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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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## HOME NEWS

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### FEDERAL.

#### STONE AVALANCHE DISASTER IN SWITZERLAND.

An avalanche of rocks, caused by the collapse of a rock wall at the "Flimserstein" about 20 miles west of Chur, in the canton of Grisons, on Monday last, buried the "Sunnehüsli" a home for consumptive children at Fidaz, a hamlet above Flims.

Help came at once from the village, and later the firemen and troops from Chur joined in the rescue work, which is made difficult and dangerous by frequent falls of rock.

From the wrecked building, which is covered by a layer of stones and earth 20ft. thick, eleven people have been rescued, all of them injured, and eight bodies have been recovered, they are: Werner Hirsch (child); Mr. and Mrs. Baumann, a child from Torenborg (Holland); Mrs. Gessler, a child not identified. Trudy Keller (child); Eveline Holtkott (a child from Holland).

The number missing are twelve, they are: Hans Rys, Paolo Pini (Paris); Heinz Brann (Berlin); Annemarie Hirsch; Fortunat von Schulthess from Zollikon; Dogan Taskent (Turkey); Dorio Galotti (Geneva); Peterli Gessler; Mrs. Brandenberger and her two daughters and Fritz Nussbaumer.

Mr. Gessler, the proprietor of the home escaped, but his wife was killed.

A few of the children saved themselves by running down the slope and escaping the full force of the fall.

This disaster has caused widespread sympathies throughout Switzerland.

#### NINE MILLION POUNDS MORE FOR SWISS DEFENCE.

The Swiss Federal Government is submitting to Parliament a demand for a new credit of 190,000,000f. (about £9,134,000) for the strengthening of national defence. This sum is to be employed for developing armaments, aviation, and anti-aircraft defence, for increasing the stocks of munitions, for taking the measures necessary to assure the working of the railways and telephones, and for the building of more fortifications.

This brings the expenditure on national defence during the past four years to 850,000,000f. (£40,900,000).

#### SWISS TIES WITH LIECHTENSTEIN.

More than 95 per cent. of the population of Liechtenstein, Francis Joseph II.'s tiny principality on the eastern frontier of Switzerland, have signed declarations of loyalty to their country and their ruling House. They have put themselves on record as favouring continuance of the present economic ties with Switzerland.

The declarations have been circulated through all communes of the country. A fortnight ago the police at Schaan, the second town of importance in Liechtenstein, disbanded a meeting at which proposals for an economic Anschluss with Germany were being discussed.

A plebiscite was suggested at the time, but the authorities, mindful of what happened in Austria when Dr. Schuschnigg decided to hold a plebiscite, ruled out the suggestion.

Until 1919 Liechtenstein was closely allied with Austria, but in 1921 the Principality adopted Swiss currency. Three years later she entered the Swiss Customs union. The postal, telephone and telegraph services are all administered by the Swiss.

#### SWISS PRECAUTIONS.

The Federal Council has decided to raise the age-limit for compulsory military service from 48 to 60, as one step towards reinforcing the army in the event of war. Men of these ages not suited for active service will be drafted into the reserve, the whole basis of which is to be recognised.

Men between the ages of 20 and 32 who have been declared exempt from military service for medical reasons will this year have to undergo a special medical examination. Men over 32 who have been released from service are invited to enrol in the reserve.

An appeal to men and women to volunteer for national service states: "If war should break out — which God forbid — only the devotion and spirit of sacrifice of every man and woman will save our most sacred patrimony — liberty and independence."

#### SWISS GOLD SENT INTO SAFETY.

Eight tons of gold from Switzerland amounting to several million francs have been sent to the "Federal Reserve Bank" in New York, a further large shipment of gold has been sent to Canada.

#### OPENING OF THE SWISS NATIONAL EXHIBITION.

The Federal Council has decided to be present *in corpore* at the opening of the National Exhibition on the 6th of May in Zurich.

The entire Diplomatic Corps in Berne has been invited to accompany the members of the Government.

#### THE SWISS PRESS ON THE ALBANIAN INVASION.

The Swiss Press is unanimous in condemning the Italian invasion of Albania. Italy's object, it is considered, is strategic — to control the Strait of Ontranto, which played such an important rôle in naval warfare in 1918.

Thus, the action against Albania is regarded as signifying a development in the future of the policy of aggression in the Mediterranean.

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### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

The death is reported from Horgen of Colonel Studer-Schläpfer. The deceased was for nearly twenty years President of the "Schweizerischen Verbandes Volksdienst."

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The death is reported from Zurich of Mme. Johanna Zürcher-Siebel, the well-known Swiss authoress.

#### LUCERNE.

M. Eduard Renggli, for thirty years drawing-master at the "Kantonsschule" and the "Kunstgewerbeschule" in Lucerne, has died at the age of 59.

#### BERNE.

The death is reported from Berne of Dr. Xavier Jobin, at the age of 74.

The deceased was a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Berne for twenty-nine years, and a member of Parliament for eleven years. From 1916-1924 M. Jobin was President of the catholic-conservative party of the canton of Berne.

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Pastor Emanuel Friedli, well-known as a dialect writer, has died in Saanen at the age of 93. One of his best-known works was "Bärndütsch als Spiegel bernischen Volkstum." In 1912 the University of Berne honoured him with the title of *doctor honoris causa*.

#### UNTERWALDEN.

The Hotel Victoria in Engelberg was partially burned down, two firemen were killed and three seriously injured, the material damage caused is estimated to be considerable. All the guests escaped uninjured and nearly all their belongings were saved.

#### FRIBOURG.

The death has occurred in Fribourg of Dr. h.c. Wilhelm Kaiser, General-Manager and President of the Board of the Chocolate Works Villars, S.A., at the age of 67. The deceased received the degree of *doctor honoris causa* in 1938 by the University of Fribourg.

#### BASEL.

Dr. E. Mende, President of the Swiss Automobile Club since 1929, has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary, he has been a member of the Club for the last 34 years.

#### THURGAU.

M. Konrad Hugentobler, the oldest Swiss citizen, has died at the age of 103. He was born in 1836 at Wigoltingen.

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## SWISS NATIONAL EXHIBITION 1939 ZURICH.

*"Clothes Make The Man."*

Like most popular proverbs, this one combines wit, irony and an underlay of truth. At any rate, the four words might be expanded into a whole volume on the psychology of our social conventions. They open up a vast field for observation and thought.

The idea of adopting this motto for the great Textile Section of the Swiss National Exhibition which will be held in Zurich from May 6th to October 29th, thus seems particularly apt. For every article displayed in the Exhibition will have a direct bearing on human psychology, achievements and requirements — especially, of course, the exhibits in the Textile and Fashion Pavilions.

The industries exhibiting in these pavilions are among the oldest and most important in the country, so that the section "Clothes make the Man" will cover most interesting ground and reveal many striking aspects of the nation's work.

Of course, the motto might just as easily be reversed, for the number of people making clothes in Switzerland is quite remarkable. There are workmen and workwomen, technicians and engineers, artists and those whose creative genius lies in their fantasy. All these will be seen at work in the Exhibition, making, working-up and refining linen, cotton, silk and rayon. Spectators will see the processes of spinning, twining, weaving, embroidering, dyeing and sanforising being carried out before their eyes. A special gentlemen's tailor will demonstrate the "building" of fashionable suits.

But this brings us back to the original motto, for in the Textile Hall we can admire the choice creations which add so greatly to the charm of elegant ladies — their ready-made frocks and undies, as well as "haute couture" in all its artistic forms — displayed in separate exhibition rooms. But the climax and greatest attraction of this "Clothes make the Man" section will be the Fashion Theatre. Even now a dozen supermannequins, chosen from as many as 300 candidates, are being trained and prepared in a special school to display the creations of Swiss fashion designers in a daily, ever-changing Fashion Pageant to visitors of both sexes at the Swiss National Exhibition.

*Fifth International Life-saving and First-aid Congress.*

In recent years Zurich has come to be known as an ideal city for the holding of international congresses. No wonder, then, that so many organisations have selected it as their meeting-place during the Swiss National Exhibition (May 6th to October 29th, 1939). In fact, it has become necessary to erect a special Congress Hall to provide worthy accommodation, a large, modern building which will be inaugurated a few days before the Exhibition opens.

Nowadays it has become quite usual for congresses meeting in Switzerland to hold part of the proceedings in one of the towns and the other part in a well-known Alpine holiday resort. This fortuitous plan is being adopted by the Fifth International Life-saving and First-aid Congress, which will divide its activities between Zurich and St. Moritz (July 23rd to 28th). This great event, which will be attended by some 1,000 members, will be held under the patronage of Federal Councillor Philip Etter. The main themes on the agenda are:— international aid in major catastrophes and disasters connected with national and international traffic; first-aid in accidents of a general character; first-aid organisation; first-aid at sporting events; the history and principles of first-aid in accidents. For particular splease apply to The Secretary, Fifth International Life-saving and First-aid Congress, Schmelzbergstrasse 4, Zurich, Switzerland.