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The Swiss Observer

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FEDERAL.

RATIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION.

The Swiss National Council has ratified the International Conventions relating to prisoners of war and wounded already ratified by the State Council.

THE NEW SWISS PRESIDENT.

The two Chambers of the Swiss Parliament met on the 11th of this month in Federal Assembly and elected Federal Councillor Heinrich Haerberlin as President, and Federal Councillor G. Motta as Vice-President, of the Confederation for 1931. M. Haerberlin was President also in 1926. He is a jurist and was for seven years chief of the Federal Department of Justice and Police.

THE ZONE DISPUTE.

M. E. Judet, the eminent French Journalist, has had an interview with M. Musy, President of the Swiss Confederation. It is hoped that this interview will greatly help to bring about a more conciliatory attitude towards the Swiss demands on the occasion of the forthcoming discussions.

SWISS MILITARY BUDGET ESTIMATES.

The National Council adopted, last week, the military Budget estimates for 1931, which, including credits for the purchase of war material, amount to 91,000,000 francs. M. Minger, Federal Councillor, said that Switzerland's task was to obtain guarantees of security. The army was the first guarantee, and the Swiss forces were purely defensive in character.

TWO NEW FEDERAL JUDGES.

Dr. Adrian von Arx and Dr. Hans Aftolter, both citizens of the canton of Solothurn, have been elected as Federal Judges.

SWISS LOCOMOTIVES FOR MANCHURIA.

Successful trials of a new Diesel electric engine built by the firm of Sulzer Brothers for the South Manchuria Railway have been made on the Winterthur-Frauenfeld-Bomashorn line of the Swiss Federal Railway.

LOCAL.

BERNESE OBERLAND.

There has been heavy snowfall all over the Bernese Oberland and Winter Sports have begun on the Little Scheidegg.

LUCERNE.

The population of the Canton of Lucerne is returned as 188,659 inhabitants of which the town of Lucerne accounts for 46,871.

GLARUS.

The position at the Kilchstock is unchanged, the mountain shows a movement of between 8-9 mm., a day. Guards are on duty day and night in order to give warning to the population should any danger develop. J.S.P.

GENEVA.

M. Moriaud was last Sunday elected a member of the Geneva Government with 13,783 votes. M. Moriaud was at the head of the former cantonal government but suffered defeat at the last elections. Owing to the resignation of M. Naine (Socialist) a seat was vacated, which has now gone to M. Moriaud. M. Olttramare who contested the seat received 9,100 votes. T.G.

AARGAU.

The Cantonal Government has asked the Grand Council for a credit of approximately 380,000 frs. for a new bridge to be built between Koblenz and Waldshut. A similar amount will be provided by the German authorities. N.Z.

ST. GALL.

An inhabitant of the town of St. Gallen, lately deceased, left in his will an amount of 10,000 frs. to be divided amongst the mourners at his funeral. The news of this bequest must have leaked out somehow, as on the day of his burial a large number attended, so that the amount available for each mourner present, including the undertakers and cemetery officials, worked out at 180 frs. per person. N.Z.Z.

THURGAU.

The election of M. Haerberlin, as President of the Swiss Confederation for 1931 was made known to the population by firing a salute of twenty two guns. N.Z.

SCHAFFHAUSEN.

The Council of the Communist party has unanimously decided to expel National Councillor Bringolf from the party, they have furthermore requested him to send in his resignation as member of the National Council. M. Bringolf, however, informed the officials of the party that he has no intention of laying down his office as a member of Parliament. N.Z.Z.

VALAIS.

The Banque de Montagne S.A. Montana, has acquired the Banque Communale de Sierre.

LAUSANNE.

The population of Lausanne per 1st December amounts of 77,720 inhabitants.

TRADIZIONI BELLINZONESI SAN NICOLAO.

“Please remember
The 5th of November...”

Al mondo piccolo londinese sembrerà impossibile che un tale giorno per loro così importante, si che necessita commemorarlo con tanto di colpi... pirotecnici e con tanto di fuochi... di paglia, sia completamente ignorato dal mondo piccolo nostrano, ticinese. Questo non sa proprio chi sia stato Guy Fawkes e non si preoccupa neanche di volerlo conoscere, han ben altro in testa i bimbi ticinesi, specialmente i bellinzonesi... Loro devono pensare a quel bravo santo che ogni anno assume, o meglio riassume, spoglie umane, e viene, accompagnato dal suo docile cincherello, a trovarli: San Nicolao che, annualmente, lemme lemme, con la sua brava barbona bianca che gli arriva sino a metà del petto, con quel suo mantello d'un bel rosso fiammante, appoggiato a un nodoso bastone, che non può cavalcare il cincherello essendo già stracarico di doni per bimbi, scende in su la sera del 5 dicembre dalla ronita chiesa della Madonna della Neve, situata nel “mezzo del cammin” che comodamente conduce al castello più alto bellinzonese: quello di Unterwalden, e su di un poggio accanto a quel grotto ben noto quanto il castello, e forse più di questo frequentato: il famoso “Torrett,” dove, nelle sere belle estive e autunnali, mentre i raggi solari giocano allegramente, in distanza, sul lago di Locarno che dal grotto si può scorgere, il rosato nostranello scorre nei caratteristici boccali la bionda formaggella invita a uno spuntino... ma... intanto io mi sono allontanata dal bravo S. Nicolao che è giunto così nella vicinanza del Dragonato (perchè tale nome poi? o che forse un tempo in quel letto di torrente, quasi sempre asciutto, ci fosse un drago?... proverò chiederlo a S. Nicolao, lui lo saprà di certo dato che sa tutto: e quali sono i bimbi buoni a cui portare un giocattolo, un dolce; e cosa quel tal bimbo speciale preferisce... ma... anche questa volta devo fare una corsetina... continuo a lasciarmi sfuggire avanti questo benedetto Santo!). Davanti alle scuole Sud una numerosa schiera di frugolini lo attende ansiosamente, lui, bonaccione, sorride, li saluta con ampie gesta della mano, e prosegue placido per la città, seguito da quella schiera che fa un baccano straordinario e con campanelle, e con latte vecchie, persino con pentole... e il corteo entra, passa per le vie principali, ovunque salutato dal popolo che si raduna ai lati d'ogni strada per acclamare. Ora un tamburo marcia trionfalmente innanzi a S. Nicolao e al cincherello... e il suo rullo annuncia ai lontani ancora che S. Nicolao sta per arrivare. E gira così, mai stanco, sempre sorridente, percorre tutta quanta la Turrita, sino a che è buio completo, sino a che quel umidore che emana la terra incomincia a penetrare nelle ossa... allora S. Nicolao prende la via del ritorno... ritorna nel mistero, da dove è venuto... nessuno sa dire bene quale è la sua dimora... lo sa solo il cincherello, ma questo fedelmente mantiene il segreto... però domani, il 6 dicembre, i bimbi troveranno in fondo al letto, fuori della finestra, sul tavolo, quel tal giocattolo che volevano, e dolci, e arancie e mele... e in ogni scuola della città, sui banchi, gli allievi troveranno, li adatterli, non noiosi teoremi, non interminabili esercizi, ma pacchettini misteriosi... S. Nicolao ha voluto premiarli... tutti quanti, indistintamente.

Bellinzona,
Dicembre, 1930.

ELENA LUNGHI.

SWISS RIFLE ASSOCIATION. ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL.

The frequency of the festive gatherings in our Colony has, in some quarters, given rise to the wish of co-ordination or even curtailment though it can hardly be disputed that such celebrations are one of our national characteristics, nowhere exhibited with greater insistence than in our Homeland. It is, therefore, a matter for congratulation that the committee of the Swiss Rifle Association succeeded in mustering about 130 members and friends for their seventh Annual Banquet and Ball, which took place last Friday, December 12th, at the First Avenue Hotel under the chairmanship of Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, the Swiss Minister. This creditable achievement is enhanced in view of the admittedly adverse economic conditions and of the fact that the members of our Colony have during the last six weeks nobly—and we venture to say with considerable personal sacrifice—supported four other banquets held by sister societies.

The company sat down to dinner at 8 p.m. the preceding hour having agreeably been spent in the reception hall where the multitude and originality of the prizes reserved for our friendly snipers evoked everybody's admiration. The two loyal toasts having been proposed by the Chairman during the dinner, Mr. Henry Senn, the president of the S.R.A., rose at its termination and addressed the gathering as follows:

Monsieur le Ministre, Ladies & Gentlemen:—

The bugle call to cease fire must be a heartfelt relief to every commander in the field whilst to every President of the Swiss Rifle Association, although it's tenor may not have the same significance, it is nevertheless a sound that gladdens his heart for he only then realises the relief of the stand at ease from his responsibility.

The knowledge that the shooting season terminated without a casualty makes him very grateful to his loyal supporters. He only wonders now whether the cross fire of comment has found him an easy target or whether he has offered no chance of a palpable hit.

The battleground of the Swiss Rifle Association this year has been at Hendon. With the exception of our yearly visit to Bisley where two teams of four went into action with very commendable results, we have not left its precincts. We were delighted to arrange, as in past years, shooting contests open to all members of the Swiss Colony in London for the Swiss Sports and for the 1st of August celebration and are gratified that these competitions were keenly contested. The beautiful array of prizes to be presented presently is perhaps the most convincing proof of the excellent “esprit de corps” which has prevailed amongst our members in the inter-members competitions during the past shooting season. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all donors most heartily for their generous support of our to-night's prize table.

The Swiss Rifle Association is still in its youth but it has successfully weathered the storms of the 7 years it has been in existence. We are at present experiencing great anxiety in the world of commerce and it is only to be expected that universal depression in trade will leave its mark on sports and, whilst I have no wish to appear pessimistic, I do feel that never in the history of this Association has it been more necessary for our members to realise the great need of working together with good hearts and mutual goodwill in order to ensure the continued prosperity and success of the Swiss Rifle Association. Differences of opinion and difficulties there will always be but no matter how black the clouds may appear, every cloud has a silver lining and if the will to succeed is there, success will follow.

Shooting is one of the greatest of our National sports and I earnestly appeal to all members to focus their attention on that fact and to determine to uphold such an honourable tradition of our dear Homeland.

To-night we are gathered here to celebrate the 7th Anniversary and on behalf of the Swiss Rifle Association I extend to you all a most cordial welcome. I am very gratified on glancing round to look upon all familiar faces.

I am specially grateful both for the Swiss Rifle Association and myself to Monsieur Paravicini, our honorary President, for having accepted the Chair. I wish to thank you Sir,