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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

### FEDERAL.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL BANK.

The difficulties regarding the state-treaty between Switzerland and the other nations which is necessary for the establishment of the International Bank at Basle have found an elegant solution at the second Hague Conference. As all Swiss State-Treaties of a longer duration than 15 years are subject to the Referendum it seemed originally that the secure establishment of the International Bank would have to be delayed during the 90 days' period in which a popular vote for the acceptance or rejection of the treaty may be demanded by referendum. At the Hague it has now been decided to enter into two identical treaties, one for 15 years, for which period the referendum does not apply, and one for permanent duration. The Federal Government will submit both treaties to Parliament for ratification. While the permanent treaty will be in suspense for three months allowed for the referendum, the Bank's establishment is in any case secured for the period of fifteen years. The double treaty is really only a formality as no one anticipates that a Referendum will be demanded. But even if it should be demanded the probability that the treaty might be rejected by the popular vote is nil.

#### THE FASCIST ACCUSATION AGAINST SWITZERLAND.

The Federal Attorney General has submitted a detailed report to the Federal Council on the anti-fascist activities recently revealed in Paris, Brussels and Geneva which have caused the Italian Press to launch such violent attacks on the Swiss authorities for alleged neglect of their duties regarding the protection of the delegates to the League of Nations. The report gives the alleged plot against the Italian delegation a much less dangerous aspect than the Italian papers would have it. Berneri has been arrested in Brussels not for plotting but merely because he used false identity papers. How he and others gold hold of forged Swiss passports will be investigated. Our authorities have been watching Berneri's movements for several months and taken all the precautions required. On receipt of further information the Federal Government will more fully consider the unpleasant situation that has arisen owing to the Italian accusations.

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

The oldest living male citizen of Zurich is 94 years old. There are altogether 10 veterans of 90 and more years, and the report adds that, while 9 are widowers, "one is not yet married!"

A motion has been put to the Zurich Town Council to budget Fr. 10,000 pro 1930 for the furtherance of literature. Z.

#### BERNE.

As the nomination of Mr. Minger to the Federal Council has left a seat vacant on the Board of the Federal Bank, Mr. G. Gnägi, a member of the national council, has been requested to fill the post for the remainder of the current period. J.G.

A terrible tragedy has occurred at Thun. A working-man killed himself with his army rifle after first attempting to shoot his daughter with a revolver. Fortunately the girl escaped without injuries.

The motive for the tragedy seems to be that the father did not like the idea of his daughter, who was engaged, leaving him. T.G.

#### THE END OF A LEGEND.

The *Tribune de Genève* reports the following story: In the Bernese Oberland it is considered as an established fact that neither the lake of Thun nor the lake of Brienz have ever been frozen. A correspondent of the "Bund" however has found in a Bible of the 16th century a notice which shows that there is an error.

The notice which appears in a very archaic German reads: "A historical event happened in the year of grace 1685. The lake of Thun was

frozen to such an extent that horse drawn carriages and sledges were circulating on the ice. On the 26th day there was a severe earthquake and on the same day a heavy fall of snow covered the fields which lasted for a day and a night."

#### GLARUS.

Various outbreaks of fire in Elm, apparently due to arson, have agitated the inhabitants of the villages which consist mostly of wooden houses. A 28 years old woman was suspected and has owned her guilt. She was found to be insane and was removed to safety. St. G.

#### ZUG.

In Blickensdorf near Baar Mrs. L. Kälin showed her husband and her 21 years old son a revolver, which somebody had given to her. As the son took the weapon into his hands, there was a detonation and Mrs. Kälin collapsed mortally wounded. Z.

#### BASLE.

The Hague Conference has definitely decided on Basle as the seat of the International Reparations Bank. N.

#### ST. GALL.

The embroidery export in 1929 was 21 million francs less in value than in 1928. Z.

#### THURGAU.

Thanks to the perseverance of Prof. Dr. Leutenegger the Kantonsschule at Frauenfeld possesses now an astronomical observatory. Z.

#### GRISONS.

The Federal Council has authorised the Department of Political Economy to refund to the canton two thirds of the help granted in 1929 to vintners, up to a maximum of Fr. 12,000. This aid was given chiefly to the vintners in the Misox, as their vineyards suffered great damage from the severe winter. St. G.

#### ON A GOLDEN LUGE.

I gather that one of the most resplendent figures at St. Moritz this year is Lady Oppenheimer, wife of the South African magnate, Sir Ernest Oppenheimer.

Lady Oppenheimer and her suite caused a sensation to begin with by arriving in Switzerland in the private railway coach of the President of the French Republic. This is apparently the only private coach in France, and it is hired out to those who care to pay for it.

Then, they tell me, Lady Oppenheimer proceeds over the snow on a golden luge.

Be that as it may, she won the prize at the fancy dress dance at the Carlton, in a 1780 costume of unparalleled magnificence.

#### SKIERS IN AN AVALANCHE.

Three young skiers of Zillis, in the Canton of Grisons, were making an excursion on the Piz Beverin (9,849-ft.) when they were struck by an avalanche which swept them towards a precipice.

On the brink of the abyss they struck against a rock, to which they clung desperately while the rest of the avalanche thundered by. Their skis being smashed to splinters, they struggled on foot through the snow, which was sometimes up to their arm-pits, until they reached the valley in a state of exhaustion.

#### VALAIS.

The electorate had recently to decide on a credit of Fr. 700,000 for the construction of gas works estimated to cost Fr. 1,400,000 which is to provide gas for the communes of Sierre, Chalais, Chippis and Montana. The credit has been voted for by a large majority and one of the most modern plants will be erected in due course. J.G.

#### VAUD.

When making the customary round of inspection, the police of Rolle have found eight fishermen from Savoy who were throwing nets within 2 or 3 km of the Swiss shore. Sixty nets have been confiscated as well as 9 trout which have been given to the Hospital at Rolle. Bonne appétit!

#### FROM THE TICINO.

##### GOTTHARD RAILWAY.

To avoid the possibility of danger and recurring interruption of the line, at Arbedo, due to abnormal quantities of earth and stones brought down by the mountain torrent coming from the avalanche region of Mount Arbino, the Federal Railways have planned a deviation of the line, for a distance of about 1½ kilometers. After leaving the station of Bellinzona the new line would proceed closer to the mountain and would

(continued in next column)

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

### Switzerland is Getting Safer:

*Evening News*, 13th Jan.

More than 2,000 people returning from the winter sports in Switzerland arrived at Victoria Station last night. Five boat trains were run from the coast instead of the usual two.

Many business men returned, while bright mufflers showed that hundreds of undergraduates had come back to start a new term this week. Boys from the public schools, however, will have a few days longer in the snow.

More people returned than on the corresponding day last year, yet there were far fewer casualties.

There were some who limped or hobbled along, and some who had their arms in slings, while faces adorned with sticking plaster were plentiful. But there was not one cot case.

A Southern Railway official said that it seemed as if conditions had been less dangerous this season or that British winter sportsmen were learning to take more care of themselves.

Last year ambulances met several of the boat trains, but this season they were not required.

Doctors at Swiss resorts always look forward to a rich harvest at this time of the year, and they are rarely disappointed. A few people who should have returned are still in Switzerland under doctors' orders.

Customs officials were kept busy examining the luggage which had been registered through from Switzerland, and the passengers by the earlier divisions of the boat train had long waits before their luggage could be cleared.

I particularly like the last paragraph in the above article, the one about the very long delay at the Customs at Victoria Station. I take it that among those returned from Switzerland on that day were to be found a great number of members of the English Upper Classes, i.e., people who may have some "pull" with the Powers that be and who, having felt terribly vexed over that delay and having thought, perchance, also how utterly futile and stupid such Customs Barriers are, may have learnt something.

But, if Switzerland is getting safer—and to my mind, Switzerland has always been *The Safest Spot* in the world, except for the foolhardy and the swaggerers—may we not feel some grateful remembrance when reading the following tribute to our Guides?

### Bold Climbers of the Alps:

*Evening Telegraph and Post*, Dundee, 4th Jan.

More and more people each year seem to be seeking recreation on the Continent, either because the summers here are not warm enough or the winters not cold enough.

At the present moment hundreds of English and probably a few lucky Scots are disporting themselves amid the snow and ice of Switzer-

### Home News—(Continued)

cut through the alluvial cone of the torrent by way of a tunnel about 370 yards long. The railway line will be considerably improved as regards gradients and curves and the goods station of Bellinzona will have more elbow-room. The work is estimated to cost about 3 million francs and to take a year to carry out.

### CENTENARY OF CANTONAL CONSTITUTION.

As this year occurs the centenary of the adoption of the constitution, under which the Ticino has lived, with minor amendments, for the past hundred years, a committee of the leading politicians has decided to commemorate the event by holding a special meeting of the Grand Council on the 5th of July next. In addition, a book on historical developments with special attention to constitutional law will be issued and special tuition on matters connected with the constitution will be given in all the schools of the Canton.

### EXHIBITION OF ITALIAN ART.

The Swiss visiting the Exhibition of Italian Old Masters at Burlington House should not omit to pay some attention to the works (seven of them) by Bernardino Luini of Lugano, perhaps the best painter the Ticino has ever produced. His "A Boy with a Puzzle" is supposed to be the best painting of a boy in existence, and several others of his works are much appreciated. I do not know whether there are paintings by other Ticinesi, but then my knowledge of the world of art is rather meagre. O.B.