

# The "Swiss Observer" thrity years ago

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1963)**

Heft 1425

PDF erstellt am: **23.09.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-688590>

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## NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE

Thanks to the indefatigable efforts of the Secrétariat pour les Suisses à l'étranger, an off-shoot of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, the London Group was once again able to show our Colony on January 15th at the Swiss Hostel for Girls, both a new edition of the "Ciné Journal" of great events and achievements of Switzerland during last year, and a coloured biographical appreciation of our great writer and philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau. The selection and technique of the "Ciné Journal" is getting better and better every year, providing the Swiss abroad with an up-to-date live survey of the most noteworthy occasions in our national life — exhibitions, industrial progress, army and air-force, music and culture as well as amusements. The Rousseau story was told in a sequence of beautiful contemporary drawings and delicately worded text in French accompanied by the poet's own very worthy compositions. What a pity so many of our compatriots have missed this magnificent Annual Film Show.

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## COMPETITION

A general competition for ideas has been launched by the Committee for the Swiss National Day Celebration (Bundesfeier-Komitee). They hope to get drafts for the new First of August Badge. All Swiss men and women at home and abroad can take part. About fifteen or twenty sketches will be chosen and the designers invited to a further more specific competition. All information may be had from the Central Secretariat (Zentral-sekretariat des Schweizerischen Bundesfeierkomitees) Clausiusstrasse 45, Zurich 6.

## OUR NEXT ISSUE

Our next issue will be published on 22nd February. We shall be glad to receive manuscripts and news items for publication by Wednesday, 13th February.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to thank the following subscribers for sending donations in addition to their subscriptions: Swiss Club Manchester, Swiss Vice-Consul at Dunfermline Monsieur B. Frick, and Messrs. E. von Bergen, O. Braga, G. E. S. Brenni, J. Brunner, J. B. Brutsch, C. L. Coulet, A. M. Duc, G. Hediger, J. Keller, Rev. Father J. Scherer, A. Steiner. We are most grateful for their kind and welcome support.

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## THE "SWISS OBSERVER" THIRTY YEARS AGO

When I read through the columns of the "Swiss Observer" of January 1933, I felt there was hardly anything cheerful to report. Several cantonal and local administrations had cut the salaries of their staff owing to the crisis. There was a deficit in almost every Commune and Canton, the Swiss Federal Railways had such a heavy loss, and even "St." 's writing "About Visions" failed to cheer me up since he had a very attractive apparition of a Federal subsidy to the "Swiss Observer" which, alas, has not yet materialised. So I decided not to write in January and wait until February brought better news.

But my hopes were dashed, for on the first page of the issue of 4th February there was a report that several schools had had to be closed in Zurich on account of influenza, and later similar news came from other parts of the country. The cantonal government of Berne had decided that no married woman would be employed in their administration if it could be proved that the husband had an income sufficient to provide for the family. As I went on, however, I read Mr. Stauffer's Reminiscences "I enter Society" which cheered me considerably and I remembered, too, that I might have mentioned something about an interesting report at the end of January about Life in Russia (talk at the Swiss Mercantile Society's meeting), and reported the "Daily Express" Outburst "Swiss Slander on a British Airman" which had been quite unjustified, as the airman in question published his apology in the same issue.

On 11th February, the Foreign Trade Report for 1932 was published and it made very gloom reading again — the lowest figures on record for a quarter of a century. The Gold Standard Controversy also took up some of the space, and a detailed report of the Annual Banquet and Ball of the SMS appeared. Looking through the list of personalities, I was struck how many were no longer with us. The Swiss Gymnastic Society reported a very successful year.

The issue of 18th February brought the news of a revolt in the local parliament of Ascona when councillors were mobbed and the police had to be brought in, and all over the purchase of an electric power station. There was an article "L'Ame de notre Armée" by *le Colonel Commandant de Corps* Guisan — had he ever any vision of one day soon becoming our General, I wonder? An interesting description appeared of the "Old Friends' Rally" at the Swiss Hotel in Old Compton Street — all those who had answered the call-up in 1914 and returned to Switzerland to defend her frontiers.

The number published on 25th February gave a report of a reduction of staff by the Swiss Federal Railways owing to the decline of goods and passenger traffic. It also reported the President's address at the AGM of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique. A biography of our fellow Countryman A. F. Tschiffely appeared. His book "Southern Cross to Pole Star" was the talk of the moment at that time. Another distinguished compatriot had been mentioned previously when her death was reported: Madame Denis Thomas, the wife of the Mayor of Torquay.

In several issues at that time a large advertisement appeared "Have you asked your friends to become subscribers to the "Swiss Observer?" — No harm in repeating — is there?"