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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

Though the tenor of the reply to the Swiss Note has not yet been made public it is semi-officially stated that the points raised have not been dealt with in a satisfactory manner by the Italian Government; further direct negotiations have therefore become necessary. It is also officially stated that the friendly relations between the two countries are in no way affected.

It is officially stated that a second Note with reference to the Rossi affair was handed to the Italian Government last Wednesday; its content, like that of the first one, has not yet been published by the Federal Council.

The proposal of the Ticinese States Council to impose a special duty on all wines and liquors having a 'luxury' character is being vigorously opposed by the many associations and federations representing the hotel and wine distributing trades.

The state insurance of school children which has been in operation for a few years in Zurich and the canton of Aargau is showing disappointing results. The funds originally allotted for financing the scheme have proved entirely insufficient, though the number of school children is on the decrease. It is stated that the professional services of the practitioner are called in for trilling cases which before the advent of this insurance received all the care required at home from the parents.

The partial breaking up of Monte Arbedo, which rises to the east of Bellinzona, entered upon the first stage at the beginning of this month. Starting from two separate points huge masses of rock and stone were hurled into the valleys of Taglio and Arbedo. The event and its effects having been anticipated months ago by geological experts no lives were lost as the threatened districts were evacuated in good time. Considerable damage—estimated at about £20,000—had been caused; the old military road below the alp Monte Chiara has been totally destroyed; a large water reservoir in the Val Pieme belonging to the Swiss Federal Railways has disappeared; the cable railway in the Val Arbedo, built some years ago at a cost of £10,000, has been partly ruined; forest land and valuable wood reserves ready for marketing were buried and about 30 empty cattle barns carried away. It is stated that the town of Bellinzona and the Gothard railway are in no danger as the movement of Monte Arbedo is confined to an easterly direction, but there is some anxiety as to water difficulties, the natural course of local torrents being impeded by boulders and topographical changes.

Legacies amounting to about 10 million francs have been made by the late Mr. August Weidmann-Jüst, principal of a large dye-works in Thalwil (Zurich). Apart from liberal donations to employees, he bequeathed 1,65 million francs to Thalwil, Frs. 400,000 to his commune of origin for scholastic and ecclesiastical purposes, and Frs. 300,000 to different local societies and institutes. Part of the residue of his estate is to be used for the foundation of a benevolent fund bearing his name.

Nine months' imprisonment and a fine of Lire 1,000 was inflicted upon a Swiss—Denis Dellèze—by the courts of Ivrea (Italy) for having insulted the Duce. It is stated that in crossing the frontier in order to pay a visit to his brother, who is a monk at the St. Bernard hospice, he had an altercation with the guards in the course of which the incriminating remarks were uttered.

Considerable damage was done by a fire which broke out in a baker's shop in Sattel (Schwyz); the latter and the adjoining Gasthaus zum Adler were completely destroyed.

Signora M. Crivelli-Toricelli, known as the soldiers' mother, has died at the age of 70. During the years of mobilisation she organised, mostly at her own expense, in the canton Ticino numerous homes and social centres tending to the welfare and comfort of the soldiers.

## NEW BUILDING FOR THE LONDON Y.W.C.A.

Mrs. Stanley Baldwin has addressed the following letter to the Swiss Minister:

Dear Monsieur Paravicini,

I am venturing to send you the enclosed pamphlet in the hope that it might be possible for the Swiss Colony in London to present a room in this Girls' Club House that we are striving to erect. Over 1,000 girls of non-British nationality (617 were Swiss) passed through our old Buildings last year. The accommodation was found to be inadequate to the evergrowing needs and the young women travel more and more, so for the last three years we have been striving to erect a more up-to-date building. The Club is international and undenominational.

It would be delightful if Switzerland could be represented by a room in the Club House.

Yours sincerely,  
LUCY BALDWIN.

M. Paravicini has replied as follows:

Dear Mrs. Baldwin,

I thank you for your letter of October 1st regarding the construction of a new Y.W.C.A. Building.

As far as I am concerned, no time shall be lost to mobilise the quarters from where contributions may be expected. As to the results of my endeavours, I cannot, of course, venture to pronounce my opinion in advance—but of this I am certain, that in this respect your autograph letter, and the earnest and forceful way in which you couch your appeal to Switzerland, will be of most substantial help.

Would you kindly instruct your Secretary to forward to me, if possible, two dozen or so of the pamphlet with attached card?

Believe me,  
C. R. PARAVICINI.

The Central Club for the Y.W.C.A. for professional and business women, as well as for domestic workers, is to be erected near the junction of New Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road, where site has already been bought. In addition to the sum to be provided by the sale of the present building in Hanover Square, a sum of £100,000 must be raised to construct the planned Club Building, which will contain: Founders' Hall for large meetings, conferences and entertainments; Library, for which the Carnegie Trustees have promised a generous donation; Chapel for private and corporate worship; Lounge where members can meet their friends, both men and women; Club Rooms for groups of members and their organised activities; Restaurant, providing lunches, teas and suppers at reasonable prices; bedrooms for temporary use; Rest Rooms and Bathrooms; Gymnasium for all physical activities and, it is hoped, a Swimming Bath; Health Centre, providing skilled advice; Information and Housing Bureau.

Amongst other countries, Switzerland is asked to contribute to the institution by the gift of a room (for instance, a "rest room" at £1,000, or one or two bedrooms at £350 each), which rooms are to be named after some historical Swiss woman to perpetuate her memory.

The Swiss Minister is now considering the best means by which the contribution of Switzerland can be found.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### The Falling Mountain.

Large headlines, such as "Three Alpine Summits Crash" in the *Daily News* and somewhat exaggerated reports in all the English dailies have turned the long-expected phenomenon in the canton Ticino into a catastrophe. The reporters seem to have vied with one another in sending to London the most sensational news about the matter. We reproduce a leader which appeared in the *Times* (Oct. 5th):—

"For thirty years anxious eyes had been fixed upon Arbedo, a mountain in the Canton Ticino of Switzerland. In 1888 the summit was found to be moving horizontally northward. First at the rate of one inch a year, then of two inches, then of four inches, the movement of these 200,000,000 cubic metres of rock went on; and at the same time a vertical movement was lowering the peak at a similar rate of progression. In 1926 both movements became far more pronounced; the mountain top moved eleven inches northward and fourteen inches down. By the autumn of last year the danger had become so

urgent that the Government of the Canton ordered the evacuation of the villages most gravely threatened. Last December a Correspondent sent us a vivid account of desolation and impending ruin. Deserted villages with houses shuttered and forlorn; vast fissures engulfing earth and trees; splitting rocks, ominous crackings and rumblings proclaimed that the mountain was rotten through and through, and that the time was not far off when there must be such a fall as Europe had not known since the pre-Glacial Age. Now that hour has come. With din and dust like a volcanic eruption, a mountain top once nearly six thousand feet high has fallen into the valley, and with it have fallen three lesser peaks. Houses, roads, forests, pastures have been wiped out. So huge is the fall that the mass has choked the valley and heaped itself up the slope of the mountain on the other side. And still, says expert opinion, this is only the beginning.

It is a dreadful thought, the slow, relentless approach of a catastrophe which men must watch but can do nothing to stop. But in this great catastrophe not a human life has yet been lost. Therein it differs widely from a somewhat similar event which took place last April at Santos, in Brazil. The Swiss geologists and Government authorities cannot be too warmly congratulated upon the clearness of their prevision and the efficacy of their measures. But their anxieties are by no means over. What was foreseen has occurred: the fallen mass has dammed the course of the river in the valley. Above the barrier a lake will form containing many million cubic feet of water. And upon the power of the dam to bear the weight of that water depends the fate not only of a strip of the Saint Gothard railway a mile away, but of Bellinzona, the capital of the Canton. Bellinzona, the ancient city that was once a gate into Lombardy—the mediaeval fortification placed amid scenes of unexampled beauty—has claims of history and association, to say nothing of its modern dignity, which make its safety a matter of interest to many travellers who have changed there on their way to Locarno, or taken a leisurely way to the Italian lakes. It is not a pleasant thought that the fate of Bellinzona depends, as our Correspondent declared on Tuesday, upon atmospheric conditions. The city, with a gigantic landslip hard by, must now be steeling herself to face a cataclysm."

And this is what the *Daily Mail* writes on Oct. 4th under the title "When Man is a Mouse":—

"The fall of some three or four million cubic yards of rock, earth and forest from Mount Arbedo in Switzerland has produced sufficiently impressive results. But it is a mere nothing to the disturbance which the engineers and geologists say is imminent, and which may indeed occur at any minute—the fall of over 200 million cubic yards of rotten rock from the mountain. Nothing on quite this scale has happened in historic times in Switzerland.

The power of man can do little or nothing to avert such a disturbance. The cataclysms of nature he cannot control. They are of magnitude far beyond the scope of his forces. But it is interesting to reflect that he can often foresee them and guard against them. In this particular case of Mount Arbedo the population in the neighbourhood was evacuated some weeks ago; and therefore it is to be hoped that there has been no serious loss of life. Very different was it with the great mountain-fall which in 1806 overwhelmed Goldau, and which may have reached 20 million cubic yards of material. On that occasion over 450 people perished miserably because knowledge and foresight were wanting, and no one troubled to order precautions."

### In Praise of the Swiss.

The impressions of an English tourist are recorded under this heading in the *Western Mail* (Oct. 2nd); vanity must be our excuse for reproducing them *in extenso*:—

"We all know Switzerland as an incomparable playground—the playground not merely of Europe, but of the world. Indeed, a recent visitors' list included "M. et Mme. Quelquese, *Equator*," which was possibly a printer's merry jest. But few of us, perhaps, here in the West realise what a highly-organised and efficient State Switzerland really is. This does not apply only to hotel-keeping, though its hotels, as everybody is aware, are splendidly run, places where one finds cleanliness, courtesy, brightness, good food, good beds, even in the most modest establishments, and this due not to chance, but to definite and careful organisation.

For instance, there is at Lausanne an admirable college the sole purpose of which is to train