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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

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## HOME NEWS

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## FEDERAL.

### M. VALLOTTON IN LONDON.

A declaration of Switzerland's determination to resist all forms of aggression, whether military or in the form of propaganda, was made by M. Henri Vallotton, President of the Swiss National Council, at the House of Commons.

He was delivering an address on Swiss foreign policy to a gathering of representatives of the Cabinet, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons, at the invitation of Capt. Plugge, M.P.

M. Vallotton, one of Switzerland's most eminent politicians, is in London to study British Parliamentary procedure with a view of introducing certain of its aspects to the Swiss Parliament — the Federal Assembly.

"Switzerland has been a neutral country for more than four centuries," he said. "But, faced with a warlike and nervous Europe resembling a great munitions factory under full steam, Switzerland, too, has been obliged to bring her army up to date, to give it efficient arms and to fortify her frontiers.

"The Government and Parliament decided to issue a loan for national defence with a first instalment of 80,000,000 Swiss francs — about £4,000,000 at the current rate. The people forthwith subscribed the whole amount: 320,000,000 francs — £16,000,000.

"This is another proof of the determination of every Swiss to defend his country to the last drop of blood, whoever the aggressor may be."

.. Switzerland endeavours to maintain the best possible relations with all countries, but she is not prepared to bow to the domination of any State. She is determined to remain mistress in her own house and to allow no foreign propaganda on her territory. This is the main reason why, after memorable debates in 1926 and 1936, the Swiss Parliament decided not to resume diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia.

"A passionate lover of liberty Switzerland is fiercely independent and intends to remain Swiss. She refuses to allow foreign ideologies to penetrate her territory.

"We know that in critical times little Switzerland can rely on great England, who has always been her friend. We thank you for it."

### SWISS JOURNALISTS IN ITALY.

M. Motta, Chief of the Political Department of the Federal Council, learnt that the Italian Government have decided to grant an unlimited respite to the three Swiss journalists, one of them the correspondent of the French newspaper *Le Temps*, who were to have been expelled from Italy. The Italian authorities are ready to reconsider the whole affair and eventually to cancel the measure recently taken.

### INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE.

The Federal Council has appointed M. Plinio Bolla, Federal Judge, to be a member of the International Court of Justice at the Hague, in succession to the late Federal Judge, M. Soldati.

## LOCAL.

### ZURICH.

The death has occurred in Zurich of Dr. E. Brunomberger, at the age of 62.

The deceased was for many years connected with the Swiss Press, principally in the cantons of St. Gall and Zurich. In 1924 he was appointed editor-in-chief of the "Neuen Zürcher Nach-

richten," and soon after he was elected a member of the "Grossen Stadtrat," and later on of the "Stadtrat," he had been a member of Parliament (Nat. Council) since 1936.

\* \* \*

Dr. Conrad Bürgi, in Zurich will occupy the seat in the National Council, which has become vacant through the death of Dr. Brunomberger. Dr. Bürgi was born in 1874 and has been a medical practitioner in Zurich for the last 23 years. The new member of Parliament is a member of the "Kantonsrat" since 1931.

### BERNE.

Dr. R. Flatt from Basle has been appointed Professor of Chemistry at the University of Berne. Professor Flatt, is the son of a former rector of the "Obern Realschule" in Basle and since 1934 a lecturer at the University of Basle.

\* \* \*

Mme. Etienne Ducommun, the oldest inhabitant of the town of Berne has died at the age of nearly 101 years.

### SCHWYZ.

The successor of the late Martin Ochsner in the States Council, is Dr. Fritz Stähli, President of the Tribunal in Siebenen, who hitherto sat in the National Council (1928-1939).

His successor in the National Council is M. Clemens Ulrich from Küssnacht a. R.

### ST. GALL.

All the members of the cantonal government, which came up for re-election, have been confirmed in their offices, the result is as follows:

Dr. Karl Kobelt (Liberal) 43,029; J. J. Gabathuler (Liberal) 42,919; Dr. Joseph Riedener (Conservative) 42,108; Dr. Albert Gemperli (Conservative) 42,059; Emil Grünenfelder (Conservative) 41,153; Dr. Adolf Römer (Liberal) 40,893; Valentin Keel (Socialist) 38,861.

### GRISON.

A company of 130 officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the 12th Alpine Battalion, which is exercising in the Pontresina district in the Engadine, ascended recently to Piz Palü (12,835 ft.), on the summit of which the company in war kit was assembled at midday.

### ARGAU.

Dr. Agostino Nizzola has celebrated his 70th birthday. He started his career with the Engineering firm of Brown, Boveri & Co. in Baden. In 1895 he joined the "Motor, A.G." During nearly 50 years Dr. Nizzola has rendered eminent services to the Electrical Industry of our country.

## THE SWISS NATIONAL EXHIBITION AT ZURICH.

A National Exhibition brings to the mind of most people the thought of walking wearily from one building to another, and taking away with them at the close of their visit a rather confused impression of the many interesting things on view.

These drawbacks have been avoided with remarkable success at the Zurich Exhibition, due to the spirit of co-operation shown by the Swiss Exhibitors under the expert leadership of the Exhibition Committee, headed by its Manager, Mr. Meili.

The varied aspects of our country, its industrial and commercial activities, its democratic institutions, schools and army, and also its history and art, will be displayed in such a manner that the visitor will take away with him a lasting and complete impression of what he has seen.

What is more, the Exhibition Buildings are beautifully set out along the tree-lined shore on both sides of the lake, and wherever possible the visitors will be conveyed from one part of the Exhibition to another in punts, following the meanderings of an inland waterway; an unusual and delightful method of transportation in such a place — noiseless, dust free and refreshing.

There will, of course, also be an amusements ground and many refreshing places for a quiet rest. The children too are bound to enjoy the corner prepared especially for them.

The Exhibition, which will open on May 6th — and, by the way, it should be ready in good time — will last until October 29th.

Every Swiss citizen living abroad who can possibly arrange for it, should make a point of seeing the unique representation of our country in miniature, which will be displayed in Zurich during the coming summer.

V. C. Ceresole,  
Manager,  
Swiss State Travel Bureau.

## LA POLITIQUE

### Les retraites des conseillers fédéraux.

Les commissions des finances du Conseil des Etats et du Conseil national s'occupent ces temps-ci d'une révision des dispositions légales en vigueur pour les retraites des conseillers fédéraux. Ce sont elles qui ont pris l'initiative de ce remaniement; celle du Conseil des Etats a élaboré un nouveau projet d'arrêté, que les commissaires du National disent à leur tour.

En 1920, un arrêté fédéral avait réglé la question des pensions accordées aux anciens membres du gouvernement helvétique. On avait jugé bon de tenir compte à la fois de la durée des fonctions et de l'âge, ce qui, en soi, paraît normal. Mais l'échelle adoptée manquait de souplesse, ainsi que l'expérience l'a prouvé depuis lors.

Pour bénéficier d'une pension de retraite, un ancien conseiller fédéral doit avoir au moins cinquante-cinq ans et avoir siégé au directoire durant dix ans au moins. A première vue, cette prescription semble assez libérale. En pratique, elle risque d'exclure du bénéfice d'une retraite nombre de magistrats méritants. Pour donner un exemple concret, parmi les membres actuels du gouvernement central, seul M. Motta, s'il venait à quitter le pouvoir, aurait droit à la pension. Ses collègues, dans la même occurrence, en seraient privés; car les uns, comme M. Pilet, auraient bien les années de fonctions exigées, mais non pas l'âge requis, tandis que d'autres, comme M. Baumann, auraient l'âge, mais non la durée d'activité prévue. D'autres enfin, tel M. Etter, ne répondraient à aucune des deux conditions.

On va disant que les anciens conseillers fédéraux ne sont pas à plaindre, que, lorsqu'ils ont quitté le gouvernement, ils trouvent facilement de grasses prébendes dans des entreprises bancaires ou industrielles, comme conseillers d'administration. C'est vrai dans certains cas. Mais cela ne l'a pas toujours été, ni ne le sera nécessairement à l'avenir. On aime à citer les tantinières et les jetons de présence que touchent tels ou tels de nos anciens heptarques; on se garde bien de rappeler le souvenir de l'un d'eux, qui, jadis, finit tristement ses jours avec un tout petit traitement d'employé de bureau. Le peuple suisse n'entend pas qu'on s'enrichisse au gouvernement, mais il ne veut pas non plus qu'un homme qui a consacré sa vie aux affaires publiques termine son existence dans la gêne.

La commission du Conseil des Etats a donc élaboré un projet combinant d'une manière plus judicieuse que l'arrêté de 1920 l'âge et la durée des fonctions. Selon ce nouveau système pour bénéficier de la pension, il faudrait avoir un total de cinquante-cinq points, calculés sur la base de l'âge et du double de la durée des fonctions. Le montant de la pension serait naturellement variable, selon le nombre de points dépassant le minimum de cinquante-cinq.

Les commissions parlementaires ont prévu l'objection que nous relevions tout à l'heure et selon laquelle certains anciens magistrats touchent, après leur retraite officielle, des deniers relativement considérables par l'exercice d'une activité privée. On a reconnu que la pension de retraite ne devait pas s'ajouter à des émoluments déjà élevés, et le projet qui sera présenté aux Chambres prescrira, croyons-nous, qu'il y aura lieu à réduction, voire à suppression, des versements de l'Etat pour les ayants-droit qui gagneraient, dans le privé, plus qu'ils ne gagnaient dans leurs fonctions publiques.

On a certes raison de faire cette réserve. Mais il convient de signaler que les chiffres donnés par certains journaux sont ridiculement exagérés, notamment quand ils parlent de "centaines de milliers de francs de tantinières et dividende fournis par la haute finance internationale (sic) à ses fidèles et loyaux serviteurs." Qui sont actuellement les anciens conseillers fédéraux qui reçoivent de telles sommes? Et

d'où les reçoivent-ils? Quand on lance des affirmations pareilles, on devrait préciser!

Le "Travail," dans un article dépassant toute mesure, prétendait l'autre jour que les "fastueuses prébendes" offertes "par les magnats de l'industrie et de la finance" aux anciens conseillers fédéraux obligent ceux-ci à "trahir les intérêts supérieurs de la démocratie suisse." C'est une très nette accusation de forfaiture.

En regard de cette diatribe furibonde, il est assez intéressant de noter que du côté socialiste, à la commission des Etats, on n'a nullement combattu, mais au contraire approuvé, le remaniement de l'échelle des retraites. Décidément, ce n'est pas le même vent qui souffle de Zurich et de Genève!

*Léon Savary.*

(Tribune de Genève.)

#### LONDON SWISS RIFLE TEAM.



H. SENN

President

London

Swiss Rifle Team

Red hot with patriotism after having seen the excellent Swiss Film, "Fusilier Wipf," I wended my way "down South," to attend the General Meeting and Dinner of the London Swiss Rifle Team, which took place at the Glendower Hotel, Glendower Place, S.W.7, on Saturday last.

The London Swiss Rifle Team could not have chosen a better day for their Annual Meeting and Dinner, and I am glad to say, that most of the members had attended the Film show previous to this function, and were thus almost "boiling over" with fervour and enthusiasm.

To be amongst the "Scharfschützen" of the Colony is to me always a great pleasure, firstly because one meets there sportsmen in the real sense of the word, and secondly their generosity in entertaining their guests has become proverbial.

This time, as on previous occasions, Mr. Alfred Schmid, who is also a member of this illustrious team, was the host, and what a host he is, words almost fail me in eulogizing this wonderful dinner, which lasted, from beginning to end, for nearly two hours. —

One of my New Year's resolutions was to undergo a slimming process; with some slight modifications I have carried out this resolution, but when I glanced at the menu, I decided right away to "break away," the temptation was too much, and all the "good work" hitherto accomplished went over board, and now if I shall see a scale, I shall give it a wide berth. The chief blame for this revelry will have to be borne by the Swiss Rifle Team and in particular by my friend Alfred Schmid. —

During the evening, Mr. H. Senn, who is the President of the Swiss Rifle Team, welcomed the guests who were present, amongst them:

Lieutenant-Colonel R. Bieri, from Interlaken; Flight-Captain E. Nyffenegger from the "Swissair";

Mr. E. Gattiker;

Mr. A. Stauffer, Editor Swiss Observer.

A short *résumé* about the work of the Society was given by the President, and amidst great acclamation it was decided, that the Society will send a strong team to compete at this year's Federal shooting competition, which will take place in Lucerne from June 16th to July 3rd, every member to defray his own expenses.

Mr. Hilfiker informed the meeting of the financial position of the Society which is satisfactory, both reports were accepted unanimously.

Apart from the officers of the Society (President and Secretary) the speech-making was done entirely by the guests present.

Flight-Captain E. Nyffenegger, who occasionally changes the joy-stick for a rifle, thus proving that he is equally efficient in finding the target on a shooting range, expressed his pleasure at being able to spend an evening amongst his friends from the Swiss Rifle Team.

The second speaker was Lieutenant-Colonel R. Bieri, who is at present on a business trip in this country, he thanked the President for the kind invitation extended to him, and appreciated this honour all the more as he is closely connected with the "Schiesswesen" at home, holding amongst other offices the one of President of the "Feldschützen Verein" Interlaken. He expressed the hope that the Swiss Rifle Team would be successful at Lucerne, and that the present company would meet on this auspicious occasion.

Messrs. Gattiker and Stauffer also spoke, associating themselves with the wishes of the previous speaker.

The distribution of prizes for the last shooting competition then took place.

The official part came to an end shortly after midnight, and as apparently nobody had "a home to go to," the company settled down in various groups to play "Zuger" and "Schieber" and daylight had nearly approached before preparations were made to "adjourn," but not before an excellent "Zibeleuspe" was served.

It is not my business to enquire about the state of health of the many participants, on Sunday morning, but of one thing I am certain, namely that all the various vintages served and drunk, would not be able to dim the vision of a really enjoyable evening; and now best of luck to our Swiss Riflemen at the Federal Shooting Competition in Lucerne.

ST.

#### VISIT OF M. VALLOTTON IN LONDON.

M. Vallotton, President of the National Council was, as is reported on the first page, on a short visit in London.

He arrived on Wednesday night and left again on Saturday morning. Much to his regret there was no possibility, owing to the shortness of his stay, to arrange a meeting with the members of the Colony.

M. Vallotton, met on Friday afternoon a number of important English Journalists and members of the Swiss Press in London at the Swiss Legation.

#### LECTURE BY DR. MAX GEILINGER.

Dr. Max Geilinger, Vice-President of the "Schweiz. Schriftsteller-Verein," has been invited by The Poetry Society in London to address a special international meeting on March 15th, at 5.15 p.m., at the Poetry Society's Library, 36, Russell Square, W.C.

The Swiss Colony is specially invited to this meeting and we hope that many of our compatriots will attend the lecture entitled "The unity and diversity of Swiss Poetry" which will certainly be of great interest. Dr. Geilinger will, we understand, read some of his own poetry as well as some translations in English of well-known Swiss poets.

Dr. Geilinger is a poet who has written some excellent poetical works, f.i., "Der Weg ins Weite" and "Klassischer Frühling;" he is very well acquainted with England and is a great friend of this country where he is often received amongst the English writers.

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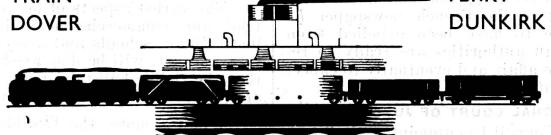
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