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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The parliamentary commission, sitting at Montreux, decided to allocate the revenue from the tobacco duty (from January 1st, 1923) exclusively for defraying the cost of old-age pensions.

A demand for an audience has been addressed to the Federal Council by the National Committee for Maintaining the Savoy Free Zones, as, in opposition to the delegations received up till now, this committee claims to represent the bulk of the people who have voted against the Convention. Representatives of this committee have since been officially received by the Federal Council.

The State Council of Fribourg, having refused to admit to the bar a woman lawyer who was associated with a local practitioner, the Federal Tribunal reversed the decision, stating that such an exclusion on account of sex would be contrary to the equality of right guaranteed by the Swiss Constitution.

The Federal Tribunal has dismissed the appeal of the Catholic curate Vogel, of Wald (Zurich), who sought to overthrow the decree of the local council prohibiting processions on the public highways. The Tribunal, however, stated that permission for a limited and defined procession on Corpus Christi (Fronleichnam) Sunday should not be refused.

In response to repeated representations of civil servants for a free Saturday afternoon, the Federal Council has expressed its agreement, if the time is made up by commencing work every morning at 7.30. This offer has been rejected.

According to official statistics, issued by the Agricultural Department of the canton of Vaud, over 10 million litres of wine of the 1922 vintage remain unsold out of a total of 40 million litres.

Zurich proposes to establish a tailoring school, for which subsidies are being demanded from both the municipality and the canton.

A craze for hypnotizing, the outcome of a lecture recently delivered on this subject, has smitten a number of schoolboys in Weinfelden, who have somewhat freely indulged in this dangerous art.

A memorial tablet was erected and dedicated, on March 2nd, at Grenchen (Solothurn) to commemorate the sacrifice of Maria Schürer and Elisabeth Frey, who heroically fought on March 2nd, 1738, in repelling the French invasion.

The newly electrified line Zurich-Zug was opened to traffic on March 5th.

Several great avalanches have, these last few days, caused considerable damage to property: the "Guppenlawine" near Schwändi (Glarus) demolished two bridges, just missing by a miracle a number of houses, and another one, falling from Beloisau down the Emosson plain (near Martigny), partly destroyed the local power station.

Working on a central heating installation in Brigue, several workmen were overcome by escaping gas, with the result that two, Albert Bär and Robert Grether, died from gas poisoning.

Trial runs on a new car, which went over the edge of the road near Carona (Lugano), resulted in the death of the driver and owner, Mr. Bossia, and in serious injuries to the other two occupants, Messrs. Knoll and Balmelli.

Prof. Guido Hauser, music teacher at the cantonal school in Lucerne for the last thirty years, succumbed to injuries caused by a fall from the third floor of his private residence.

Charles Georg, the president of the S.A. Publications (formerly Haasenstein & Vogler), died last Monday in Lugano at the age of 72.

## AUSLANDSCHWEIZERTAG AT THE BASLE FAIR.

The full programme of this, the sixth, annual meeting, which takes place on Monday, April 16th, has now been published. Preceded by a short report on the progress of the movement by Dr. Edgar Steuri, two lectures, followed by a discussion, will be delivered, entitled "Die Pflichten der Auslandschweizer gegenüber der Heimat" by Mr. E. Suter, Swiss Consul at Stuttgart, and "Comment conserver le sentiment national de la jeunesse suisse vivant à l'étranger" by National Councillor Horace Micheli, of the *Journal de Genève*. The day's labour will be concluded by a banquet at the Casino, accompanied by patriotic entertainments.

## BASLE FAIR PARTY.

Those of our readers who wish to join this party should make early application, as the number is strictly limited. Particulars will be found in the leaflet enclosed herewith. In addition to the reduced railway fare to Basle, visitors enjoy unique privileges in Switzerland. For the time from April 16th to April 20th the Swiss Federal Railways and most of the privately owned systems have granted a 50% reduction on the ordinary fares to every Swiss from abroad who visits the Basle Fair, that is to say, a special identity card will be handed to them personally at the office of the Basle Fair which entitles the holder to travel all over Switzerland during these five days at half fare. In order to secure these reductions, applications, stating name, address and occupation, should be made not later than 29th March, 1923. Applications from the provinces should be certified by the respective Swiss Consul.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### Swiss Sculler for Henley.

*The Evening News* (Feb. 17th) reports:—"Dr. Bosshard, a Swiss sculler, has arrived at Richmond to train for the Diamond Sculls. He was a member of the 'Grasshopper' crew which took part in last year's racing at Henley."

### A Loss to the Swiss National Museum.

We read in *The Morning Post* (Feb. 23rd):—"The Victoria and Albert Museum has acquired out of the funds of the Murray Bequest four panels of stained glass from the recent sale of the Engel-Gros Collection in Paris. Three of these are Swiss and belong to the period of highest accomplishment: the fourth is South German. The panels are as follows:—The Assumption of St. Mary Magdalene; Basle School, early Sixteenth Century. The vivid effect produced by the process of scratching a design through a film of dark paint is here seen in its full force. The composition closely resembles the engraving of the same subject by Dürer.

The arms of the town of Porrentruy, supported by angels; Sixteenth Century—a panel showing extreme skill in the arrangement of colours.

The arms of the Counts of Kyburg, supported by a wild man and woman; Zurich School, end of the Fifteenth Century. This was formerly in the collection of the Baron de Trétaigne.

Adam and Eve; South German School, Fifteenth Century.

The panels are temporarily exhibited in Room 139. Our consolation is that these panels may bear witness of our forefathers' artistic skill.

### Zurich School Children and Jewish Sabbath.

According to the *Jewish World* (Feb. 8th):—"In Zurich the question of Sabbath observance has arisen in a very ominous form. Jewish children attending school in the town, have up till now been permitted to be absent on the Sabbath. But the Central School Organisation, at its last meeting, decided that with the Spring term, beginning in April, the exception granted hitherto should be withdrawn. The Organisation declares that the exceptional treatment of the Jewish pupils, permitting them to observe the Jewish Sabbath, is derogatory to school discipline, and that Jews at school must in future submit to general conditions, such as occurs in the army. Needless to say, the Zurich Community is greatly perturbed, and sees that the only way out of the difficulty is to establish a denominational Jewish school. There are, however, great difficulties in regard to the foundation of such a school, and no means seem available for carrying the scheme into effect. Thus it is to be feared that the Jewish children in Zurich will be condemned to a permanent abrogation of the Sabbath, unless the decision of the Central Organisation can be reversed or overruled."

Touching religion, we cannot refrain from mentioning that, at a gathering of Primitive Methodists at Holborn Hall, the Rev. J. T. Barkly stated, according to *The Westminster Gazette* (Feb. 24):—"The Russian Government had recently given special facilities for the extension of Methodist 'Evangelism in that country.'

We think that our readers may like to read the



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above, as it may help them to digest other "news" the papers are dishing up daily as to the state of affairs in Russia.

### Furka Railway.

We read in *Modern Transport* (Feb. 17th):—"The Swiss Federal Council has been investigating the question of the Furka railway, which, as is known, has not been completed. The works, finished up to the present, represent a cost of 30 million francs; 7 million more are needed for the termination of the line. In view of the strategic importance of the railway, the Federal Council would not object in principle to the granting of a subsidy, but it would do this only on the condition that the Valais and Grisons cantons also contributed towards the scheme."

### Italy and Switzerland.

According to the Milan correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* (Feb. 15th), the signing of the commercial treaty between the two countries has given general satisfaction:—

"The Italian commodities of which the entry into Switzerland is facilitated are principally of an agricultural nature—wines, cheese meat and fruits. For common wines, oranges and fruits in general the special tariff recently accorded to Spain is confirmed to Italy, who will thus no longer be dependent on most-favoured nation treatment in respect of these products.

The facilities granted by Italy to Switzerland include numerous manufactured goods, such as embroideries, laces, silks, watches, agricultural machinery, textile machinery, fertilisers, dyes and chemicals, as well as certain food products."

### Contracts sent Abroad.

In a timely and well thought-out letter, to *The Electric Times and Lighting* (Feb. 8th) Mr. G. Wüthrich, General Manager and Chief Engineer of Oerlikon, Ltd., points out the harm done by British firms confining their purchases in times of acute unemployment to manufacturers in Great Britain. We quote some of his arguments, as they may help others of our compatriots when confronted with the same attitude. Mr. Wüthrich states that the harm done is twofold:—

"(a) The British consumer loses money directly as the consequence of the enhanced prices, by letting it be known that he places his orders only within the borders of his own country; and

"(b) He harms the other industries by taking away from the foreign buyers the ground upon which they alone are justified and enabled to place the orders with the British manufacturers.

The writer appreciates that these arguments against placing British orders with countries having a depreciated exchange have a real 'raison d'être, as these countries, due to the low value of their currency and the consequently low wages they pay to their workmen, are unfair competitors.

Switzerland has up to now, and for some years past, however suffered from the fact that its currency has appreciated also, as compared with that of Great Britain; consequently, Swiss manufacturers find it extremely difficult to sell their goods to neighbouring countries, including Great Britain.

When it is further considered that Switzerland has no raw materials of its own, that its manufacturers have to import raw materials and semi-manufactured parts from abroad, and to an increasingly large extent from Great Britain, these imports entailing very heavy freight and railage expenses; when it is also appreciated that the finished goods cause similarly large outlays until they reach their destination, it will be understood what a severe fight that country has to encounter against adversity."