

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

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1924)

Heft: 174

Rubrik: Extracts from Swiss papers

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Telegrams : FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 4—No. 174

LONDON, NOVEMBER 1, 1924.

PRICE 3d.

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES

UNITED KINGDOM AND COLONIES	{	3 Months (13 issues, post free) -	36
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Basle V 5718.)

HOME NEWS

A settlement in the dispute between Escher, Wyss & Co. and their staff has at last been effected. According to a provisional agreement signed with delegates of the trade union concerned, and subsequently ratified, the workmen are withdrawing their demand for a general increase of wages; in certain specified instances the firm will increase the hourly rate by two to four centimes.

A monument was unveiled on the Kleine Schanze in Berne last Saturday to Oscar Bider, who during the last war flew 80,000 kilometer when in the service of the Swiss air force. He was born in Langenbruck (Baselland), where he was buried in July, 1919; his death was due to a fatal descent he made near the Dübendorf aerodrome.

Backwardness is the conclusion reached by Dr. H. Ammann in a pamphlet dealing with conditions in the canton Ticino. From an economic point of view development has not taken place at the same rate as in Switzerland generally. The population has not increased materially, and emigration is an important factor; against the latter, an exceptional number of foreigners, chiefly Italians, have settled in our southern canton, and in certain districts are predominant not only in industrial undertakings, but also in agriculture.

The total number of employees in the service of the Confederation amounted, on September 30th last, to 66,772, i.e., about 700 less than at the same time last year. 35,466 are claimed by the Federal Railways, and about 21,000 by the Post Office, including the telegraph and telephone services.

A compatriot residing abroad, who wishes to remain anonymous, has presented Frs. 400,000 for the purpose of founding an educational institute for the benefit of Swiss children whose education for different reasons may be fraught with difficulties. The Kurhaus Alpbisbrunn (Zurich) has been acquired towards this end.

The reputation of the "saucisses vaudoises" has been upheld by the Federal Tribunal, which confirmed a judgment of the cantonal courts, condemning several Lausanne butchers to a fine for adding other ingredients to pork sausages.

Motor accidents are of almost daily occurrence in Switzerland: Near Menziken (Aargau) Julius Merk, age 37, was run over on Wednesday night last week and instantly killed. — A recruit, named Helffenberger, from Gossau (St. Gall), lost his life similarly when out for a stroll. — A cyclist, Arnold Deuber, from Altdorf, sustained fatal injuries in a collision on the road from Weinberg to Lidwil. — Fusilier Karl Bucher, from Neuhausen, was accidentally shot during army manoeuvres in the neighbourhood of Möriken-Münchwilten (Thurgau). — Near Küsnacht (Zürich) a butcher named Bauman, of Zurich, was crushed to death as the result of a collision. — Mr. Klaus, rates inspector of St. Gall, attending to some mechanical defect on a car in which he had been invited to ride with a friend, was thrown over the road border near St. Eiden and killed, in consequence of the car unexpectedly commencing to move.

The Federal Council has granted, for the next three years, an annual subsidy of Frs. 10,000 to the "Secrétariat des Suisses à l'étranger."

Dr. Walter Boveri, the joint founder of the well-known electrical and engineering concern bearing his name, died in Baden after a short illness at the age of 59½ years. As a pioneer in the electrotechnic sciences he has been a driving factor in the industrial development of Switzerland.

Pater Gabriel Meier, a great authority on matters theological, died at the age of 80 at the convent in Einsiedeln, where for forty years he was the official librarian.

The murderer Bernet, who, on being released from prison and in order to provide himself with

some ready cash, murdered the daughter of a local official, has been sentenced to death, the verdict having now been confirmed by the Landrat of Uri. — It has been held for many years that the death penalty had been abolished in Switzerland, anyhow in theory, if not by law, and the unusual verdict has created widespread interest and critical comment. In some parts feeling ran so high that the railway men refused to handle the guillotine which is being lent by Lucerne. For further details see 'Extracts'.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Vor der Hinrichtung des Mörders von Schattdorf. Bei der Behandlung des ausserordentlichen Gesuches um Begnadigung von der Todesstrafe zu lebenslänglichem Zuchthaus durch den Landrat ist eine Zweidrittelmehrheit der anwesenden Mitglieder nötig, die jedoch nicht durch die Verfassung vorgeschrieben ist. Der am Montag morgen in ausserordentlicher Sitzung zusammengetretene Landrat zur Prüfung des Gesuches des Raubmörders Bernet entschied vor Eintritt in die grundsätzliche Frage, dass es sich bei dem vorliegenden Fall um 'ein ordentliches Begnadigungsgesuch handle und deshalb eine einfache Mehrheit in Anwendung komme. Der Landrat zählt 52 Mitglieder. Entschuldigt abwesend von der Sitzung waren zwei, und sechs waren im Ausstand wegen Mitwirkung am Kriminal- und Obergericht. Gestimmt haben 42.

Der Polizeikommandant erhielt am Montag nachmittags von der Regierung die nötigen Instruktionen, um dem Mörder den Beschluss des Landrates, wonach dieser das vom Verteidiger Dr. Schmid eingereichte Begnadigungsgesuch ablehnte, mitzuteilen. Auf Veranlassung des Landammanns wohnten diesem Akte der Verteidiger Dr. Schmid und der Schwiegervater Bernets bei. Um 4.30 Uhr verlas der Polizeikommandant dem Verurteilten in seiner Zelle den Beschluss des Landrates. Bernet nahm die Mitteilung völlig gefasst entgegen. Er sagte: "Es ist Gottes Wille, ich bin froh, dass ich freudig sterben kann. Ich hätte die Begnadigung zurückgewiesen. Ich glaube, dass Gott mir verzeiht. Ich bin sehr gefasst, und die letzten Stunden, die ich noch zu leben habe, sind für mich so glücklich, dass es die schönsten Stunden meines Lebens sein werden, denn ich hätte auch sterben können, ohne eine Gelegenheit zu finden, um mich mit Gott zu versöhnen."

Als sein Schwiegervater ihn fragte, ob er der Hinrichtung beiwohnen dürfe, antwortete der zum Tod Verurteilte: "Wenn Du es willst und wenn Du stark genug bist. Was mich betrifft, so bin ich einverstanden. Ich wiederhole, dass ich ganz gefasst sterbe." "Ich möchte," erklärte Bernet in seiner Rolle weiter in Gegenwart seines Verteidigers und des Polizeikommandanten, "dass meine Hinrichtung öffentlich erfolge und dass mein Kopf zu Füßen der andern Verbrecher rolle, damit sie dadurch eine ernste Lektion erhalten." Bernet nahm auch die Früchte und die Zigaretten entgegen, die ihm sein Schwiegervater mit Genehmigung der zuständigen Behörde gebracht hatte.

Nach den im Sinne der organisierten Eisenbahnen durch die beiden Nationalräte Bratschi und Frank bei der Generaldirektion in Bern und Bezirksanwalt Wyss bei der Kreisdirektion in Zürich unternommenen Schritte gegen die Uebernahme des Scharfrichteramtes in Altdorf durch den Weichenwärter Mengis in Schlieren hat sich dieser heute morgen nach einer Besprechung mit Kreisdirektor Dr. Locher entschlossen, seine Anmeldung zurückzuziehen. Mengis hat die Urner Regierung bereits von seinem Entschlusse telegraphisch verständigt.

Landammann Huber (k.-k.) hat im Namen der Urner Regierung an die Generaldirektion der S.B.B. ein Protestschreiben gerichtet gegen die Einnischung des Eisenbahnverbandes im Vertrag zwischen der Urner Regierung und dem Scharfrichter Mengis. (National-Zeitung.)

A propos de la peine capitale.— Une condamnation à mort à Altdorf et de graves discussions au Conseil national sur la peine capitale en matière militaire ! Depuis longtemps, nos journaux n'avaient plus eu l'occasion de traiter ce grave problème qui soulevait jadis en Suisse tant de discussions passionnées et qui continue à défrayer l'attention publique dans plusieurs pays.

N'est-ce pas dans le 'Nouvelliste vaudois' du 8 février 1828 déjà qu'Alexandre Vinet écrivait: "Une erreur générale, une erreur inconcevable a jusqu'ici maintenu les échafauds."

Ce n'est pas le lieu de reprendre les arguments pour ou contre la peine de mort, ni d'exprimer une opinion personnelle, mais il faut souligner la décision du jury d'Altorf, qui est symptomatique.

Jusqu'ici, et en attendant le code pénal fédéral, la question de la peine capitale en Suisse a passé par trois phases:

Dans la première (1848-1874), les cantons étaient seuls compétents, exception faite des délits politiques, pour lesquels la peine de mort était constitutionnellement prohibée — comme aujourd'hui du reste. Pendant cette période, seuls huit cantons ou demi-cantons — dont Genève le 24 mai 1871, sur la proposition du professeur de droit pénal Hornung — l'avaient biflée de leur législation pénale.

Vint la Constitution de 1871 et son interdit absolu dans ce domaine. Puis l'opposition triompha et l'article 65 nouveau de notre Constitution fédérale rend la compétence aux cantons. Mais seuls huit cantons ou demi-cantons rétablissent la peine capitale. Le canton de Genève ne les suit pas. Uri, en revanche, la rétablit aussi le 2 mai 1880, en invoquant le motif que la peine capitale réalise, essentiellement, une juste justice répressive. Mais il la réserve pour le meurtre et l'incendie suivi de mort d'homme.

L'exécution, le 10 janvier 1868, à Moudon, d'un sieur Hély Freymond, semble avoir ébranlé les convictions, car, dès lors, et pendant 24 ans, nous sommes en pleine crise de grâce. Bien que ces crimes horribles soient commis, la sentimentalité ou la pitié l'emporte. A propos du forfait de Jakob Mattmann, en 1885, von Segesser déclara au Conseil législatif de Lucerne: " Je ne veux pas me présenter au tribunal de Dieu avec les mains tachées de sang."

Aussi le professeur Stooss pouvait-il écrire en 1892: "Le refus permanent d'appliquer la peine capitale dans les cas les plus graves équivaut à sa suspension."

Mais les faits viennent démentir ces prévisions. La même année, en 1892, Lucerne envoie à l'échafaud un certain Gatti. Le même canton récidive en 1893. Schwytz l'imita en 1894, Fribourg en 1904 et Lucerne en 1910. Et puis, si nous ne faisons erreur, les glaives vont décorer les musées, les guillotines sont démolies et les bourreaux n'ont plus qu'à s'inscrire au chômage.

Allons-nous revoir dans nos quotidiens les récits des réveils au petit jour, du cortège et des dernières paroles définitives ? ou continuerons-nous à emprunter à l'étranger ces faits divers ?

En Angleterre, comme l'on sait, l'avènement des travaillistes a suscité de grands espoirs dans les rangs des adversaires de la pendaïon; mais l'accueil qu'on leur réserva fut plutôt froid. Et le moment n'est pas encore venu où les Anglais renonceraient à cette arme de sécurité.—Agnor Kraft.

“Ständli”trunk aus Gemeindemitteln. — Einer Polemik im “Wohler Anzeiger” entnimmt man, dass das Stadtoberhaupt des hübschen Reussstädtchens Bremgarten jungen Leuten einer kommerziellen “Verbindung,” die ihm in weinseliger Stimmung ein Ständchen brachten, ein Trinkgelage aus Gemeindemitteln verabfolgte. In einer Einsendung wurde das Stadtoberhaupt Sch. aufgefordert, das für das Trinkgelage durch den Gemeindegassier bezahlte Geld an die Gemeindekasse zurückzubezahlen, worauf er in einer öffentlichen Erklärung den Einsender im “Wohler Anzeiger” aufforderte, die “entstellten und lügenhaften Behauptungen” zurückzunehmen. In der kürzlichen Gemeindeversammlung, in der das Stadtoberhaupt in dieser Angelegenheit interpelliert wurde, soll es dann zugegeben haben, dass es vor einigen Wochen und schon vor zwei Jahren eine “Studentenverbindung” junger angeheurer Kaufleute aus dem Grunde, weil “man nicht wissen könne, was so ein junger Kaufmann später der Gemeinde Gutes erweisen könne,” für ein ihm gebrachtes Ständchen eine Weinspende aus Gemeindemitteln verabfolgt habe. Es wird nicht gesagt, ob es vom edlen Saft der Gemeinderennen Bremgartens, Zukifer oder Lumkhofer gewesen ist.

(Neue Zürcher Nachr.)

Hommage à un Vaudo's. — Conformément à une demande qui lui a été faite par le Sénat universitaire le Conseil d'Etat genevois propose au Grand Conseil d'accorder à M. le professeur Charles Borgeois la bourgeoisie d'honneur de Genève, seule distinction que cette République puisse décerner à un savant qui l'a grandement honorée.

« Dans le rapport à l'appui de son projet d'arrêté, écrit le 'Journal de Genève,' le gouvernement rappelle l'action féconde de M. Borgeaud comme professeur à l'Université, comme membre du comité du monument de la Réformation, etc.

“ M. Borgeaud, dit le rapport, a laissé dans tous les milieux l'impression d'un savant qui, ayant fait de Genève sa patrie d'élection, l'a illustrée par ses travaux et a contribué largement à lui maintenir sa réputation de ville cultivée. La longue liste de ses ouvrages, dont la plupart ont une

notoriété mondiale, fait foi de l'activité scientifique et de la puissance intellectuelle de ce distingué confédéré.

"Appelé par le Conseil fédéral en 1918 à siéger au sein de la commission consultative pour l'étude du problème de la Société des Nations, il joue dans cette commission un rôle de premier plan, spécialement en ce qui concerne la question du maintien de la neutralité de la Suisse, et ses avis judicieux le désignent bientôt pour collaborer en commission très restreinte à la rédaction du 'Mémoire sur la neutralité' adressé le 8 février 1919 à la conférence de la paix, par le Conseil fédéral. Au surplus, cette haute autorité l'a délégué à Paris en 1919 pour s'occuper de la question des zones et, en cette occasion encore, il a pu rendre de précieux services à sa patrie en faisant comprendre à des hommes d'Etat de la plus grande valeur et à des journalistes influents la situation exceptionnelle de notre pays au triple point de vue technique, historique et géographique."

M. Charles Borgeaud est doublement Vaudois, étant bourgeois de Pully et né au Sentier. Il a fait ses études à Paris. (*Gazette de Lausanne*.)

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KIBURU."

It is a useful lesson and promotes wholesome modesty in a scribbler to find how nicely a paper can be and is being conducted during his absence. As a matter of fact, having read the intervening issues of the *S.O.*, I felt quite astonished and a wee bit thrilled when I heard the well-known, melodious voice of the Editor over the telephone the other morning, asking me bluntly, "Eh, what about the 'Gleanings,' now you are back?"

During a somewhat prolonged honeymoon, spent in several beautiful parts of my native land, favoured by wonderful weather, except when travelling right through the cloudburst in the Ticino on that terrible Wednesday evening, when Nature showed herself in an awful, but nevertheless tremendously interesting mood, one "glean" quite a lot of new notions, the chief of which being, perhaps, an astonished wondering as to why one has not thought of it before! However...

Swiss Domestic Servants.

Settling down in dear Old England, I am getting familiar with heaps of problems the existence of which I had only dimly suspected so far. One of these questions is evidently worrying another "brain-worker" as well, for she states in *The Times* (Oct. 20th):—

Swiss girls are anxious to enter English homes as domestic servants. They are not allowed to do so, for fear of reducing the amount of work open to English girls who refuse to do it. If the system of protection, rejected in the case of goods, can be abandoned in the case of persons, the lives of many whose work is with their heads, not with their hands, will be prolonged, and be made more valuable to the State.

Well, being an ardent Free-Trader myself, I hope the Government will take due notice!

A handsome Tribute to Swiss Airmen

appears in the *Daily Telegraph* (Oct. 21st):—

Air Force officers who recently have visited Switzerland have remarked upon the brilliant flying seen in the Swiss air service. It is said that it is even superior to British, French, and American airmanship, hitherto regarded as the best, and of about equal merit, although manifesting subtle national distinctive characteristics. The fine flying of the Swiss, it is suggested, may be due to the influence of the mountains upon both physique and spirit. The Swiss air service is very small, consisting only of a few pilots and observers, who are obliged to make up an aggregate of ten hours' flying per month and three hours' flying per month respectively. There is a small Government construction works at Thonon, besides which there is only one air craft factory, that at Romanshorn, where Dornier machines are made under license. Civil aviation is represented by two or three small companies which run schools, make surveys, and operate the air line Geneva-Zurich-Munich.

I am not qualified to comment on the above, but it is nice to read such praise of our airman's skill, and I have no doubt that the praise is well merited.

New Stamps.

One of the International Bureaux at Berne has been celebrating its jubilee recently, namely, the Universal Postal Union, and stamps have been issued for the occasion. I find in the *Daily Telegraph* (Oct. 16th):—

The two Swiss stamps to celebrate the jubilee of the Universal Postal Union are now to hand. In addition to the other celebration stamps mentioned last week, Germany has produced another two stamps, bearing a portrait of Dr. Heinrich von Stephan, the famous Postmaster-General, to whom the foundation of the Union was largely due. The new stamps are an improvement on the Von Stephan portrait type, illustrated in this column on July 17th, and the values are 10 pfennig (dark green) and 20 pfennig (blue).

Whenever I think of these various international Bureaux having their headquarters in Switzerland, and when I add to them the League of Nations at Geneva, I cannot help feeling that one day Switzerland will probably become the headquarters of the Civil Service of the Federation of Europe, in other words, one vast "Beamtenstaat." Land speculators at Zurich, Berne and Geneva, please note this tip!

Quo Vadis?

Few Swiss there are, I think, who have not been thrilled when reading Henri Sienkiewicz's "Quo Vadis?" Some probably have also seen it on the screen and got an idea of the fearful struggles of the early Christians in Rome. According to the *Daily Express* (Oct. 20th):—

The body of the famous Polish writer Sienkiewicz, the author of "Quo Vadis?" who died in exile at Vevey in 1916, will be ceremoniously entined for Warsaw, where it will be reburied with great ceremony.

M. Chuard, the President, will head the Swiss delegation, while the Polish Government has sent a special delegation, including M. Paderewski.

I hear also that the town of Vevey is erecting a monument to the great Polish writer in one of her public gardens.

Capital Punishment.

Most citizens of Switzerland are enlightened enough to disagree with Capital Punishment, and for many years no such execution has disgraced our country. I find the following in the *Morning Post* (Oct. 22nd):—

Failing the unlikely intervention of the Swiss Federal authorities, the execution of a man named Bernet, condemned for the particularly brutal murder of a young girl several hours only after leaving prison, where he had served a sentence for theft, will take place at Altdorf, in the canton of Uri, on the 27th October.

Capital punishment now exists in only three cantons of Switzerland. The last execution was about twenty years ago. As there is no public executioner, the duty in the present case will be performed by a railway official, chosen from scores of applicants for the gruesome post. The canton of Lucerne has agreed to lend its guillotine.

I pity that poor railway official who has to carry the memory of that gruesome task with him to his own grave.

Million-and-a-half "Heiress" Arrested.

Now for something in a lighter vein! After the astonishing affair which happened at Zurich last year, where a comely "lady" swindled a number of the "best people" there, comes the following story from Geneva, where another "American" Dollar Princess has found it easy to enjoy a long run of comfortable living at the expense of her dupes. *Daily Express* (Oct. 18):—

A pretty girl of twenty, who said she was "Dolores Hamel, of New York," and claimed that she would shortly inherit £1,600,000, was arrested in Geneva. She is accused of obtaining credit for large amounts by false pretences.

It is stated that the girl became engaged to a young man belonging to a wealthy Swiss family, from whom she borrowed large sums on the strength of her inheritance. She also bought on credit a villa worth £20,000, furniture costing £6,400, and a number of motor-cars.

In the meantime she lived in extravagant style at one of the principal Geneva hotels until suspicion was aroused and the police were informed.

Her real name is stated to be Josephine Kaufmann, of Zurich, formerly employed as maid by an American family living in Paris. She speaks English perfectly.

* Na ja, die Dummen werden nie alle!

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

A short reference was made in these columns last week to the speedy over-subscription accorded to the Swiss issue of the German 7% External Reparations Loan. The large amount subscribed cannot, indeed, be taken as any real index to ruling conditions in the capital market in Switzerland, since in the case of many of the larger applications the success of the issue had been anticipated, and the amount applied for had been increased proportionately to the probable allotment. The success of this issue contrasts very forcibly with the virtual failure of the recent loan of the Canton of the Grisons, a 5½% issue. This rate of interest was generous enough in view of the general level of Swiss Cantonal loans, but was not high enough to outweigh the feeling against the security of this Canton, caused by the affair of the Bündner Kraftwerke.

An interesting feature of the German bonds was the option of taking up the loan in sterling or in Swiss franc denominations. It is readily to be understood that the former were generally preferred, since, in the first place, they offered a chance of improvement owing to exchange appreciation, as the £ sterling stands at a discount of

10 per cent. as compared with gold parity, while at the same time the sterling bonds have the advantage of being negotiable on the London market, whereas the franc bonds will only enjoy this privilege after a lapse of two years.

The Federal Railways were again able to make a very good showing in September. The surplus of revenue over expenditure was Frs. 15,514,000, an improvement of Frs. 400,000 as compared with the previous month. There is an improvement of 22 million francs in the net return on the railways for the first nine months of this year, as compared with the corresponding months of 1923.

For the first time since the middle of May, 1922, the Swiss franc has practically regained the parity of the United States dollar. For the last week quotations in Zurich have been about 5.19 frs. per dollar, as compared with the par rate of 5.18.

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.		Oct. 21	Oct. 28	
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903 ...	...	73.25%	74.14%	
Swiss Confederation 5% 1923 ...	...	98.25%	98.80%	
Federal Railways A & K 3½% ...	...	76.22%	76.22%	
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921 ...	...	100.37%	100.30%	
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892...	...	67.67%	68.50%	
SHARES.		Nom.	Oct. 21	Oct. 28
		Frs.	Frs.	Frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation ...	500	642	641	
Crédit Suisse ...	500	675	675	
Union de Banques Suisses ...	500	540	541	
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3015	3000	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	1802	1917	
C. F. Bally S. A. ...	1000	1107	1110	
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon...	500	600	602	
Entreprises Suizer ...	1000	632	632	
S. A. Brown Boveri (new) ...	500	279	278	
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	196	196	
Choc. Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler	100	149	142	
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	495	495	

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