

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: 848

Rubrik: Home news

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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. 848

LONDON, FEBRUARY 12, 1938

PRICE 3d.

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

UNITED KINGDOM AND COLONIES	3 Months (13 issues, post free)	3/6
	6 Months (26 issues, post free)	6/6
SWITZERLAND	3 Months (13 issues, post free)	12/-
	6 Months (26 issues, post free)	Fr. 7.50

(Swiss subscriptions may be paid into Postcheck-Konto
Basle V 5718).



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.

M. HUGO E. PRAGER APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF THE ZÜRICH "KONGRESSGEBAÜDES."

The "Stiftungsrat" of the "Tonhalle und Kongressgebäude" in Zürich has appointed M. Hugo E. Prager as General Manager for the next five years.

M. Prager was born in Zürich on January 7th, 1880, and after having received his schooling in Zürich he decided to join the Hotel profession.

He started his career in 1897 in Milan, later on he occupied various positions in Paris, London and Brussels. In 1905 he was appointed Banqueting Manager at the Hotel "Astoria" in New York, a post which he held for five years. In 1910 he was entrusted with the Management of the "Suvretta" in St. Moritz, and afterwards had an appointment at Wiesbaden. In 1919 he acquired for himself the Hotel and Restaurant "Carlton-Elite" in Zürich.

We consider that in appointing M. Prager to this important post, the "Stiftungsrat" has appointed the "right man in the right place."

THE SWISS CINEMA.

There are in Switzerland 354 cinemas, with a total seating capacity of 132,000. Statistics show that for every 1,000 inhabitants there is an average of 32 seats; this number varies according to the towns, being 82 at Lausanne, 75 at Geneva, 63 at Lucerne, 59 at Bâle, 49 at Zürich, 38 at St. Gall, 34 at Berne, etc.

In spite of the fact that the popularity of the cinema constantly increases the exhibiting side of the industry is not paying, overbuilding in the past being given as the reason.

During the past few years, however, measures have been taken whereby, as already stated, it is now almost impossible to open a new cinema.

The minimum rental for a film programme is 100 francs (about £5); and no cinema charges less than one franc (about one shilling) for admission.

Every Canton has its own censorship administration and laws, which makes the work of film importers, distributors, and even cinema directors somewhat difficult. This difference of Cantonal judgment also exists in reference to certain taxes imposed on the cinema.

The three languages spoken in the country are: French, German and Italian; and, in view of this fact, the following percentage list of film imports during the past year is somewhat surprising:—

America	53.0
France	19.1
Germany	17.0
Austria	4.6
England	3.8
Italy	1.5
Divers	1.0

Newsreels have in the past been imported exclusively from France and Germany, but owing to certain political tendencies it is to be one of the first efforts of the Swiss Film Chamber to organise the production of a national newsreel.

TOURISTS IN SWITZERLAND.

Over 306,000 motorcyclists and car owners visited Switzerland during 1936, about 16 per cent. more than in the previous year.

SWISS FASCIST CRISIS.

A serious crisis in the Swiss Fascist movement has come to a head with the resignation of Herr Rolf Henne, leader of the National Front.

Herr Henne's subordinates are believed to have disapproved of his too close imitation of the German Nazis. His successor, Dr. Robert

Tobler, is expected to follow a more independent line and develop a more "Swiss" brand of Fascism.

Since he assumed the leadership, Dr. Tobler has declared that the principles on which the Swiss Confederation is based are "democracy, Federalism, neutrality, and religious peace." At the same time, however, he intends to continue Herr Henne's anti-Semitic policy by presenting a petition against the Swiss Jews.

The National Front, which in 1933 hoped soon to win power in Switzerland, according to Herr Henne himself, has declined steadily in membership and influence since 1934.

The only gains have been made by another Fascist body, the Union Nationale, in Geneva, where the first Socialist Government of the Canton, headed by M. Leon Nicole, was accused of Communist tendencies.

Under Herr Henne's leadership, not only were the ideals propagated by the National Front indistinguishable from those of Nazism, but its relations with German semi-official organisations were stated to be close. Documents were published to prove that these organisations had provided the Frontists with money and inspired their petition demanding the suppression of Freemasonry.

SWISS BANK CORPORATION.

The report for 1937 shows a net profit of Fr. 51,798,340, compared with Fr. 52,021,449 in 1936. The directors propose to pay a dividend of 5 per cent. (same) and to carry forward Fr. 1,574,184. Cash, as shown in the balance-sheet, amounts to Fr. 368,824,512 (against Fr. 310,665,161), while total assets are Fr. 1,512,755,363 (against Fr. 1,389,041,967). On the liabilities side current deposits were Fr. 97,678,219 (against Fr. 96,321,310) and long deposits Fr. 150,233,250 (against Fr. 143,772,850).

R.A.F. OFFICER KILLED BY AVALANCHE.

Pilot Officer John Millington Holden, R.A.F., was killed in a skiing accident near Pontresina. He and his brother, Mr. H. R. Holden, left Muottas Muragl, above Pontresina, with a view to making the descent along the Muragl valley. They started shortly after 1 o'clock, which was too early on account of the heat, and, not knowing the way, they passed along a steep snow slope where nobody goes in winter. They detached an avalanche and were swept down a distance of 500ft. Mr. H. R. Holden was thrown out of the avalanche by the pressure of the snow, and escaped unhurt.

The accident had been witnessed from Muottas Muragl, whence a search party set out at once. Pilot Officer Holden was dragged out and artificial respiration tried for two hours, without result. A doctor was summoned from Pontresina, but his efforts were in vain.

NEW SWISS LEGATION IN PARIS.

The Federal Council will shortly put a motion before Parliament, asking for the necessary credit for the erection of a new building for the Swiss Legation in Paris.

The present quarters at the Avenue Hoche being inadequate to house the increasing staff.

HEAVY LOCOMOTIVES FOR SWITZERLAND.

The Swiss Federal Railways have ordered a third "giant" electric locomotive of the Ae 8/14 class, having eight driving and fourteen carrying wheels. The two "giant" locomotives at present engaged in heavy express and goods train working on the Gotthard line each covered 100,000 miles per annum in 1936 and 1937, engine-miles run being the highest on record for Switzerland. Orders have also been placed for a high-speed electric railcar unit capable of 95 m.p.h. and two diesel-electric railcars giving a maximum speed of 63 m.p.h.

SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS.

Operating revenue of the Swiss Federal Railways for December, 1937, was £1,440,000, or £52,000 higher than in December, 1936. Passengers carried (10,950,000) increased by 1,037,000 and, at £542,000, yielded an increase of £51,600. Goods traffic in the same month declined by 66,000 tons and £47,000 in receipts. Working expenditure increased by £37,400, giving a net revenue of £14,600. For the whole of 1937 net revenue is estimated at £6,190,000, or £2,270,000 more than in 1936.

SWISS MILITARY MACHINE CRASH.

A military aeroplane crashed near Kirchberg (Berne), the two occupants, Lieutenants Huber and Zuber, received serious injuries, but fortunately they are out of danger; the machine, however, has been completely destroyed.

SWISS BANK DIVIDENDS.

The following bank dividends for 1937 have been declared:

Spar & Kreditkasse Suhrental in Schöffland, 5½ per cent. (1936: 5½%); Spar & Leihkasse Zurzach 5½ per cent. (1936: 5½%); Spar & Leihkasse Kaltbrunn 5½ per cent. (1936: 5½%); Aargauische Hypothekenbank, Brugg, 5 per cent. (1936: 5½%); Hypothekbank in Winterthur, 6 per cent. (1936: 6%); Obwaldner Gewerbebank 5 per cent. (1936: 5%); Volksbank Beromünster 4½ per cent. (1936: 4%); Crédit Yverdonnois, Yverdon 6 per cent. (1936: 6%).

LOCAL.

ZÜRICH.

National-Councillor, M. Philipp Schmid-Ruedlin, General-Secretary of the "Schweizerischen Kaufmännischen Vereins," has celebrated his 20th service anniversary. Born in humble circumstances, M. Schmid-Ruedlin, through sheer hard work and an untiring energy, succeeded in making a name for himself amongst the Swiss commercial community. Both as General Secretary of the "Schweiz. Kaufm. Vereins" and as a Member of Parliament, he has rendered great services to our country. We extend heartfelt congratulations to M. Schmid-Ruedlin, who is no stranger to the Swiss Colony in London, having on several occasions attended functions of the London Section of the S.K.V.

BERNE.

The population of the town of Berne at the end of 1937, numbered 120,933 inhabitants.

SOLOTHURN.

M. Albert Mägis, from 1888-1920, Manager of the Cantonal Bank Solothurn, has celebrated his 90th birthday anniversary.

BASEL.

Dr. Fritz Egger, from 1905-1933, Professor of Medicine at the University of Basle, has celebrated his 75th birthday anniversary.

ST. GALL.

M. Ernest Löpfe-Benz, States-Councillor, and Publisher of the "Nebelspalter," has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary. M. Löpfe-Benz has for a great number of years played an important part in the political life of the canton of St. Gall.

AARGAU.

The death has occurred in Aarau, of M. Carl Sprecher-Sigrist, the founder of the firm Sprecher & Schuh, at the age of 70.

TICINO.

Heavy forest fires occurred at the "Monte Bré" near Lugano.

M. Arthur Weissenbach, examining magistrate for the "Sottoceneri," has died in Lugano at the age of 53.

CHARLES, ALFRED BARBEZAT †.

We deeply regret to inform our readers of the passing away in Switzerland, where he attended the funeral of his father, of M. C. A. Barbezat, of 57, Southway, Carshalton, Surrey.

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, February 12th, at 11 o'clock at the "Eglise Suisse," 79, Endell Street, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2. The interment will take place at All Saint's Church, Banstead, at 2 p.m.

An obituary notice will appear in the next issue of the Swiss Observer.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Please reserve

SATURDAY, MARCH 12th, 1938.

for the

DINNER AND DANCE

at the

MAYFAIR HOTEL, Berkeley Square, W.1.