

# Prepaid subscription rates

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1926)**

Heft 269

PDF erstellt am: **19.09.2024**

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# The Swiss Observer

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 9595

Published every Friday at 23, LEONARD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 6—No. 269

LONDON, OCTOBER 23, 1926.

PRICE 3d.

## PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES

UNITED KINGDOM	3 Months (12 issues, post free)	3 6
AND COLONIES	6 " " " "	6 6
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SWITZERLAND	6 Months (26 issues, post free)	Fr. 7 50
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(Swiss subscriptions may be paid into Postcheck-Konto: Basle V 5718).

## HOME NEWS

Protests are raised in the majority of the Swiss press against the possible election of National Councillor Grimm, as president for 1927 of the National Council; according to old established Swiss parliamentary tradition he should be the next occupant of this high post, but, apart from his extreme socialist views, his candidature is opposed on the ground of his having admittedly been the chief instigator and director of the revolutionary general strike of 1918 in Switzerland.

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A new viaduct, connecting Baden and Wettingen, was inaugurated last week in the presence of Federal Councillor Schulthess and cantonal and local authorities.

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The accounts of the international inland navigation exhibition, recently held at Basle, close with a deficit of Frs. 775,000, most of which will be borne by the Basle government; the latter, however, has already recouped its loss by the rates and taxes on tickets imposed. In the above deficit is also included a sum of Frs. 400,000 to be paid to the Basle Fair company, for the hire of the exhibition halls.

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Several public and private institutions in the cantons of Solothurn and Aargau are benefiting to the extent of half a million francs, under the will of the late National Councillor Bally-Prior of Schönenwerd.

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A novel case of international importance will probably come before the civil courts of the canton Zurich in the near future. A recently naturalised Swiss, Paul Spier by name, was carrying on before the war, a successful business in Intra on the Lago Maggiore (Italy); on the outbreak of hostilities he was expelled from Italy, being then a German, and his property was subsequently confiscated and sold. In 1919 he revived his old business relations in Italy and, thanks to his former good reputation, was able to enjoy credit to the tune of over Lire 100,000. On being pressed by his Italian creditors for settlement, the latter were informed that he had made a claim against the Italian Government for wrongful confiscation of his property, and that until such claim had been satisfied, he was not in a position to make any payments to them.

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The old idea of re-uniting the two half-cantons Basel, which has been dormant for the last 12 years, is to be revived, and at a meeting in Muttenz last Saturday, an intensive propaganda scheme was decided upon.

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The "Orismühle," situate on the borders of the cantons of Solothurn and Basel-Land, was destroyed by fire last week, together with some of the adjoining outhouses, the damage being in the neighbourhood of Frs. 100,000. The property at present belongs to the family Reinhard, but at one time was owned—and to a large extent personally enlarged—by the well-known patriot Hans Joggeli Schäfer, who at the time of the revolution in 1798, was a fiery fighter in the cause of the people.

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Imprisonment for life is the sentence on the 19 year old boy robber, Fritz Bühler, from Bannwil (Bern), who in March last attacked and murdered his friend, Eugen Schönmann, in the Rütliwald (Zurich), and abstracted the Frs. 13,000 which the latter had drawn at the local bank for the wages of his firm. Bühler, who is married and the father of a child, is said to have been driven to commit this mad act by an irresistible desire to obtain the necessary funds for the purchase of a motor cycle.

\*\*\*

A remarkable series of minor accidents, without any serious consequences, happened last Saturday on the road between Suhr and Aarau. A new Buick car which had just passed a horse-drawn vehicle, after damaging the rear part of the latter, collided with a heavy motor-lorry following on behind. The car was thrown across the road into a meadow, only slightly the worse for the encounter, whilst the lorry with a bent front axle remained fast on the track of Wyentalbahn. In spite of the signals and shouting of the former occupants of the above three conveyances, the approaching train was unable to pull up in time, and crashed into the lorry obstructing its progress, simply whirling it into the adjoining meadow. Nobody was hurt.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

### Einweihung der neuen Doldenhornhütte der Sektion Emmental des Schweiz. Alpenklubs.

Bei prächtigstem Sonnenschein fand am vergangenen Sonntag (12. Sept.) die Einweihung der neuen Doldenhornhütte ob Kandersteg statt. Ueber 100 Bergfreunde, Männer und Frauen jeden Alters, hatten sich zum Weiheakt eingefunden. Unter den Erschienenen bemerkte man die Vertreter des Zentralkomitees, die Herren Dr. Faes und Bächtold, den Chefredaktor der "Alpen," Dr. Jenni, die Vertreter der Talschaft, sowie die Delegationen der befreundeten Schwestersektionen Altsels, Blümlisalp, Bern und Kirchberg.

Herr Pfarrer Trechsel, der Präsident der Sektion Emmental, hielt die Weiherede. Ein Haus, das so hoch gebaut ist, bedarf nebst des Menschen Hut Gottes Schirm und Schutz. Ihm, dem Gebieter der Elemente, übergibt er vertrauensvoll das Hüttlein am steilen Hang und hofft, dass der Allerhöchste es bewahren werde vor Blitz und Donnerschlag, vor Sturmwind und Lawinengefahr.

Es sprachen ferner die Herren Oberst Bühlermann, der trotz seines hohen Alters die Feier durch seine Anwesenheit geehrt hatte, Architekt Mühlemann, Grossrat Keller und Zentralpräsident Dr. Faes. Letzterer bezeichnete das neue Berghaus als ein Sinnbild emmentalischen Trotzes und Dauerhaftigkeit. Nach dem Imbiss, der den Ehrengästen inner- und ausserhalb der Hütte serviert wurde, ergriffen noch die Vertreter der eingeladenen Sektionen sowie die Vertrauensmänner der Talschaft, worunter Nationalrat Bühler, in äusserst launiger Rede aus dem reichen Schatz seiner Erinnerungen schöpfte, das Wort. Alle Redner gaben ihrer grossen Freude Ausdruck über das wohlgelungene Werk und dankten der Sektion Emmental für das dem Alpenklub im allgemeinen und der Talschaft im besondern gemachte Geschenk. Um 3 Uhr war die in allen Teilen wohlgelungene Feier zu Ende und die Teilnehmer nahmen in grösseren und kleineren Trupps Abschied von der heimeligen Stätte, deren Bild wohl noch lange in ihrer Erinnerung haften bleiben wird. Unvergesslich wird uns das schlichte Wort bleiben, das der Vertreter Kanderstegs der Hütte gewidmet hat:

Gott bewahre dieses Haus  
Und alle, die drinn gehen in und us  
Vor Fürgfahr und vor böser Zyt  
Vor Murer- und vor Zimmerliit.

(Emmenthaler Nachrichten.)

Une petite S. d. N.—C'est évidemment à un sentiment très généreux et très louable qu'obéit ce vieux couple anglais qui vient, comme nous le signalons hier, de décider d'adopter six enfants âgés de 6 ans et appartenant à six nationalités différentes, pour leur donner une éducation technique et leur laisser plus tard leur nom: il y aura un petit Français, une petite Anglaise et quatre enfant italien, espagnol, polonais et suédois.

Ce sera là en modèle réduit, une véritable Société des nations, dont il sera curieux de suivre, dans l'avenir, l'évolution, comme pour l'autre. Quand ces six enfants auront quelque litige à propos de quelque tartine de confiture, il sera curieux de voir si l'arbitrage pacifique suffira à faire attribuer la tartine à l'ayant-droit ou si, au contraire, le droit du plus fort ne jouera pas, exactement comme pour les hommes. Car, conclut *Le Petit Bleu*, si les hommes sont frères, ils ne sont pas tous semblables, et l'histoire nous en fournit mille preuves depuis Caïn et Abel.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### The Landslides in the Valais.

The upper Rhone Valley continues to remain in a state of geological evolution and lucid descriptions appear in the English Press of the efforts made in order to prevent further damage to railway tracks and bridges threatened by the consequent overflowing of the St. Barthelemy torrent. A typical narrative is given in the *Daily Mail* (October 11th) and refers to events of Saturday, October 9th:—

At half-past two in the afternoon the gendarmierie at Lavey-les-Bains, in the Rhône Valley, were startled by a telephone message from the watchers at the Alpine village of La Rasse warning them of another landslide from the Plan-de-Névé, in the Dent du Midi range, where exactly a fortnight ago a great avalanche of mud and stones swept down to the Rhône and diverted the river from its course for half a mile.

Scores of railwaymen who were occupied in clearing the scene of the last avalanche immediately set to work to try to make a channel for the torrent to pass beneath the new bridge on the Simplon line, over the St. Barthelemy torrent, which was only completed a week ago. But, like sand-castles on the seashore, washed away by the incoming tide, their work was wiped out in a few seconds. Inexorably the dark sluggish mass of mud and rocks moved down, covering the neighbouring forest for hundreds of yards.

At three o'clock this morning the watchers again heard a dull, rumbling sound from the mountains. This time the flood overflowed the banks of the St. Barthelemy torrent and swept across the countryside, covering the only road up the Canton of Valais for half a mile.

The landslide was even more extensive than its predecessor a fortnight ago. A quarter of a mile above the Simplon road the torrent left its bed and spread out like a great fan over the neighbouring forests. A huge amount of debris has been carried down into the old bed of the Rhône, but the Simplon railway bridge was spared.

A new theory as to the cause of these disturbances is advanced in the issue of October 7th of the same paper; here it is:—

Geologists have established that the landslide was not due to the bursting of a water pocket on Plan-Névé glacier, as was believed, but by the disintegration of rocks near the summit of the Cime de l'Est which accumulated in a gigantic funnel-shaped ravine. The heavy rainfall sufficed to set the mass in motion.

It is now seriously suggested that the disintegration of these rocks is not due to natural causes, but is the result of heavy artillery fire from the Swiss fortress of Dailley, across the valley, which for years has used the rocks below the summit as a target.

### The Cost of Surgery.

I have referred at some length to the interesting correspondence which the *New Statesman*, under this and similar headings recently published. I have received communications from several subscribers who are singularly unanimous in disagreeing with the opinion expressed by "L" in the last issue of the S.O.; one fair subscriber, who successfully emerged from the grip of surgeons and nursing homes in both countries, states that "she is glad to know that 'L' has had happier experiences than herself, but he ought to think himself very lucky indeed." I must apologise to my correspondents for not publishing their instructive experiences, but in justice to the *New Statesman* I reprint two letters which appeared in its issues of October 2nd and October 9th respectively:—

Sir,—In your issue of September 18th, you publish an article by your contributor of "Lens," the theme of which is the praise of—among other things—Swiss nurses and nursing homes. Without maintaining that English nursing homes are all they should be, I should like to point out the possibility of there being two sides to this question.

I have spent six months in one of the more expensive clinics of Dr. Rollier. In this clinic the nursing, diet, and, I may add, the medical attention, were disgraceful. The nurse is evidently considered efficient, as she has held the position for nearly two years.

During my stay in Switzerland I have met many people who have had a fairly wide experience of Swiss nursing homes. I have yet to hear of a Swiss nurse who is anything but a *femme de chambre*.—Yours, etc., PATIENT.

I can hardly believe that the charges levelled against one of Dr. Rollier's clinics can be substantiated; however, as the writer veils his identity under a non-de-plume, our great compatriot will probably decline to enter into a controversy, but the second letter from the pen of a medical practitioner deals with the charges very effectively and leaves little to be added:—

The letter published under this heading in your issue of October 2nd is so misleading in its inference, and so contrary to my own experience, that I trust you will permit me space to reply.

Last August my wife was brought down from a Swiss mountain resort owing to an attack of appendicitis, and was operated upon at a clinic. I desire to state that our experience was almost identical with that described by "Lens" in your previous issue.

I cannot personally speak too highly of Swiss nurses, who besides being generally well-trained, maintain to my observation the spirit of nursing at an unusually high level. I can record an equally happy experience of two different Swiss