

Memorial for a Swiss pioneer

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THE "SWISS OBSERVER" THIRTY YEARS AGO

Home news in the "Swiss Observer" during the last quarter of 1934 ranged from a government decision to spend six million francs on fortifications on the Rhine frontier to provide work for the unemployed, to Professor Piccard's plans for a new balloon ascent into the stratosphere from Switzerland. Another violation of Swiss territory by German agents was reported. The Pope had congratulated Federal Councillor Motta on his speech at the League of Nations Assembly opposing the admission of Russia to the League on the grounds of alleged persecution of religion. The Federal Statistical Department announced that it had been asked to undertake a census in Turkey. The federal budget for 1935 anticipated a deficit of over 41 million francs. Professor Karl Barth had been suspended at Bonn University, and unemployment was still going up (76,000). There were reports of Nazi arms smuggling and of the "Bund", "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" and the "Nationalzeitung" having been banned in Germany.

Nestlé's factory at Payerne had been closed down for good, and the new President of the Confederation for 1935 was to be Federal Councillor Rudolf Minger.

Articles dealt with various subjects, such as "56 Jahre Bundesstaat — 55 Bundesräte", "Swiss Watch on the Rhine" (strengthening of defences) which was a reprint from "The Times", "Schweizerische Truppenaufgebote und Grenzbesetzungen seit dem 16. Jahrhundert", "Reasons why Switzerland should not devalue her Currency" and "The Wonders of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery" by Charles Willi (two full pages — twice the present size — with photos of *before* and *after*).

There were monthly reports on the Zurich Stock Exchange activities, and the regular advertisements included those of the Plaza Hotel in St. Martin's Street and Paganis — both gone; of Monsieur and Madame Rohr's *Pâtisserie*, Patzenhofer Beer, Mr. Bachmann's West End Fancy Bakery, Mr. W. Wetter's wines and Mr. Bartholdi's "Blut- und Leberwürste".

Colony news covered great festivities to mark Monsieur le Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme's Silver Jubilee, including a "Jubilee Sonnet" by our old friend Willy Deutsch known as GALLUS. The Swiss Rifle Association had had a dinner at the Swiss Hotel in Old Compton Street, at which Mr. P. F. Boehringer had been presented with a silver salver in recognition of his services as faithful and untiring Hon. Secretary. Mr. von Bergen and Mr. Gandon had appeared in B.B.C. Children's Hour, one remembered as fine Yodeller, the other fortunately still with us as an expert, but now rarely heard accordionist. Mr. Alfred Brauen had been made a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, and Dr. A. Schedler was celebrating ten years as Honorary Consul in Manchester. The Historian Prof. Gooch had addressed the Swiss Mercantile Society, and the City Swiss Club, apart from a Bridge competition, had held another brilliant Banquet and Ball under the Chairmanship of Mr. Henry Senn (seven *long* columns of reporting!) The Union Helvetia had had theirs with Mr. Paul Lehrian in the chair, whilst the S.M.S. Students' Christmas Dinner and Dance had been held at the Princes' Galleries. The Liverpool Geological Society had presented Consul Montag with a medal for his nearly 25 years of activities, the Unione Ticinese had organised a successful Concert and Ball at Paganis's, whilst the Old Folks' Christmas Lunch had been held at the Foyer Suisse in Upper Bedford Place — both buildings have since disappeared.

Monsieur Jaques-Dalcroze had given a lecture and demonstration on eurythmics at the Scala Theatre. There was a review by Dr. Egli on our compatriot Tschiffely's new book "Tale of two Horses", and, finally, it was reported that the Swiss Minister and Madame Paravicini had presented a Swiss clock to the Duke of Kent and Princess Marina on the occasion of their wedding.

MEMORIAL FOR A SWISS PIONEER

A ceremony recently held in Brigue, the Alpine turntable in the Rhone valley, and attended by Federal Councillor Roger Bonvin and other guests of honour from all parts of Switzerland was devoted to the memory of Dr. Alexander Seiler, born a hundred years ago. Named after his father who started the family's hotel business, Alexander jun. won considerable reputation in politics, as champion of tourism and supporter of many social and educational institutions and was known far beyond his home Canton not only in Switzerland but also abroad. As member of the Federal Parliament, he initiated the idea of a national advertising office for tourism and later was named the first President of the Swiss National Tourist Office. To him Zermatt owes its development into a world renowned resort. On the occasion of the anniversary, a memorial designed by the sculptor Hans Loretan was unveiled while the work of the great humanitarian is to be carried on by the "Dr. Alexander Seiler Foundation" which is to devote itself entirely to the promotion of the interests and training of nurses.

[S.N.T.G.]

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