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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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## HOME NEWS

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### FEDERAL.

#### TRADE OF SWITZERLAND.

Swiss foreign trade, which since the end of May had shown a declining tendency, again improved during the third quarter of the year, though the figures remained somewhat inferior to the corresponding period of 1937.

	1938	1937
Imports:	Francs	Francs
First Quarter	399,920,657	454,911,769
Second Quarter	381,484,374	474,805,796
Third Quarter	397,391,531	419,131,006
Nine months	1,178,796,562	1,348,848,571

Exports:	1938	1937
First Quarter	306,259,582	264,099,456
Second Quarter	312,172,470	314,822,997
Third Quarter	313,833,204	338,297,764
Nine months	932,265,256	917,220,217

Trade with the five chief countries for the nine months was as follows (in francs):—

	1938	1937
Imports from—		
Germany	272,800,000	298,900,000
France	160,600,000	178,400,000
U.S.A.	92,100,000	89,100,000
Italy	81,900,000	86,200,000
Great Britain	70,200,000	87,400,000
Exports to—		
Germany	147,400,000	142,900,000
Great Britain	104,300,000	103,400,000
France	86,800,000	105,400,000
Italy	65,200,000	66,100,000
U.S.A.	61,000,000	71,400,000

The number of unemployed, which was 95,722 in January, reached its lowest level in June at 48,658, and then slightly rose. It was 49,606 in August, which is 2,200 less than in August, 1937, and 30,000 less than in August, 1936.

### ST. MORITZ CHOSEN FOR OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES 1940.

St. Moritz has been chosen as scene of the Olympic Winter Games 1940! This good news was broadcast all over the world after the international Olympic Committee, at a recent meeting in Brussels, made this all important decision. The fascinating Swiss wintersport capital was hostess to the Olympic winter games 1928, with its lofty, yet convenient location and its excellent organization for such an event as deciding factors. Nowadays, with still more improved connections, St. Moritz can be reached within 24 hours by train from any European capital, or within six hours by air, Europe's loftiest airport being as Samaden-near-St. Moritz.

Many big events have been planned for the 1938-39 season in this sparkling resort. Ski-jumping contests on the famed Olympia Leap are to be held on December 26th, January 15th and 28th, and February 12th. The annual International Horse Races on the frozen lake are scheduled for January 29th, February 2nd and 5th. The Boblet Grand Prix is set for February 4th-5th and the Boblet World Championship for February 8th-9th. Among a bewildering multitude of other sports attractions will be Ice Hockey Tournaments; Ice Festivals; Races on the breath-taking Cresta Run; Ski Races, etc.

### U.S.A. AIRPLANES FOR SWITZERLAND.

A Swiss commission consisting of five specialist members of the Air Force has left for the U.S.A. to study the progress of American aviation, and to prepare for the purchase of aircraft for the Swiss Army.

## SWISS CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY.

New stamps of the denominations of 3f., 5f. and 10f. have just been placed on sale in Switzerland. The 3f. depicts the scene at the making of the first federal pact in 1291. The 5f. shows the monk, Nicholas von der Flie, intervening at the Diet of Stans in 1481, to preserve the Swiss Federation from disruption. The 10f. brings the story of the Swiss Constitution up to the present day with a picture of Swiss citizens quietly recording their votes.

## FEDERAL SHOOTING COMPETITION IN LUCERNE.

The Federal Shooting Festival which will be held at Lucerne from June 16th-July 3rd, 1939, will, for the first time in its history, be combined with an international shooting match. Aside from the Swiss National Exposition at Zurich, from May 6th-October 29th, 1939, this will be one of the outstanding Swiss summer season events.

Rifle shooting is a national sport in Switzerland, with Inter-communal, Cantonal and Federal matches tending to keep up a high standard in marksmanship. The first Federal Shooting Match dates back to 1824 and since then the festival has steadily gained in importance. It is held in a different place every five years, all notable cities in the Confederation having been the scene of this event at one time or another, some of them more than once. This movable nature of the gathering tends to give spirit to the fete, each hostess viewing with her predecessor in the heartiness and splendour of her welcome to competitors and visitors.

## NAZI AGENTS IN SWISS VILLAGES.

A National Socialist propaganda organisation of dangerous proportions has been discovered by Swiss Police in Eastern Switzerland.

Towns and villages near St. Gall have been deluged with Nazi propaganda, and many thousands of copies of two newspapers, called "Schweizer Volk" — "Swiss People" — and "Der Schweizer Degen" — "The Swiss Dagger" — which openly proclaim a policy of fidelity to "National Socialist World Outlook," have been distributed free.

At Nesslau four Nazi agents were found distributing the newspapers from a motor-car. One thousand copies were seized and the four occupants arrested. They threatened at the prison to go on hunger strike.

## WINNER OF THE 1938 GORDON-BENNETT BALLOON RACE.

It is officially stated that this year's Gordon-Bennett Balloon race, was won by the Polish balloon "L.O.P.P." piloted by Messrs. Janusz and Janik. They covered 1,692 km. in 37 hours and 47 minutes.

Poland thus wins this competition for the fourth time in succession and the cup becomes the perpetual property of the Aero Club of Poland, in addition the winning pilots receive a sum of 25,000 frs.

Here are the official results:

Balloon.	Country.	Pilot.	Time.	Km.
1. L.O.P.P.	Poland.	Janusz,	37:47,	1692.
2. S.I.I.	Belgium.	Thonnard,	33:55,	1463.
3. Warsawa II.	Poland.	Krzykowski,	33:33,	1444.
4. Maurice Mallet,	France.	Dollfus,	33:25,	1406.
5. Polonia II.	Poland.	Koblański,	33:45,	1369.
6. Belgica,	Belgium.	Demuyter,	31:35,	1336.
7. Wallonie,	Belgium.	Quersin,	30:00,	1026.
8. Flandre,	France.	Crombez,	23:50,	905.
9. Zurich,	Switzerland.	Tilgenkampf,	24:50,	841.

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## SWISS DEFENCE SCHEME.

The Central Committee of the Swiss Radical Party has addressed an appeal to the other parties to introduce a common motion at the next parliamentary session, requesting the Government to put forward, as soon as possible, an extensive scheme for the improvement of national defence.

To finance the scheme a 1 per cent. tax on all monetary property is proposed.

The principal suggestions are that the period of military service shall be extended, and that fortifications and aviation shall be developed.

## SWISS ARREST NAZI SPIES.

There have been many arrests in the past few days of Swiss and Germans accused of espionage for Germany.

## SWISS EXHIBITORS' MOVE TO RESTRICT CINEMA BUILDING.

Swiss statistics show that the number of cinema seats compared with the population is greater than that of other countries.

In Geneva there are 10,000 places for a population of 120,000 as compared with 15 places for 1,000 in Paris, respectively 12 and 66 people per seat.

The various cinematographic associations throughout the country have requested the newly constituted Film Chamber to appeal to the Federal Government to refuse permission for the construction of additional cinemas. At the same time the three renting associations have decided that films will only be rented to present members of the Directors' Association.

## DUTCH-SWISS CREDIT TO ARGENTINA.

The Dutch-Swiss bankers' credit to Argentina, granted on 6th May in the form of Three and a Half per Cent. three months Treasury bills, will be extended until 6th February.

The credit granted to the Argentine Government amounted to about £3,209,000, the Dutch portion being £1,389,000 and the Swiss share £1,820,000. As previously announced, the bills may be renewed seven times.

## SWISS PASSES CLOSED BY SNOW.

Snow has fallen in abundance on the mountains above the 4,000ft. level, and the roads over the passes are closed to vehicles. Small snowfalls are reported from La Chaux de Fonds and Fribourg at the height, respectively, of 3,200ft. and 2,400ft.

## NEW YORK EXHIBITION AND SWITZERLAND.

The Federal Council is making a proposal to the Federal Chambers to take part at the Exhibition in New York in 1939. A credit of 1,500,000 frs. will be asked for this purpose.

## NEW "KREISPOST-DIREKTOREN."

Having reached the age limit, the following "Kreis-Post Direktoren" are retiring at the end of the current year: Rudolf Luder in Berne, Eugen Maire in Geneva, Jakob Riniker in Aarau and Jakob Graf in Chur.

They will be replaced by the following: Ernst Schneeburger in Berne, F. Rodel in Geneva, Ernst Aeschbach in Aarau, and G. Schwarz in Chur.

## THE MAERJELLEN LAKE BECOMES NATIONAL RESERVATION.

The Märjelen lake at the foot of the Great Aletsch Glacier in the Valais has been set aside as a national reservation. The lake has somewhat the shape of a triangle and is situated 7,710 feet a.s. The base of the triangle is barred by an ice wall, 183 feet long and 160 feet deep, formed by the Aletsch Glacier. The natural outlet is to the west through the Aletsch Glacier, but when the water exceeds a certain level it has at its east end, the apex of the triangle, an additional outflow to the Fiescher Glacier. Thus the lake has two outlets in opposite directions, but in order to prevent an overflow upon the pastures near the Fiescher Glacier, a tunnel, 700 yards long, is provided by which the surplus water is discharged on the Fiescher Glacier itself.

Striking peculiarity of the Märjelen Lake is that it empties itself at irregular intervals, the same varying from three to seven years, and within the space of a few hours. The bulk of the receding water flows through the Aletsch Glacier to the Massa torrent, a tributary of the river Rhone, at the time often causing floods in the upper Rhone Valley.

In the days before telephones and telegraphs the peasants who first arrived in the Rhone Valley with the news that the lake had disappeared was given a pair of new shoes.

Scientists are of the opinion that the Aletsch Glacier itself is responsible for the lake's actions. Little by little the melting ice raises the level of the lake until at the end of a few years the accumulated water exerts such an enormous pressure upon the sides and bottom of the lake that the basin gradually becomes as porous as a sponge. At some point or other the water begins to escape; then it flows more rapidly, until it pours through the fissures on every side.

To the average tourist the Märjelen lake is principally known for its unique location, its deep-green colour and its floating blocks of ice which shows marvellous colour effects in the sunshine.

#### LOCAL.

##### ZURICH.

M. Ernst Gagliardi, Professor of History at the University of Zurich, has been allotted the "Gottfried Keller Preis."

Professor Gagliardi is one of Switzerland's foremost historians and his work "Geschichte der Schweiz" enjoys an international reputation.

##### BERN.

Late National-Councillor Ernest Daucourt in Porrentruy, has celebrated his 90th birthday.

##### LUCERNE.

The death is reported from Lucerne, of M. Joseph Troxler, "Stiftsprobst" in Beromünster. The deceased was for a great number of years Headmaster at the "Mittelschule" in Beromünster. He reached the age of 63.

##### FRIBOURG.

The government of the canton of Fribourg has acquired the historic castle of Gruyères from the family Balland of Geneva for a sum of 150,000 frs.

Dr. Beck, since 1891 Professor of theology at the University in Fribourg has celebrated his 80th birthday.

##### SCHAFFHAUSEN.

Dr. Gustav Schoch has been elected a member of the cantonal government.

##### ST. GALL.

The government of the canton of St. Gall has elected Dr. Bruno Pfister a member of the National Council. Dr. Pfister, who is 49 years of age, sat in Parliament before (1925-1935). He was until recently Vice-President of the "Kaufmännischen Direktoriums" in St. Gall, at present he holds the post of General Secretary of the Swiss Millers Association.

##### GRISONI.

Dr. Arnold Saxe, who has recently been appointed Director of the Federal Insurance Office, has resigned from the cantonal government, he has also vacated his seats in the National Council and the Grand Council.

##### ORGANISATION.

Recent excavations on the plateau of Cresta in the Grisons valley of Lugnez, have established that this district was inhabited in the 11th or 10th century before Christ and that descendants of these primitive settlers occupied these parts for approximately four centuries, when their homes became the prey of invaders or fire.

Among the prehistoric finds unearthed at Cresta are bronzes and many remarkable ceramics. The latter are considered exceptional for their size and adornments. Traces of barley, wheat and beans have also been discovered and bones dug out reveal that bears, ibex, deer, chamois, wildcats and marmots formed the wild beasts group, while sheep, goats, cows and pigs were the domestic animals. The homes, it has been found, were a forerunner of the present alpine huts, and no special shelters were provided for the livestock.

##### AARAU.

M. J. Bisang, for over twenty years a member of the Municipal Council of Baden and the Grand Council, has died in Baden at the age of 53.

##### TICINO.

The "Instituto Elvetico" in Lugano, formerly known as the "Landriani" has celebrated the 100th anniversary of its foundation. States Councillor Celio, Mayor of Lugano, and a large number of former students attended the festivities held in Lugano.

#### VAUD.

The death has occurred in Lausanne of M. Constant Butticeaz, from 1888-1896 Manager of the Municipal Electricity Works in Geneva, at the age of 80. M. Butticeaz built the Chêvres Works as well as the Coulonvenière bridge.

#### EXPOSITION NATIONALE SUISSE 1939 ZURICH.

*Un petit peuple — Une grande Exposition.*

Pour la Suisse, petite nation de 4½ millions d'habitants, une Exposition Nationale est un événement d'une haute signification. Ne se renouvelant que tous les quarts de siècle, elle est en quelque sorte le baromètre de l'économie suisse, puisqu'elle enregistre, tous les 25 ans, les progrès réalisés par l'industrie, le commerce et les métiers, le développement des arts et des sciences, l'évolution du niveau intellectuel et des possibilités d'instruction. Elle fait également fonction de microscope à travers lequel ses visiteurs voudront jeter un regard curieux sur tout ce qui intéresse notre pays : ses industries, ses paysages, les réalisations parfois gigantesques de ses populations, son art de bâtir, ses fêtes locales et folkloristiques, ses projets grandioses d'hydrographie et de colonisation intérieure — en bref, tous ses efforts vers un idéal d'équité sociale et de prospérité matérielle et spirituelle.

Le peuple suisse, dont l'exportation est une des principales ressources, et qui ne peut lutter contre la concurrence étrangère que par la qualité irréprochable de ses produits, se doit de prouver à intervalles réguliers, à ses voisins et à lui-même, les perfectionnements qu'il a obtenus dans tous les domaines, grâce à un travail méthodique et consciencieux, à des recherches infatigables et la collaboration effective de toutes les couches de sa population.

L'Exposition Nationale Suisse 1939 présentera d'une façon thématique, homogène, judicieuse et complète la production helvétique, ses réalisations économiques et intellectuelles. Elle sera l'expression du caractère, de la pensée et du travail suisses. A ce titre, elle prouvera qu'un petit peuple, malgré la diversité de ses races, langues et confessions, peut tenir une place honorable parmi les autres nations, grâce à sa volonté inébranlable et sa solidarité à toute épreuve.

Armin MEILE, Architecte  
Directeur de l'Exposition Nationale  
Suisse 1939 Zurich.

#### SITUATION.

*Une exposition dans un parc.*

Les expositions internationales et manifestations analogues de ces dernières années ont apporté un soin tout spécial dans le choix de leur cadre. C'est ainsi que l'on a vu naître des villes de pavillons au cœur d'une métropole, au bord d'un fleuve et même de la mer. L'Exposition Nationale Suisse a trouvé, elle, une situation idéale : la ville de Zurich lui a octroyé l'emplacement le plus beau qui soit, sur les bords du plus souriant des lacs, sous les ombrages de vastes parcs aux charmes vêtus et aux bosquets fleuris. Le lac, les arbres, les fleurs — le tout festonné à l'horizon par la frange étincelante des Alpes neigeuses, du Saentis jusqu'aux géants d'Uri. Construite aux portes même de la plus grande ville suisse, l'Exposition Nationale Suisse a trouvé son cadre idéal. On n'en saurait imaginer de plus beau.

#### ORGANISATION.

*Une innovation hardie : le thématisme.*

Une exposition n'est pas forcément une foire, quoique celles de ces dernières années en aient souvent eu l'apparence. L'Exposition Nationale Suisse 1939 ouvre hardiment le chemin aux réalisations nouvelles, en s'écartant définitivement de cette conception qui consiste à entasser dans un ordre plus ou moins parfait, mais sans aucun plan directeur, bien défini, les objets les plus divers. A Zurich, l'Exposition 1939 sera organisée thématique : tous les exposants se mettent, dans leur propre intérêt, au service de leur branche d'activité collective. Quatorze thèmes, dans un enchaînement logique, montreront dans leur cadre naturel et leur fonction dans l'ensemble, la production matérielle et spirituelle de la Suisse. Ce système nouveau, s'il exige une adaption très stricte des exposants à la ligne directrice du thème qui supprime les exposants individuels au profit des collectivités professionnelles, se révèle très attrayant pour le visiteur. Il voit représenté tout ce qui l'intéresse dans un enchaînement logique et naturel. Le thématisme, ainsi compris, est certes une innovation audacieuse dans l'art d'exposer.

**GROSSENBACH**  
**SWISS ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY.**

A report of last Thursday's Concert will appear in our next issue.

#### LES SUISSES A L'ETRANGER REMERCIENT.

Les délégués des colonies suisses du monde entier sont heureux de saisir l'occasion de la Journée des Suisses de l'étranger à Schaffhouse pour exprimer au peuple suisse, à ses autorités et tout spécialement au Comité du 1er août, leur vive reconnaissance pour le magnifique geste accompli le jour de notre fête nationale. La preuve de solidarité donnée ce jour-là par la patrie à ses enfants exilés restera à tout jamais gravée au fond de leur cœur. Ils sauront y répondre par un attachement toujours plus fervent au pays de leurs pères. Quels que soient les dangers qui pourront le menacer, ils sont inébranlablement décidés à le défendre dans toute mesure de leurs forces jusqu'à leur dernier soupir.

#### TO OUR READERS.

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