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To the Readers of "The Swiss Observer."

This being the first number of the 1924 issues, the Editor would like to address a special and warm invitation to all those readers who "believe" in the public-spirited service which the *S.O.* is intended to render to the Swiss Colony, to come forward in support of the objects pursued by contributing articles of general interest in any of our national languages. There is no cook that manages to "season" his food to the exact liking of every palate. A similar remark applies to the production of a newspaper, the general "get-up" of which may or may not please everybody, though it is certainly the Editor's particular wish to satisfy, week in, week out, the largest possible number of his readers. With this object in view, he would welcome co-operation on the part of some of the leading members of the various sections of our colony, to add to the diversity of the information and intellectual food he is anxious to offer. The more practical suggestions he receives as to what articles and other matter are best calculated to meet the *desiderata* of the majority of subscribers, the more he will be pleased and able to make future numbers a journalistic success.

THE DEPUTY EDITOR.

HOME NEWS

The recent visit of M. Chuard, the newly elected President of the Swiss Confederation for 1924, to Lausanne was made the occasion of great popular rejoicing that this signal honour had been bestowed on a "Vaudois." The welcome at the station was of a very cordial character, and amidst the roar of cannons, the joyous ringing of church bells, the melodious music of bands and a veritable shower of flowers, a large procession formed, wending its way to the Cathedral. M. Chuard was greatly touched by the splendid and affectionate reception accorded to him, and returned hearty thanks for the honour done him, assuring the congregation that his very best efforts would be devoted to the good of our country. — Our best wishes accompany him in his new and high office!

Dr. Affolter has been elected President for 1924 of the Federal Tribunal, while M. Evequoz (Valais) has been appointed to preside over the National Council, and M. Simon (Vaud) over the State Council during the ensuing year.

The Commercial Treaty between Italy and Switzerland has now been ratified by the Italian Chamber of Deputies, and it is satisfactory to note that there were but few opponents to the terms of the Treaty, which contains mutual concessions that should tend to benefit trade relations between the two countries.

The figures of the Customs receipts for the month of November last show—at Frs. 17,500,000—an increase of almost 4 million francs as compared with the November, 1922, revenues. The total of the first 11 months of 1923 is more than 25 mill. in excess of the Customs revenues for the identical period of the previous year. Indeed a sign that business is at last waking up, though, of course, it is generally more gratifying to see increased export figures instead of large imports that may easily produce industrial unemployment at home.

The well-known Basle sculptor, Mr. Carl Bueckhardt, whose works will for ever proclaim him a master of his art, has died at Ligornetto (Tessin) at the early age of 45.

The Basle University have conferred upon Rudolf Sarasin, in recognition of his great services in the interests of Art, Science, Commerce and Industry, the degree of doctor *honoris causa*.

Peter Orgi, of Kandersteg, the well-known Alpine guide, evidently missed his way in a thick fog; his body was later on discovered at the bottom of a precipice.

Switzerland is gradually coming into her own again as a holiday resort, and it is gratifying to

note that in the period of five months, namely, 1st May to 30th September, 1923, upwards of 55,000 tourists (10,000 more than during the corresponding period in 1922) made their "Absteigequartier" at Interlaken and district. It is particularly noteworthy that the number of visitors from England is now in excess of pre-war figures. The Sports Express Trains London—Bernese Oberland discharged no less than 1,000 new arrivals, who wished to spend a "white" Christmas in our salubrious native air.

"Made in Germany!" At Constance, within a stone's throw of the Swiss frontier, a band of forgers carried on the nefarious business of producing spurious Swiss 5-franc notes, of which they managed to put some 8,000 into circulation. Having regard to the rate of exchange, they must have netted a stupendous sum as expressed in "Reichsmarks." The local police have arrested three culprits who had rented certain premises, ostensibly for a genuine business enterprise, and thereupon set up a well-equipped printing press for counterfeiting currency notes.

Keen satisfaction is felt at and around St. Gall that the embroidery trade with the U.S.A. shows a steady improvement: the export figures for November disclosing at Frs. 3,117,069 an increase of some 12½% as compared with those of the same month in 1922.

At Wangs (St. Gall) Nicklaus Rohner recently celebrated the 99th anniversary of his birth. He is still in capital health, both mentally and bodily. A brother of his is now 90 years old, and another one 89 years. (Clearly not a "promising" locality for the monkey-gland specialists!—*Ed.*)

No doubt, due to the intense darkness which prevailed at the time, the Mail Coach, running between Ilanz and Vals in the Grisons, left the road and fell into an abyss. Both the driver and his only passenger managed to jump to safety before the horse and coach went to their doom.

A gruesome discovery was made under the roof of a house at Schaffhouse, in the form of the skeletons of two children. The opinion is held that the bodies may have reposed in their hiding-place for the last 15 years or so. An investigation has been set on foot.

The canton of Schwyz is at present suffering from the ravages of a mysterious disease, in its deadly effect not unlike infantile paralysis. One family lost within a few days all three of its male members, aged from 27 to 34 years.

A terrible act of revenge was perpetrated, by a certain Arturo Guglielmetti, on the wife of State Counsellor Riva, at Lugano. The would-be murderer, who bore a grudge against M. Riva, apparently followed the latter to Lucerne, with the avowed intention of killing him. As this plan miscarried, he hurried back to Lugano, and gaining, by a pretence, admission to the residence of M. Riva, Guglielmetti drew a revolver and seriously injured the lady. He thereupon tried to end his own life, but merely succeeded in robbing himself of his eyesight. He is now in hospital under arrest.

Close to the cantonal prison at Kalchrain (Thurgovie) one of the three occupants of a fast travelling automobile was violently thrown out and broke his skull, while the others escaped with less serious injuries. The driver has been arrested.

Those of our readers who find it too costly to quench their thirst with a drop of cheery "Waad-laender" at 7/6 a bottle, may be interested to learn that at the public wine auction, at Lausanne, "Burignon" sold, on an average, at about Frs. 2.40 per litre, while "Dezaley de la Ville" realised as much as Frs. 3.70 per litre. (The Chief Editor's "bid"—c.i.f. Garlick Hill—for a barrel of "Dezaley Clos des Moines de Kybourg," which was intended as a "refresher" to his colleague in harness, was, unfortunately, not entertained!)

Lovers of aquatic sport should note that the "Zurich Regatta Club" has been asked to carry through arrangements for the International Sculling Competition at the end of August, 1924. An international competition will also take place on the Lake of Zurich on 21st and 22nd June, whilst the Western part of Switzerland will celebrate its own regatta on Lake Lemán's glorious waters at Vevey on June 8th next.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Les Jeux olympiques de 1924. — Le samedi 29, à 14 h. 15, au buffet de la gare de Lausanne, se réunira le bureau du comité olympique suisse avec les délégués des sports d'hiver et M. Jaques, pour entendre un rapport du secrétariat et des renseignements divers sur les Jeux, pour discuter l'organisation financière de la participation de la Suisse aux Jeux olympiques de Paris en 1924, l'utilisation de la subvention fédérale, l'organisation de la participation aux Jeux de Chamoniix et aux Jeux de Paris, l'entretien et le logement des participants. Un rapport sera présenté sur le congrès des sports d'hiver qui s'est tenu à Paris du 23 au 26 novembre. On discutera également du concours pour la médaille olympique internationale.

The abnormal weather conditions—and their consequences—now experienced in Switzerland are vividly depicted by the following extracts from the *Journal de Genève*:—

Les Diablerets, le 26 décembre:

Une avalanche, descendue mercredi, à 14 heures, sur le versant sud de la pointe de Châtillon, a emporté jusqu'à la Grande-Eau sept granges et chalets habités seulement en été. Elle a rasé en même temps à la hauteur de l'Étalon un chalet rempli de bétail qui n'a pas eu de mal et démantelé trois maisons neuves non encore habitées, appartenant à M. Emile Buffet, ancien syndic. La halte du Pillon du chemin de fer Aigle-Sépey-Diablerets a été déplacée. Un groupe d'ouvriers occupés au déblaiement de la voie a eu juste le temps de s'enfuir. A Lavanchy-dessous, endroit particulièrement exposé, où une avalanche, tombée le 7 février 1749, avait tué dix-sept personnes et 34 pièces de bétail et avait emporté 51 maisons, quinze chalets ont été évacués par mesure de précaution.

D'Adelboden, le 26 décembre:

Une avalanche, partie de la région de la Schwandfeldspitze, est venue s'abattre contre l'hôtel Bellevue, dont l'aile nord a été gravement endommagée. Toutes les portes et fenêtres ont été enfoncées. Les corridors et la salle à manger du rez-de-chaussée sont remplis de neige. Une grande partie du mobilier est détruite. Les dégâts matériels sont très importants.

L'établissement appartient à une société anonyme. Les pompiers ont été alarmés.

De Frutigen, le 26 décembre:

Au Kratzergraben, le pont de la route Frutigen-Adelboden a été emporté par une avalanche sur une longueur de 180 mètres. La route est recouverte de neige, de pierre et de bois. La circulation est entièrement interrompue.

De Meiringen, le 26 décembre:

Entre Giswil et Kaiserstuhl, une avalanche a recouvert la ligne du Brunig sur une distance de 120 mètres. L'épaisseur de l'avalanche, qui a emporté avec elle beaucoup de pierres, d'arbres, etc., est considérable. La circulation sera rétablie vraisemblablement d'ici à jeudi soir.

De la Chau-de-Fonds:

Mardi, un hangar d'une grande superficie, appartenant à la Scierie nouvelle, s'est effondré sous le poids de la neige. Le hangar détruit contenait les œuvres en préparation du peintre et sculpteur L'Eplattenier. La maquette de la sentinelle qui doit commémorer aux Rangiers l'occupation des frontières pendant la guerre a été détruite. Des cartons de dessins destinés au château de Colombier sont lacérés.

Fribourg.—Mardi soir, à l'avenue Weck-Reynold, à Fribourg, une terrible collision s'est produite entre un bob sur lequel six personnes avaient pris place, et qui descendait la pente à toute vitesse, et une automobile. Les deux véhicules furent brisés. Deux des voyageurs, grièvement blessés, ont été transportés à l'hôpital. Le premier, un jeune homme de vingt ans, Gérard Pyton, avait la jambe droite brisée en deux endroits. Le second, Andreotti, a eu le crâne fracturé. Il fut transporté mourant à l'hôpital.

Davos. — Du 28 décembre au 4 janvier, le team de l'Université d'Oxford sera à Davos, puis, du 2 au 5 janvier, le team de l'Université de Cambridge.

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