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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Thanks to satisfactory imports and to the official wish to stimulate a merry Xmas a welcome increase in the December food rations has been announced. This refers especially to farinaceous foods and sugar, the quota for the latter being 2,000 grammes against 1,500 in November.

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The index figure of living costs shows the comparatively small increase of 2.5% as compared with October 1938; it is mainly due to higher prices for meat and fats.

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Swiss exports continue to show a marked decline which for October was 39 million francs as compared with the same month last year; the total of 94 million francs represents about 55% of the imports for the same period. For the nine months to October last imports amounted to 1,438 millions (1,324 in 1938) and exports to 1,059 million francs (1,666 in 1938). Increased exports are recorded to the United States of America, Russia, Spain and Belgium.

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That the suzerainty of the cantons can at times traverse the dispositions of the Federal government is shown by a decision of the Regierungsrat of Baselland. Two members were elected to the National Council but the cantonal constitution allows only one member of the local body to go to Berne. The lot was drawn and Hilfiker (Soc.) had to retire in favour of Dr. Gschwind (Cath.). — In St. Gall, Otto Pfändler will have to desert his newly acquired fauteuil in the National Council unless he prefers to resign his present appointment as teacher at the local elementary school.

* * *

Some consternation in Fribourg political circles was caused when a scrutiny of the election figures for the National Council brought to light that contrary to results published originally the former National and Federal Councillor J. M. Musy had failed to secure the requisite majority.

* * *

In St. Gall four members of the Regierungsrat have been elected National Councillors and as during their obedient absence the necessary quorum is also

missing, a proposal is being formulated to the effect that two members only may journey to Berne in future.

* * *

In the elections for the Grand Conseil in Geneva the socialists lost five of their former 40 seats; the old "Nicole" party secured 28 mandates and the recently created "Rosselet" section seven. The Conseil consists of a hundred members. Since 1933 the socialists have suffered a gradual reduction in favour of the radicals.

* * *

Geological indications in certain districts (in Aargau and Vaud) have encouraged the belief in the existence of deposits or wells containing mineral oils. Borings have so far not justified the expectations. It is now stated that the research station at Cuarny near Yverdon which was built in spring 1936 and financed by a Dutch syndicate is being dismantled; drilling under considerable difficulties at a depth of 1,600 metres did not encourage the explorers to proceed further. It was originally intended to go down to 2,500 metres.

* * *

The circulation in Switzerland of offensive pamphlets attacking our government and especially M. Motta has led to the discovery of several secret movements directed from abroad. One of these spurious groups has been traced to Stuttgart whose leader is one named Leonhardt, who, along with others took refuge abroad when proceedings for a similar charge were instituted some time ago. Masquerading under the name "Swiss Society for Authoritarian Democracy" adherents were found in Switzerland, ten of the latter have been arrested but only five are being detained. The Federal prosecutor has transmitted the matter to the cantonal authorities of Baselstadt for investigation. Another group is said to operate from Lörrach.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu Mardi le 5 Décembre à 5.30 h. précises au Restaurant PAGANI 42, Great Portland Street, W.1.

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.

Démissions.

Admissions.

Divers.

Le souper est facultatif et les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Monsieur P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Téléphone: Clerkenwell 2321/2). Le Comité

The "Association des Intérêts de Genève" is already taking steps to approach the Federal Council for holding the next National Exhibition in their city. It will be held in 1964 and it is to be hoped that the application will be in time.

* * *

A sensational victory of three goals to one has been scored by the Swiss national team against the Italian football champions, who for the last four years have remained unbeaten. General Guisan witnessed the match and shook hands with each of the players.

* * *

In the new Pro Juventute stamps which will be on sale after December 1st the previous series of cantonal peasant dresses will be continued, i.e., 10 cts. Fribourg, 20 cts. Nidwalden, and 30 cts. Baselstadt. The 5 cts. stamp shows a portrait of General Hans Herzog, as a tribute to the masterly manner in which he organised national defence during the 1870/71 crisis.

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Two steamers which have been chartered from a Greek company are at present somewhere in the Atlantic flying the Swiss flag and making for an Italian port; they are carrying cereals. It is stated that altogether nine Greek steamers of from 4,000 to 10,000 tons will be transporting under the Swiss flag goods and foodstuffs which will be unloaded at Genoa.

* * *

To the great surprise of the postal authorities at Basle a postal bag was delivered from the Frankfurt express containing about 2,000 letters from England and overseas; the mail showed the marks of the German censorship. No explanation is so far available but it is surmised that the occurrence is due either to a mistake of a Dutch or Belgian railway official in loading the bag into a German train, or to war action.

* * *

Nearly 28 million letters and parcels passed through the military field post during September and October.

* * *

Dr. Oscar Bernard died in St. Moritz at the age of 78. He enjoyed an international reputation, having been honoured by several foreign universities. Some of the members of our Colony may remember him; he and some colleagues were entertained by the City Swiss Club during the last war when they were in charge of the selection of badly wounded war prisoners for transport to Switzerland. On that particular evening an air raid was in progress and Dr. Bernhard and the writer of these lines were watching the then rare spectacle from the flat roof of Gatti's Restaurant in the Strand.

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LES MOTIFS DE LA DESAFFECTION DES FRIBOURGEOIS A L'EGARD DE M. MUSY.

Décidément, le sort en est jeté: M. Musy ne siégera pas au Conseil national. Le gouvernement fribourgeois n'a pas voulu désavouer ses vérificateurs; et cela se comprend, puisqu'ils ont appliqué cette fois-ci la même méthode que lors des précédents scrutins, ce pourquoi ils n'ont jamais reçu de reproche ou de monitoire de la chancellerie fédérale. Celle-ci, il est vrai, corrigeait, paraît-il, les résultats de Fribourg, selon la procédure qu'elle tient pour seule authentique; mais elle le faisait sans mot dire. La répartition des sièges se trouvant alors la même, quelle que fût la méthode appliquée, la chose était sans conséquence. Le 29 octobre, la situation s'est modifiée; et le mode de calculer, au lieu de revêtir une importance secondaire, a posé un problème brûlant.

Le Conseil d'Etat de Fribourg aime mieux, semble-t-il, laisser le Conseil national juge. Aucun doute ne saurait subsister maintenant sur la décision de la chambre. Elle s'inspirera de la jurisprudence constante, elle attribuera le septième siège au parti agrarien, et M. Robert Colliard prendra la chaise curule de M. Musy.

L'échec de celui-ci est un événement sensationnel, qui a une profonde répercussion dans tout le pays, à cause de ce que l'ancien magistrat fédéral a représenté naguère.

On se gardera certes de donner à un homme tombé le coup de pied que l'âne de la fable réservait au lion vieilli. Mais on ne laissera pas non plus se répandre la légende selon laquelle M. Musy serait victime de sa propre supériorité et aurait perdu des voix simplement parce que la démocratie préfère les médiocres.

Nous avons eu, et nous avons, en Suisse, des hommes d'une haute valeur intellectuelle et morale, auxquels les électeurs sont demeurés constamment fidèles et qui n'ont jamais été "lâchés" ni lors des scrutins populaires, ni lors des votes de l'Assemblée fédérale. Quand un politicien succombe à cause des graves erreurs, des fautes incompréhensibles qu'il a commises, c'est vraiment trop facile d'accuser la veulerie ou la sottise des citoyens. Qu'on rende hommage aux mérites réels de M. Jean-Marie Musy, c'est juste et convenable. Mais que l'on tienne pour coupa-