

Amongst the speakers during the service, were Pastor Fueter, Colonel Isler, who expressed the thanks of the country, Colonel Messmer, on behalf of the Swiss Aero-Club, General Deutmoser for the "Oester. Luftverkehrs A.G." and Flight-Captain Walter Ackermann, who paid a moving tribute to his chief and co-pilot.

TELEGRAM OF THE SWISS GOVERNMENT.

M. Motta, President of the Swiss Confederation has addressed the following telegram to the widow of the late Walter Mittelholzer:

"Im Gefühl nationaler Trauer entbietet der Bundesrat für sich und als Interpret des Schweizer Volkes Ihnen und Ihrer Familie den Ausdruck tiefgefühlten Beileids. Die Verdienste des uns allen jäh Entzogenen um die Aviatik, sind ein Ruhmesblatt unserer Geschichte."

FOREIGN CONDOLENCES FOR WALTER MITTELHOLZER.

The Austrian President, M. Miklas, has sent his condolences to the Swiss Government. The French Ambassador, the Ministers of Great Britain, Germany, U. S. of America, Finland, Hungary and Austria have called at the Foreign Office in Berne, to express the sympathy of their respective governments.

GIRL KILLED AT ST BERNARD HOSPICE.

A girl who, with her father, Dr. Bremond, of Chesières, and her two sisters, arrived at the Great St. Bernard Hospice, was attacked by one of the dogs. The party were met by monks and a team of the dogs, one of which suddenly knocked the girl down, tore her clothing, and bit her savagely. It is presumed that her neck was broken.

LESS UNEMPLOYMENT IN SWITZERLAND.

According to figures just published there were 70,793 unemployed registered in Switzerland or 18,553 less than twelve months ago.

LESS MILLIONAIRES IN ZURICH.

The number of millionaires in the town of Zurich during 1936 has been reduced from 283 to 264.

SWISS NATIONAL BANK.

On April 30th, 1937, the gold and gold exchange reserves of the Swiss National Bank amounted to 2,623 million Swiss francs; discounts and advances on securities reached 61 million. The notes in circulation (1,386 million) and the other liabilities at sight (1,298 million) were covered by 97.71% by gold and gold exchange.

FOURTEENTH-CENTURY FRESCOS IN SWISS CHURCH.

Some valuable fourteenth-century frescoes are now on view in St. Blasien's Church at Ziefen, a small village in Canton Baselland. They were discovered in 1931 by the local pastor, who cleared off the plaster under which they were hidden, and restored most of them with the help of two artists. Thirty paintings have been discovered, but 17 only are in good condition. A coat of arms on the wall makes it possible to fix the date of these frescoes between 1330 and 1340.

CORONATION DAY IN SWITZERLAND.

Coronation day was enthusiastically celebrated by every British community in Switzerland, while the Swiss themselves followed with the keenest interest the broadcast of the ceremony.

The local authorities showed their friendly feelings towards Great Britain and the King and Queen by flood-lighting the principal Swiss monuments, the cathedrals of Berne and Geneva, and the *quais* of Lucerne and Lausanne. The British Legation in Berne gave a reception at which the Swiss Federal authorities and the Diplomatic Corps were represented, and there were also official receptions at Zurich, Lucerne, Basle, Montreux, Lausanne, and Geneva. High officials of the League and the International Labour Office attended a dinner held at Geneva.

SWISS RAILWAY EARNINGS.

The earnings of the Swiss Federal Railways show a remarkable increase for the first three months of 1937. The operating results are as follows (figures for 1936 in parentheses): Operating earnings, 75,499,000 fr. (63,771,000 fr.); operating expenses, 51,570,000 fr. (52,061,000 fr.); operating surplus, 23,929,000 fr. (11,710,000 fr.), which represents an increase of 104.4 per cent.

COMMERCIAL BANK OF BASLE.

The reorganisation scheme of the Banque Commerciale de Bâle (Basler Handelsbank) has now been issued. While creditors are to sustain no losses at all, shareholders will have to make heavy sacrifices. The scheme has been approved by the Swiss Federal Banking Committee. It will now be passed on to the Swiss Supreme Court.

It was reported in 1935, that this bank which is one of the leading Swiss banks, was granted a two years' moratorium owing to its inability to meet its obligations. The difficulties were caused above all by the bank's frozen assets in Germany.

First of all, the reorganisation scheme which is to put the bank on a sound basis provides for the writing off of each share with a nominal value of 500f. to 100f. The share capital at present amounts to 75,000,000f., 5,250,000f. of which is in the possession of the bank. This latter amount is to be written off completely.

The share capital of 69,750,000f. thus remaining is to be reduced to 13,950,000f.

It is intended to increase the share capital at a later date by 3,550,000f., to 17,500,000f. or to 20,000,000f. if sufficient funds are forthcoming. All new shares will be of a nominal value of 100f.

By this reorganisation scheme there will be a profit of as much as 55,800,000f. Together with

the reserves of 13,750,000f. the bank will have at its disposal 69,550,000f. with which to carry out the reorganisation.

This amount will be used as follows:— 29,500,000f. to wipe out the loss in the balance sheet, 34,000,000f. for contingencies, 1,000,000f. for depreciation on estate, 3,500,000f. for the creation of an ordinary reserve account, and 1,500,000f. for an extra-ordinary reserve account.

The date of maturity of all the bank's bonds will, on an average, be extended by three years, the rate of interest being fixed at 4 per cent. all round.

As soon as the Supreme Court has approved the scheme, the moratorium will come to an end.

SWISS GOLD RESERVE REVALUATION.

The authorities of the Canton of Berne have lodged a request with the Swiss Federal Council that the profit of the Swiss National Bank resulting from the revaluation of the gold reserve be distributed. The amount involved is Frs. 500,000,000 (about £23,935,000 at the present rate of exchange) with which the National Bank formed an Exchange Equalisation Account.

Since, so far, the Federal Council has refused to touch this profit, the request of the Canton of Berne will probably be refused.

In this case it is possible that the Canton of Berne will bring an action before the Swiss Supreme Court.

The latest return of the Swiss National Bank shows gold holdings unchanged at Frs. 2,623,200,000 (£124,914,000). On 7th May the gold cover for bank notes and other sight obligations was 97.84 per cent., compared with 97.71 per cent. a week earlier.

SWISS BUDGET.

The publication of the accounts of the Swiss Confederation for 1936 — which will be submitted to Parliament within a few weeks — has caused a bitter disappointment in the country. The Budget for 1936 estimated expenditure at roughly 507,700,000f., and receipts at 507,400,000f., thus leaving an estimated deficit of 300,000f. When the Budget was discussed in Parliament and criticized, the Finance Department promised to make drastic economies and to oppose any increase in expenses unless compensated by new receipts; on the other hand, a rise in taxation rates was to increase the yield of the "Crisis Tax." The accounts for 1936 show that these promises were not fulfilled despite the new effort made by the taxpayers who paid an extra 65,000,000f. to the Treasury. Expenditure rose to 541,000,000f., or 34,000,000f. more than forecast, and receipts to 513,000,000f., or 7,000,000f. more than expected.

These results are all the more discouraging as the 1936 accounts should have reflected the good effects of the restoration plan of the Federal finances approved two years ago, after another restoration plan adopted in 1933 had failed. Since 1913 the expenses of the Confederation have increased from 105,000,000f. to 541,000,000f.; receipts have also risen by means of increases in taxation, but not in the same proportion. Since 1932 the Confederation has accumulated deficits aggregating 178,000,000f.

Next June Herr Meyer, Chief of the Finance Department, will submit a new "Restoration Plan" to Parliament, and one cannot forecast how it will be received, as a strong movement is now developing in many Cantons where nearly all parties are uniting in view of combating the present financial policy of the Federal Government. Should the plan be accepted, it may reveal itself as useless as the two previous ones, unless the Government puts an end definitively to the granting of huge State subsidies, and gives up to private initiative certain semi-official commercial endeavours which have been a complete financial failure.

ENTERPRISES SULZER.

It has been decided to cut the capital of the Enterprises Sulzer (Sulzer Unternehmungen), the big Swiss machinery manufacturers, of Winterthur, from Frs. 40,000,000 (£1,850,000 at current rates) to Frs. 28,000,000 (£1,296,000) by reducing the nominal value of the shares from Frs. 1,000 to Frs. 700. This step has been necessitated by losses incurred in previous years.

The directors report that thanks partly to the devaluation of the Swiss franc the future of the company looks very bright. At the principal works at Winterthur alone the total of orders received since the beginning of this year was nearly as big as the whole turnover in 1936.

CITY SWISS CLUB

REUNION D'ETE

à laquelle les dames sont cordialement invitées

MARDI 15 JUIN à 7 HEURES 15

au BRENT BRIDGE HOTEL, HENDON.

Dîner (7/6) — Dance jusqu'à minuit.

Tenue de Ville.

Pour faciliter les arrangements, les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Monsieur P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Telephone: Clerkenwell 9595)

Le Comité.

SIMPLON PASS OPEN.

The road over the Simplon Pass (6,582ft. above sea level) was opened to vehicles on Saturday, 12 days earlier than last year, but motorists are advised to fit their cars with snow chains. In some places snow trenches on the road are 21ft. deep.

AT THE JUNGFRAUJOCH.

In 1931 there was opened at the Jungfrauoch a scientific station, the construction of which cost a million Swiss francs. Situated at an altitude of 11,475 feet, it is built against a wall of rock between the top of the Jungfrau (13,660 feet) and that of the Mönch (13,460 feet). Its geographical situation is exceptional: the station is accessible in all weathers owing to the electric railway which goes through a long tunnel. The heating, lighting and cooking installations, as well as the laboratories are all electric. There exists no other station which combines as many advantages. If there are any situated at a similar altitude, they are not so easily accessible. They are too far away from scientific centres and lack the necessary comfort.

Next to the scientific station are an astronomical pavilion and the Jungfrauoch Hotel, which is quite up-to-date. A meteorological pavilion is about to be erected under the summit of the Sphinx.

The average annual temperature of the Jungfrauoch is 7 degrees C. below zero and almost all the condensation falls in the form of snow. Even in mid-summer, therefore, the Jungfrau region offers exceptional possibilities for skiers.

PRODUCTION OF ELECTRIC ENERGY IN SWITZERLAND IN THE COURSE OF THE HYDROGRAPHIC YEAR 1935-1936.

From October 1st, 1935 to September 31st, 1936, the electric energy produced in Switzerland by enterprises furnishing outside parties, railway and industrial undertakings, exceeded for the first time 60,000 million kWh. 45% of this increase is derived from exports, the increase of which is due to the installation of two plants, which export their total output.

IMPROVEMENT IN THE SPEED OF SWISS RAILWAYS.

The favourable results obtained last year with the light trains and the rapid "arrow" service have induced the Swiss railway authorities to pursue the application of this system. In addition, two new express trains or "block-trains" will soon be put into operation. They are of an entirely new construction and may attain a speed of 93 miles per hour which will lead to a marked improvement in communications between the various large centres.

SWISS ALPINE ROADS.

The Swiss Government has set up an 8-year plan for the development of alpine routes and the construction of several new arterial roads through the Alps.

This large scale programme comprises first of all the improvement of the road leading from Lake Léman to the Lake of Lucerne over the Mosses and Brüning passes, which thoroughfare will remain open to traffic all the year round. The Gothard road will also be improved and in the Canton of Glaris the Kerenzerberg road, between Zurich and Chur, will be completed.

In the Canton of Valais, the development of the Furka and Great St. Bernard roads is contemplated. In the Grisons, the Julier road will be the first to be corrected, then the Oberalp which connects the Grisons with the Gothard route, the Flüela which leads from Davos to the Lower Engadine, the Ofenberg which goes through the National Park, and, lastly, the Saint-Bernardino and the Lukmanier which connect the Grisons with the Canton of Tessin.

The new roads will be constructed: that of Susten, which, starting from the Bernese Oberland will lead to the Gothard, and that of the Lake of Wallenstadt which, following the left shore of the lake will facilitate traffic between Zurich and the Grisons.

The Federal Council will grant a subsidy of 53 million Swiss francs to the Cantons, but the total expenditure will exceed 80 millions, which will permit the employment of 3,250 workers over a period of 6 years. The Government will thereby not only help to combat the depression by providing work for the unemployed, but it will improve and enlarge the already highly developed network of Swiss alpine routes and render a great number of resorts more easily accessible.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONCRETE ROADS IN SWITZERLAND.

Increased use of concrete for road-building is noted in Switzerland. At the close of 1936 there were, in fact, 138 km. of concrete roads, which represents a surface of 830,000 m² as compared with 512,000 in 1934.

THE TRAFFIC OF THE BASLE HARBOUR DURING FEBRUARY.

The traffic of the Basle harbour during the month of February exceeded 260,000 tons, which constitutes a new record. Last year's figures, over a corresponding period, came to 145,000 tons. The down-stream traffic shows a very marked increase, since it went from 6,000 tons in January to over 9,000 tons in February 1937. For the

months of January to February together, the increase as compared with that of the corresponding period of 1936 exceeds 40%. Ship arrivals at Basle averaged 26 units per day.

LOCAL.**ZURICH.**

The death is reported from Winterthur of M. Emile Bachmann, a former engineer of the Sulzer concern, at the age of 75.

BERNE.

M. Lindt, the Mayor of the town of Berne, is shortly retiring from his post which he has held for many years with great distinction.

M. Armand von Ernst, Senior Partner in the Banking firm Armand von Ernst and Co. in Berne, has died at the age of 82.

The deceased rendered for nearly 50 years great services to the "Berne Burgermeinde." In the army he reached the rank of a cavalry colonel.

Doctor Marcel Godet, Director of the National Library, has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary.

ZUG.

The death is reported from Zug of Dr. Robert Bosshard at the age of 64. The deceased, who had an extensive medical practice, rendered great services to many municipal institutions.

The "Kantonsschule" Zug has celebrated the 75th anniversary of its Foundation, amongst the guests at a Banquet arranged for the occasion was Federal Councillor Etter.

FRIBOURG.

M. Quartenoud, Editor in chief of the paper "Liberté," has been made a *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Fribourg.

SOLOTHURN.

Dr. Urs Dietschi, who has been elected a member of the cantonal government was born in 1901 the son of States Councillor Dr. Hugo Dietschi. After completing his schooling at Olten and Solothurn he studied law at the Universities of Berne, Heidelberg and Berlin. On returning from a stay in Paris and London, he established himself as an advocate in Olten. Doctor Dietschi is the President of the Young Liberal Party of the canton of Solothurn and a member of the "Kantonsrat" since 1933.

The elections for the "Kantonsrat" have shown the following result: Liberals 77 (73); Cath. Conservatives 38 (42); Socialists 31 (31). The following members of the cantonal government have been elected: Dr. Oscar Stampfli (Liberal) 31,515 votes; Otto Stampfli (Liberal) 33,056 votes; Dr. Urs Dietschi (Liberal) 31,789 votes; Dr. Max Obrecht (Cath-Conservative) 31,285 votes; J. Schmid (Socialist) 30,197 votes.

BASLE-CANTON.

M. H. Senn of Rothenfluh had celebrated his 90th birthday anniversary. M. Senn is the father of M. Henri Senn, late President of the City Swiss Club.

VALAIS.

An avalanche of snow has carried away the Marcel Brunet Hut, erected eight years ago on the slope of the Rosa Blanche in the Val de Bagnes.

ST. GALLEN.

While a party of Zurich mountaineers were descending the Leistikann, in Canton St. Gallen, on Monday, one of them, Frau Toggweiler, slipped on the snow, fell 500ft., and was killed.

GENEVA.

A new case of arms smuggling has been discovered by the Swiss Federal police, and a Swiss motorist has been arrested in Geneva while he was trying to smuggle a consignment of arms and ammunition into France, whence, it is alleged, it was to be forwarded to the Spanish Government. His car contained a load of rifles, automatic pistols, and cartridges. The centre of this arms-smuggling organization seems to be in Canton Neuchâtel.

Professor Otto Barblan has celebrated his 50th anniversary as organist of the St. Peter's Cathedral in Geneva. Professor Barblan, who is a teacher at the Conservatory, has received the degree of *doctor honoris causa* of the Geneva University, he has also been made an honorary citizen of the town of Geneva.

FOOTBALL.**INTERNATIONAL MATCH, 2nd May, 1937.**

SWITZERLAND0 GERMANY1

A record crowd of 35,000 spectators witnessed a keen game played at Zurich. It was a battle between two brilliant defences and two forward lines lacking in penetrative power. The deciding goal fell in the 64th minute from a scrimmage following a corner kick, at a time when Switzerland were reduced to ten men. Springer, right half, having had to leave the field after an unfortunate collision with Urban. The scorer was Kitzlinger, the German left half. The better

team won. Our eleven may be said to have done well against redoubtable opponents.

MIDDLESEX WANDERERS F.C. in Switzerland.

The chief aim of the Middlesex Wanderers Football Club, founded in 1905, is, to make propaganda for the game of football, by sending teams to the Continent, composed of the best amateur talent in England. For the last 32 years, the brothers Capt. H. and Mr. R. B. Alaway, President and Secretary of the club, have been at the helm and have done wonderful work for Amateur football. Of particular interest to us Swiss is the fact that our well-known compatriot, Mr. F. M. Gamper, old Swiss international footballer, has the privilege to be one of the hon. Vice-Presidents of Middlesex Wanderers. No wonder then, that the 45th tour once again and for the fourth time (the previous visits took place in 1924, 1926 and 1928) leads the Wanderers to our native land.

The party includes many brilliant players, some of them on their first trip with the club and most of these young enough to look forward to many more Wanderers' tours in the future. The team travels direct to Lugano, there to play F. C. Lugano on Whit-Sunday a stiff proposition, as our only Ticinese National-League club are specially strong in their native surroundings.

On Whit-Monday F. C. Lucerne will provide the opposition, again no light task, Lucerne having done extraordinarily well in their first season in the upper circle.

On Wednesday, the 19th, the Wanderers renew acquaintance with F. C. St. Gall, this time in a night-match by floodlight. I trust the bottom club of the National League will fare better than of late.

On Thursday and Friday the touring side will be entertained by the F. C. Zurich. On Saturday they leave for Schaffhausen, view the Rhine Fall, and finish their programme on Sunday with a match against F. C. Schaffhausen, members of the First League and at present in rather a precarious position, being in dire relegation danger. The Wanderers are due back in London on Monday 24th.

Let us wish the Middlesex Wanderers F. C. a pleasant and enjoyable tour in good old Switzerland and may the better team win!

(Results will be given in our next week's number.)

M.G.

EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

The Editor,
Swiss Observer,
23, Leonard Street, E.C.2.

Dear Sir,

First let me wish "The Swiss Observer" many happy returns and to congratulate them on the excellent issue of the 15th. Reading the article "Basle to London by Water" I wished I could be labelled "goods" and do the trip.

As an old friend may I supply an omission which I think should be noted — the making of the Free Harbour at Basle. Was it 14 or 15 years ago? Being interested in commerce in an academic way I always endeavoured to visit any new enterprise, especially entrepôts.

When I read in *The Times* about the opening of this new harbour I mentioned to my friend Mr. Joss that as I was going to Geneva I should like to visit it. "Oh, that's easy. Little Stucki is head of a bank there; I'll write to him." (I must apologise for using "Little," but then we knew him more than 30 years ago when he was the genial smiling Secretary of the Swiss Institute when it was in Percy Street.)

All was made plain sailing. — On arrival at Basle I called on Mr. Stucki, who looked hardly any older, and as bright as ever. We visited the President of the Chamber of Commerce who gave us maps, plans, &c., and then took us to this New Free Harbour.

To those who have not seen it I can best describe it as a clever collection of warehouses, wharves, docks, locks, &c., all self-contained and enclosed within high walls. Although it is many years ago I see clearly long well-lighted warehouses, with offices by X, one wall with wide windows enabling those within to see at a glance what is going on without. There was a wide variety of goods already in although it had not long been opened. We were shown some bales of leather from Yorkshire and told they were up to sample. Coming from N. of the Humber I could not but reply "Yorkshire always supplies goods true to sample."

The cellars were equally interesting; and although the New Free Harbour was just an infant it was certainly a most sturdy one. The idea was sound — to admit goods without duty (as I understood), and then re-distribute them all over the continent. To-day nations and politicians, and business men are all talking of freeing trade of its many shackles. The Swiss showed how when it made the Basle Free Harbour. Basle is a natural "hub" of Europe. This new spoke, Basle to London by Water, is but one. May I ask when I shall be able to enter a ship in the Thames and not leave it till I reach Basle?

J. T. Mustard.