

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1938)
Heft: 869

Artikel: Swiss sports and garden party
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-692613>

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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE LONDON COLONY.

Telephone. CLERKENWELL 9595/9596. Published every Friday at 23, LEONARD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 15—No. 869

LONDON, 9 JULY, 1938.

PRICE 3d.

TO-DAY: Swiss Sports and Garden Party at Duke of York's Headquarters, Chelsea, 2.45 p.m.

SWISS SPORTS and GARDEN PARTY.

We particularly wish to draw the attention of our readers and their friends to the Swiss Sports Meeting and Garden Party, which will take place to-day, at the Duke of York's Headquarters, Chelsea.

The Committee of the Swiss Sports has spared neither time nor money to make this event a great success, and we hope that many of our compatriots and their friends will make the journey to Chelsea.

We feel sure that they will not be disappointed, it will be an afternoon well spent. Therefore make up your mind now, and do not fail those who have given their time and money freely, that you and your friends should have an enjoyable afternoon. Don't say, "I may come along" say "I will be there," and we are certain you won't regret it, even should it rain, as the events could then be held in the various drill halls.



HOME NEWS

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

FEDERAL.

NEW FEDERAL PENAL CODE.

A referendum held in Switzerland at the week-end has settled a question that has been considered for forty years. The Federal Penal Code passed by the Federal Parliament was adopted by the rather narrow majority of 48,887. Only about 55 per cent. of the electors voted, and there were 358,487 votes for and 309,600 against.

The new law deprives the cantons of the powers that they have hitherto possessed of legislating in criminal matters and substitutes a single penal code for the whole of Switzerland for the various cantonal codes, which differ considerably from one another. It is thus a centralising measure, and for that reason it has been strongly opposed by the rigorous advocates of cantonal sovereignty. The issue has been in reality one of State rights against Federal rights.

The adoption of the Federal Penal Code involves an amendment of the Federal Constitution, but the principle of the amendment was decided on in 1898, when a majority of the electors and a majority of the cantons authorised in a plebiscite the Federal Parliament to consider unifying the criminal and civil codes. The civil code was unified more than a quarter of a century ago — the Federal Civil Code came into force in 1912, — but it was only recently that the Federal Criminal Code was at last adopted by the Federal Parliament.

A change in the Federal Constitution can be made only after a referendum, in which there must be a majority both of the electors and of the cantons in favour of it, as was the case in 1898. In the vote taken at the week-end, however, a majority of the cantons for the new code was not necessary as the constitutional change had already been authorised in principle. The present referendum was taken in consequence of a petition signed by the requisite number of electors demanding that the question should be referred to a popular vote. Had a majority of the cantons been necessary the new code would have been rejected, for it was approved by only 9½ cantons, and 12½ cantons voted against it.

There are 22 cantons, but six of them are divided into two, and these two count only as half-cantons and have only half a vote. The Canton of Geneva in particular, where there was a majority for the change in 1898, has now rejected the code by 13,074 to 7,730.

Unfortunately, the referendum shows a sharp racial and religious division. The result is a victory for the German Protestant majority of the Swiss people over all the minorities. All the French cantons, the Italian canton of Tessin, the Romansch canton of Grisons, and all the German Catholic cantons except that of Lucerne, where there was a very small majority in favour, voted against the central penal code. The overwhelming majorities in favour of the code in the cantons of Zurich and Berne, and the two "half cantons" of Basle decided the issue. In those cantons there was an aggregate majority of 103,892—168,446 votes against 64,554 — in favour of the code, though in the rest of Switzerland there was a majority of 55,005 against it.

Here are the figures:

| Cantons | Yes | No |
|------------------|--------|--------|
| Zürich | 84,701 | 31,676 |
| Bern | 58,193 | 21,812 |
| Luzern | 14,539 | 14,069 |
| Uri | 1,497 | 2,781 |
| Schwyz | 2,153 | 6,268 |
| Obwalden | 641 | 2,429 |
| Nidwalden | 631 | 1,811 |
| Glarus | 3,482 | 2,617 |
| Zug | 2,191 | 2,634 |
| Freiburg | 5,662 | 18,731 |
| Solothurn | 13,012 | 9,230 |
| Basel-Stadt | 11,640 | 6,694 |
| Basel-Land | 8,972 | 4,371 |
| Schaffhausen | 8,009 | 3,778 |
| Appenzell A.-Rh. | 5,607 | 3,645 |
| Appenzell J.-Rh. | 396 | 1,642 |
| St. Gallen | 25,723 | 29,519 |
| Graubünden | 9,487 | 10,178 |
| Aargau | 32,314 | 26,914 |
| Thurgau | 16,786 | 10,207 |
| Tessin | 6,642 | 8,680 |
| Vaudt | 26,015 | 57,419 |
| Wallis | 5,322 | 12,039 |
| Neuenburg | 6,470 | 8,061 |
| Genf | 7,730 | 13,074 |

Total 357,815 310,279

SWISS NEUTRALITY.

The recent assurances by the German and Italian Governments to respect the neutrality of Switzerland have caused much satisfaction in Switzerland. Since last year the Swiss Federal Government have striven to return to their traditional policy of complete neutrality, and a first step was reached when the League of Nations Council accepted Switzerland's resolution no longer to co-operate in sanctions.

While remaining a member of the League Switzerland recovered her complete neutrality in the eyes of the States members. It was not sufficient, however, that Swiss neutrality should be acknowledged only by the Powers represented at Geneva; its recognition by the two immediate neighbours of Switzerland who are no longer League members was also necessary. Public opinion is satisfied to find in the German Note a confirmation of pledges given in March, 1937, by Herr Hitler himself in his interview with the former Federal Councillor, Herr Schulthess.

Switzerland cannot disregard the attitude of her northern and southern neighbours, as it shows that the policy of complete neutrality attitude of her northern and southern neighbours, as it shows that the policy of complete neutrality is regarded by the Powers now, as in 1815, as in the interest of Western European States, and further constitutes an important asset to the cause of peace in Europe.

ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION IN 1939.

An International Advertising Convention is being planned to take place in the Spring of 1939, in Zurich.

This will coincide with the Exhibition, for which preparations are now well advanced.

SWISS MARKET FOR U.S. INDUSTRIALS.

It is reported from Zurich that, in order to enlarge the scope of the Swiss financial market, the question of introducing suitable foreign securities has been under consideration for some time.

As a result of the recommendations made by the authorities, several American shares will shortly be introduced on the Swiss Bourses — namely, Kennecott Copper, International Nickel, Montgomery Ward and General Electric.

It may be recalled that two leading American Railway shares (Pennsylvania and Baltimore and Ohio) are already listed on the Zurich Bourse.

LUCERNE MUSIC FESTIVAL.

Toscanini is to conduct a gala concert in the grounds of Wagner's house at Tribschen during the International Music Festival at Lucerne. The festival opens on Monday, July 25th; the Toscanini concert, at which the principal item of the programme will be Wagner's "Siegfried Idyll," will be given on Thursday, August 25th; and Bruno Walter will conduct a concert in the Congress Hall on Monday, August 29th. From the middle of July to the end of August an international music exhibition will be held in the Old Town Hall at Lucerne. Original scores, autographs, letters, and portraits of composers from the sixteenth century to the present day will be shown.

SWISS BANK MERGER.

Leu and Co.'s Bank, one of Switzerland's "Big Seven," of Zurich, has taken over the assets and liabilities of the Zurich banking firm of Brettauer and Co.

The Leu bank has a capital of 25,866,300 francs.

ROYAL VISIT IN LUCERNE.

Queen Wilhelmine of Holland has arrived in Lucerne, where she intends to make an extended stay.

RETIREMENT OF DIRECTOR, DR. GIORGIO.

The Federal Council has accepted the resignation of Dr. H. Giorgio, "Direktor des Bundesamtes für Sozialversicherung" for reasons of health.

Dr. Giorgio held this important post since 1922, when he succeeded the late Dr. Rüfenacht; during the tenure of this important office, Dr. Giorgio has rendered great services to our country, and his resignation at the early age of 52 is universally deplored.

As his successor is mentioned: National Councillor Saxer.

NEW DIRECTORS OF THE SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS.

M. Eduard von Steiger, advocate in Berne and a prominent member of the "Bauern, Gewerbe und Bürgerpartei" has been elected a member of the Board of the Swiss Federal Railways. Dr. E. Branger, a former "Landammann" of Davos, has also joined the Board of the S.F.R. administration.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Dr. Karl Hafner, President of the cantonal government, has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary. Dr. Hafner entered the cantonal government in 1929.

LUCERNE.

Two climbers from Lucerne fell while ascending the "Kingspitze." Mr. Zuber was seriously injured, whilst Mr. Hodler, an officer of the Swiss Air Force, was killed.