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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

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### FEDERAL.

#### SWISS RAILWAYS 3% LOAN.

Subscription lists for the Swiss Federal Railways Three per Cent. loan at par are now open and close on 16th March.

The loan, which is for Frs.400,000,000 (about £18,520,000 at current rates), is for conversion of certain Federal Railways 3½ per cent. loans. Redemption will begin after ten years by 25 annuities.

#### SWISS NEUTRALITY.

After discussing the report on the work of the last League of Nations Assembly, the Committee for Foreign Affairs of the National Council (Second Chamber) of the Swiss Parliament, adopted a resolution to the effect that it was indispensable for Switzerland to revert to the status of complete neutrality.

#### INCREASED RHINE TRAFFIC.

In 1937 some 2,960,265 tons of goods passed through the Swiss port of Basle, which was a new record and 30 per cent. more than in 1936. Exports amounted to 219,025 tons, or 7.4 per cent. of the total traffic, compared with 4.9 per cent. in 1936 and 3.1 per cent. in 1935. Owing to improvements made in the bed of the Rhine, the river waterway is now more used than the Rhone-Rhine canal, which carried 77 per cent. of the traffic in 1932, 42.5 per cent. in 1936 and 34.5 per cent. in 1937. The Rhine brings coal to Switzerland from England, France, Poland (via Danzig) and the Ruhr, sugar from Czechoslovakia, and wheat from Hungary and Eastern Europe.

The Swiss fleet, no longer a joke, consists of 1,306 one-thousand ton barges and a number of tugs. The lack of space for these ships made it necessary to build new dock basins, and a new port is being constructed at Birsfelden, near Basle. Some 41 million francs have been invested in the port of Basle and its equipment, and it is estimated that the import of goods through Basle represents a saving of 15 to 20 million francs annually on freight.

The devaluation of the Swiss currency caused a revival in the tourist industry. During the past year, the 5,500 hotels of Switzerland received 3,508,000 guests, of whom 1,600,000 came from abroad, compared with 2,952,000 and 1,156,000 in 1936. Some 300,000 foreign motor cars entered Switzerland in 1937, against 144,000 in 1936. The increase in tourism was in part responsible for the improved earnings of the Federal Railways.

#### GERMANS IN SWITZERLAND.

During investigations in towns in the frontier canton of Aargau into a case of attempted enticement by German agents the Swiss Federal police have obtained evidence pointing to widespread activities infringing the Swiss laws for the defence of the realm.

Residences have been searched and much documentary material seized. Arrests are expected.

#### BASLE FAIR.

Dr. Baumann, President of the Swiss Confederation will be the official representative of the Swiss Government at the opening of the Basle Fair.

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

The University of Zurich has conferred the degree of *doctor honoris causa* on States Councilor Dr. Wettstein.

The firm of Joh. Jakob Rieter and Co. A.G., in Winterthur, has made a donation amounting to 375,000 frs. to various funds in connection with their staff.

### BERNE.

The late colonel-of-division, Wilhelm Schmid, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary in Berne.

Colonel Schmid entered the Federal Instruction Corps in 1893 after having attained the rank of major. In 1909 he was promoted to colonel-of-division and at the same time to chief-of-arms of artillery (Waffenchef). In 1913 he succeeded Colonel Audéoud, as commander of the 4th division, a command which he held until 1918. On reaching the age of 60, he retired from the army. Colonel-of-division Schmid was one of the most popular leaders the Swiss army has had, and during his long and successful career, he has rendered great services to our country.

M. Cuno Amiet, the well-known Swiss painter has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary at Oschwand (Ct. Berne), a great number of his paintings can be found in Swiss Art Galleries.

Dr. F. de Quervain, Professor of surgery and Director of the surgical clinic at the University of Berne, has retired from his post on reaching the age limit.

Dr. Hermann Matti has been appointed as his successor.

Colonel Friedrich Mezener, "Kriegsmaterial-Verwalter," has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary, he has been in the service of the Federal Military Administration for the last 48 years. During the Frontier occupation, he was in the command of a "Luzerner" regiment.

On the occasion of the 70th birthday anniversary of Dr. E. Schulthess, late Federal Councillor, a banquet was held at the Bellevue-Palace in Berne, amongst the guests were M. Baumann, President of the Swiss Confederation, Federal Councillor Motta, M. Mangold, rector of the University in Basle, M. Porchet, member of the government of the canton of Vaud, etc.

### LUCERNE.

M. Anton Erni, late member of the government of the canton of Lucerne, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary.

Dr. Jos. Jakob Zimmerli, Town-President of Lucerne, has recently celebrated his 75th birthday anniversary. Dr. Zimmerli was from 1919-1935 a member of Parliament (National Council).

### GRISONS.

Messrs. Lardelli (Democrat) and Willi (Conservative) have been re-elected as States Councillors.

### SOLOTHURN.

At the age of 60, died in Solothurn, Dr. Hugo Spillmann, from 1904-1911 a member of the Superior Court of the canton of Solothurn. The deceased was for several years a member of the "Kantonsrat."

### THURGAU.

The oldest inhabitant of the canton of Thurgau, M. Jakob Herzog, from Märwil, has celebrated his 100th birthday anniversary.

### VAUD.

Doctor Bruno Galli-Valerio, for 40 years Professor of medicine at the University of Lausanne, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. Professor Galli is now retiring from his post.

### TICINO.

M. Gaspare Gatti, in Dongio, member of the cantonal Appeal Court, has been appointed Federal examination Judge in succession to the late M. Arturo Weissenbach.

### GENEVA.

The Archaeological Society, in Geneva, has celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of its existence.

## LA POLITIQUE.

### Les élections de Vaud et de Fribourg.

Le dimanche politique a été favorable aux partis nationaux, dans la Suisse romande.

Le canton de Vaud avait à élire son Conseil d'Etat. Comme nos lecteurs le savent, tandis que les partis radical et libéral présentaient une liste commune, avec cinq candidats radicaux (tous sortant de charge) et deux libéraux (dont un nouveau, M. Vodoz, succédant à M. Baup), agrariens et socialistes avaient cimenté une alliance que l'on s'accordait à juger étrange, dans les milieux où l'on pense que la tactique électorale ne saurait

faire litière de quelques principes essentiels.

Poussé par son mauvais génie, le colonel Roulet, ancien commandant d'une brigade de cavalerie, patriote authentique, Vandois de vieille roche, acceptait d'accueillir son nom à ceux de deux adversaires avérés de la défense nationale, M. Paul Golay, rédacteur du "Droit du peuple," et le Dr. Gloor, ancien syndic de Renens, tous deux députés au Conseil national, tous deux contempteurs acharnés de l'armée. Pareil alliage n'a rien dit qui vaille à nos voisins. Le paysan vandois est profondément attaché à la cause que représentent nos milices de citoyens soldats, et quels que puissent être, aujourd'hui, ses sujets de mécontentement, il n'admet pas que l'on se dise à la fois blanc et noir, que l'on veuille concilier les contraires, simplement pour prendre sa part du gâteau gouvernemental.

Le bizarre pacte signé entre les "rouges" et les "violets" a sans doute été préjudiciable aux uns comme aux autres. C'est dans la logique des choses. Le Conseil d'Etat vandois, qui a toujours donné l'exemple, par son souci de l'intérêt public, par son esprit progressiste et par son sens de l'autorité, tempéré d'une grande bienveillance, reçoit du corps électoral le témoignage de confiance qu'il méritait incontestablement. Ceux qui se sont imaginés qu'à la faveur de circonstances difficiles ils bouleverseraient aisément la majorité en seront pour leurs frais de propagande et de... diplomatie. A Missy, dans la solitude agreste où fleurit son doux génie, M. le colonel pourra méditer la jolie fable *Le renard, le singe et les animaux*, qui se trouve au livre VI de La Fontaine...

Dans le canton de Fribourg, les électeurs avaient à élire leurs conseils communaux et — dans les localités d'une certaine importance — leurs Conseils généraux.

Plusieurs de ces scrutins se faisant selon le mode proportionnel, qui, on le sait de reste, complique énormément les opérations, nous ne saurions commenter tous les résultats.

Mais, des renseignements que l'on possède à l'heure où nous écrivons, il ressort que dans la ville de Fribourg les conservateurs ont maintenu leurs positions, tandis que les radicaux ont gagné un siège, pris aux socialistes. Cela, pour le conseil communal (administratif) du chef-lieu, où, depuis 1934, il y avait six conservateurs, deux socialistes et un radical. Aux précédentes élections, un siège radical avait passé aux conservateurs. On eût pu supposer que ce siège là serait regagné cette fois par les radicaux; or la victoire de ceux-ci se réalise au détriment de l'extrême-gauche.

Du point de vue fédéral, il suffit de comparer ce qui s'est passé dans les cantons de Vaud et de Fribourg avec ce que l'on a enregistré précédemment à Bâle et ailleurs, pour se déclarer content de cette bonne vieille Suisse romande à laquelle les angures d'outre-Sarine font volontiers la leçon, mais qui se comporte assez bien, en somme, et se défend toute seule.

Léon Savary.

(Tribune de Genève.)

## POLYTECHNIC TOURS REUNION.

The Annual Polytechnic Reunion took place last Saturday at the Albert Hall before a densely packed audience.

This Reunion, which from year to year gets more popular, was celebrating this year its golden jubilee. Sir Kynaston Studd was in the Chair, amongst the guests were the Swiss

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