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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

A somewhat doubtful point in the minds of motorists has been set at rest by a recent decision of the Federal Tribunal. It refers to an accident which happened as far back as July, 1925 when on the road between Lausanne and Moudon a motor cyclist was killed in a collision with a motor car. It was admitted that the cyclist was travelling on the wrong side of the road and as in approaching the car he did not appear to have any intention of altering his course the chauffeur, in order to avoid a head-on impact, swerved to the left (the latter's wrong side) to allow the cyclist to pass; at the same moment, however, the cyclist corrected his direction with the result that a fatal collision took place in the middle of the road. The Lausanne Tribunal upheld the judgment of the Vaudois courts by which the motorist, though acquitted of manslaughter, was held partly responsible for the accident and mulcted in damages to the family of the victim. It is therefore evident that a motorist is bound by law to keep to his proper side of the road even if an accident is imminent.

Though suggestions to the contrary have recently appeared in Swiss LaFour papers it is now officially stated that the central council of the Swiss Socialist Party is not disposed to favour the candidature of a representative in the Federal Council.

For the construction of a new arsenal, in place of the one recently destroyed by fire, the Grand Council of Fribourg has voted a credit of Frs. 820,000.

The resident population of the town of Zurich has increased during October by 2,750 and is now computed to be 227,200.

In an official communication from the Swiss Tourist Office the acceptance of the initiative demand for the re-introduction of gaming tables at the casinos and hotels patronised by foreign visitors is warmly recommended. The matter will be submitted to the vote of the Swiss electorate on December 2nd.

The Bernese National History Society has elected Melle. Viviane de Wattenwyl an honorary member. Some time ago she accompanied her late father on an expedition in Central Africa, when he was killed by a lion; she continued her father's research work and brought home a valuable collection which she presented to the local museum.

The world-wide storm during the last week-end has caused considerable damage in the central part of Switzerland and has in one instance been responsible for the loss of three lives. A small steamer on the Zurich lake, carrying stone and sand, was caught by a terrific gale near the isle of Ufenau, and sank within a few minutes. The crew of four jumped into the water but only one of them was able successfully to fight the tremendous waves; he clung to a protruding rock until help arrived from the shore.

Philanthropic institutions in Andelfingen (Zurich) have benefited to the amount of Frs. 74,000 through legacies left by the late Dr. med. W. Breiter.

The editor of a Basle Labour paper has been fined Frs. 230 for having published disparaging statements about an affluent local Communist.

Federal Councillor Musy has been laid up with an attack of appendicitis from which he is slowly recovering.

Col. Ed. Usteri-Pestalozzi, a well-known banker and philanthropist, died in Zurich at the age of 78.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Nezeitliche Klubs zur Hebung der Gemütlichkeit.**—In Brugg hat sich ein Klub gegründet, der sich den schönen Namen "Höcker-Klub" beigelegt und seine Getreuen jüngst zu einem "Sauser-Hock" mit Freinacht eingeladen hat. Wer möchte da nicht mitmachen, besonders in der gegenwärtigen Epoche, wo man mangels von Vergnügungsanlässen so selten Gelegenheit hat, länger sitzen zu bleiben als bis Zwölfe. Diesem Leidwesen hat der Klub ein Ende gemacht, denn die Klubmitglieder sind zum "Hock-en" verpflichtet, wobei die Gemütlichkeit Trumpf ist.

Ein interessantes Gegenstück zu diesem Klub pantoffelfreier Männer ist in einem kleinen Städtchen an der Aare entstanden, nämlich "Der Klub der fideles Frauen." Welcher Mann sollte da nicht nach dem offiziellen Kommerz als auserwähltes Ehrenmitglied oder Gast das Präsidium übernehmen und für die Fideleität sein Zeppter schwingen wollen? Ein wirklich beneidenswertes Ehrenamt! Vielleicht gesellt sich als drittes Glied zur Hebung der Gemütlichkeit noch ein Klub, der sich nennt: "Klub der schönen, rässigen Frauen!"

—*Neue Argauer Ztg., Aarau.*

**Unsere Gesandtschaften.**—Die Schweiz besitzt zur Zeit 16 Gesandtschaften, von denen indessen jene in Petrograd seit 1918 nicht mehr besetzt ist. Die verbleibenden 15 Gesandtschaften beziehen laut Budget für 1928 Jahresgehälter in der Gesamthöhe von 625,000 Franken. Dazu kommen noch die Besoldungen und Zulagen für das Personal im Totalbetrag von 1,514,675 Fr. Der Personalbestand unserer Gesandtschaften beträgt rund 170 Mann, wobei die Gesandtschaften in Paris mit 28 Köpfen, in London mit 20, in Berlin mit 19, Washington mit 12 und Rom mit 11 Personen oben an stehen; es folgen weiter Wien, Buenos-Aires und Madrid mit je 9 Personen, Warschau und Brüssel mit je 8, Athen und Prag mit je 6, Bukarest, Belgrad und Rio de Janeiro mit je 5, Tokio mit 4, der Haag und Stockholm mit je 3 Mann Personal. Zu den oben angeführten ordentlichen Gehältern kommen noch Zulagen, Reiseentschädigungen und Unzugskosten in der Höhe von 470,000 Fr., ferner 311,000 Franken für Miete, Heizung, Beleuchtung und Unterhalt der Kanzleien und 190,000 Fr. für Post- und Telegraphengebühren, Mobiliaranschaffungen und Bürokosten, so dass der Bund für seine Gesandtschaften insgesamt rund 3,1 Millionen Franken auszugeben hat. Weitere 2,3 Millionen Fr., sind nötig für die Konsulate mit ihrem Stabe von 220 Personen, wodurch die Kosten für unsere gesamte Aussenvertretung auf 5,4 Millionen zu stehen kommen.

—*Ostschweiz Tagblatt.*

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

All the illustrated weeklies have issued special winter sports numbers and it wants a brave man to resist the lure of the wonderful alpine pictures—always assuming that he is the lucky possessor of an adequate bank balance. The choice of cloth comes in for most of the comment and advice, the attractions of the different resorts being often a secondary consideration. One paper thus summarizes the characteristics of the generally patronized places:—At Murren, all the people are terribly busy being public-school boys. At St. Moritz, everyone is busy being a Guards' officer and drinking champagne cocktails. At Grindelwald, everyone is busy being an old-fashioned English style skater. At Wengen, everyone is busy practising for the gold ski and making cross-country runs. Each of these four chief resorts, in fact, is utterly different. So now you know.

### Swiss Industries.

The Swiss Office for the Development of Trade has issued in English an attractive pamphlet with two maps and 23 photographs, containing a great deal of useful information about our industries, communications, economic relations with other countries, etc. We believe a limited supply of these pamphlets is still available at our London Legation; the following summary is taken from the *Statist* (Nov. 10th):—

It has often been observed that foreign business interests possess very little knowledge of the economic structure of Switzerland. This is all the more surprising as Switzerland buys almost as much merchandise from foreign countries as is purchased by Spain, with a population five times as great, and sells more goods abroad than are sold by Spain and Portugal combined. The publication of a booklet in English, dealing with economic activities in Switzerland, by the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade, is therefore particularly welcome. Switzerland has developed from an agricultural to a predominantly industrial country, becoming more dependent upon foreign supplies of raw materials and foodstuffs, with a tendency for its own industries to become more and more specialised. Among the raw materials imported those for the textile industry represent the highest value, followed by coal, iron, steel and other metals, building materials, timber and raw chemical products. Foodstuffs represent 28 per cent. of total imports.

Manufactured products represent four-fifths of the total of Swiss exports, and among the various branches of production for export the

textile group is the most important. The spinning and weaving of silk forms one of the chief activities of the textile branch, and within recent years, the artificial silk industry has been largely developed. The cotton industry employs 28,000 persons, but the bulk of the output is absorbed in the country itself, chiefly by connected industries. The woollen industry has grown considerably in the German part of the country, while knitting and hosiery rank among the leading export trades. The production of electric energy, and its distribution at great distances have contributed considerably to the development of the machine industry in Switzerland. Hydro-electric energy is a big asset in Swiss economy, for its exportation has been developing rapidly in recent years, yet only 73 per cent. of the total water power available has so far been utilised, though 97 per cent. of the population is supplied with electric energy, and the main railway lines are electrified.

The machine and metal industries are surpassed in importance only by textiles, and it is in the construction of various types of motors, such as electric and steam turbines and the Diesel engine that the largest output is registered. Swiss textile machinery has a considerable reputation abroad as have also Swiss pumps of all kinds. There is scarcely a single branch of machine construction in which Switzerland has not a speciality, and the manufacture of special machines for the food industry, breweries, the making of cement, paper and printing has opened up a large field of activity. Swiss cast steel made in electric ovens is exported in large quantities, while aluminium bars and aluminium products, in the production of which Switzerland ranks third among the countries of the world, are valued, for export, at over 55 million francs annually. The heavy chemical industry in Switzerland is still relatively young and its activity is closely linked up with that of the electricity industry, as certain works are engaged not only in the production of electric energy, but also in the manufacture of acids and salts. In spite of keen foreign competition, the output of Swiss dyes is steadily increasing. The Swiss watch-making industry continues to hold its own as first in the world, while the boot and shoe industry has rapidly developed. The total output of Swiss shoemaking firms, of which there are about 30, is nearly 7,000,000 pairs per annum, of which 2,000,000 pairs are exported. The competition from Swiss shoe-wear has been acutely felt by manufacturers in this country, which is one of the chief export markets for these goods.

The total foreign trade figure per head of the population places Switzerland first among the industrial countries of the world. The population enjoys a very high standard of living, the basis of which is due to the thrifty habits of the community. This is reflected in savings bank returns and in insurance business. At the close of 1926, the total amount of the insurance deposits reached 2,957 million francs, against 980 million francs at the end of 1917. In 1927, the average number of life insurance policies taken out per hundred families was 78, compared with 34 in 1913.

### A School above the Clouds.

A great many of our mountain hotels serve no useful purpose in winter, which means that during the few summer months in which they are open, they are forced to cover the expenses for the whole of the year. The proprietor of a Bernese Overland establishment has had the novel idea of running a winter school for teaching English. The English master in charge of the educational scheme has sent the following report to the *Times* (Nov. 17th), Educational Supplement:—

"On a narrow ledge, some four miles in length, 3,600 ft. above sea level, and 1,600 ft. above Lake Thun, lies the sunny village of St. Beatenberg, looking across to the Jungfrau, the Schreckhorn, Eiger, and Mönch. Nearly all the hotels in the mountain cantons are closed from October 15th to December 15th, and even in December only a few which are favourably situated open again for winter sports. Though Beatenberg has winter sports, only about two of the dozen hotels cater for them.

The owner of one of the hotels has had the excellent idea of utilizing his hotel, in the close period, for the instruction of young Swiss students in the English language. There are many young people in Switzerland ardently desirous of acquiring English who cannot afford to go to England for it. The hotel proprietor obtained permission from the authorities at Berne,