

**Zeitschrift:** The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

**Herausgeber:** Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

**Band:** - (1930)

**Heft:** 432

**Rubrik:** Prepaid subscription rates

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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED BY DR. H. W. EGLI WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE LONDON COLONY.

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 9595

Published every Friday at 23, LEONARD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRING, LONDON.

VOL. 10—No. 432

LONDON, FEBRUARY 1, 1930.

PRICE 3d.

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(Swiss subscriptions may be paid into Postcheck-Konto Basle V 5718).

## HOME NEWS

### FEDERAL.

#### REPLY TO FASCIST COMPLAINTS.

In an official communiqué the Federal Council gives an indirect reply to the unfounded charges made in the Italian press against the Swiss authorities concerning anti-fascist activities. As a result of police inquiries it is stated that no proof whatever exists that bombs or other weapons for criminal purposes have found their way from abroad to Geneva, or that the suspects arrested in Paris and Brussels ever communicated with Bertoni, Ludovici and Vella, or other persons in Switzerland with a view to the perpetration of a plot on the delegates to the League of Nations or on the Belgian Royal family on transit. The alleged visit of Berneri to the League buildings or to Geneva has not been proved. But on the other hand it is known that a Fascist agent provocateur who, was in touch with Berneri has visited Geneva in company of his mistress.

#### FEDERAL ELECTRICITY OFFICE.

On the 1st of April a new Federal Office for the surveillance of all matters connected with the generation and supply of electricity in Switzerland will be established. The office will collect useful statistics, seek contact with all electricity producers for purposes of co-operation in all respects, and especially deal with questions of the exportation of current.

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

Hans Hofer of Zollikon, a pupil of the Cantonal Commercial School in Zurich, was late in leaving his home and, in order to catch the train, ran as fast as he could. He got into the train and collapsed; heart failure had ended his young life.

Karl Wegmann, butcher, was on his way home at midnight, when he was accosted in an offensive way by a man on the Limmatquai. As Wegmann resented this, the other man retaliated by sticking a knife into him.

A few weeks ago an American film "The King of the Bernina," based on the novel by J. C. Heer, was stopped at a Zurich cinema on account of demonstrations by students.

The same film has now reappeared in Uster and a band of about 20 students from the Grisons have started a protest. It is stated that the film, which was not staged in Switzerland, does not do justice to the novel and further that no permission for its production had been obtained from the heirs of Heer.

#### BERNE.

Thieves have given their attention to the Kunstmuseum and the historical museum at Berne, in each of which small oil paintings were taken.

The town of Berne also desires a Zoo. An association has been founded with this end in view. The Elfenau is the proposed site, and the cost is estimated to be 1,117,500 Frs.

The Berne Town Council is now presided by Hurni (soc.) formerly its first vice-president, and Dr. Flückiger (lib.) follows the former as vice-president. Berger-Stalder (cons.) was elected second vice-president.

The Administrative Council of the Kursaal Schaanli has decided, on account of the insufficiency of receipts, to close its doors in October next and in future to keep open from June to October only. The re-establishing of the games has not met with the expected success and every week the deficit is increasing. Since the maximum stake has been reduced from Fr. 5 to Fr. 2 the number of visitors has greatly diminished.

The Federal Council has requested the town authorities to prevent the square in front of the Federal Palace and streets in the immediate neighbourhood from being used as parking places on account of the incessant noise and the traffic congestions caused by stationary vehicles. Their

wish has been acceded to although Berne is not any too well provided with space for parking cars.

#### SCHWYZ

Josef Tritsch, of Unter-Iberg, during his work as a wood-cutter, climbed a pine to remove a branch with his axe. A blow with his axe glanced off and hit his forehead with such force that he was killed instantly. He leaves a widow and five children, aged from 2 to 10 in poor circumstances.

#### ZUG.

On January 10th, the Mayor of Zug, X. Schmid, received a post-card with a menacing message. Exactly eight days afterwards, at 9.15 p.m., three revolver bullets were fired at his house, one of which penetrated the window of the dining-room in which three people sat at the table. In the following night, stones were thrown through two windows. The authorities offer a reward of 500 frs. for the arrest of the miscreant.

#### SOLEURE.

Solothurn town inhabitants have reached the number of 14,052, and Grenchen now counts 10,972. Since the last census (1920) Grenchen's population has increased by 21 per cent., Olten by 14 per cent., and Solothurn by 8.34 per cent. At this rate, Olten and Grenchen will soon overshadow the Capital.

#### BASLE.

Spectators were horrified to see a railway employee, who crossed the lines early last Monday morning, slip and fall in front of a fast goods train. They rushed across the lines to help the poor unfortunate, if human help would still avail, only to see the man get up absolutely unharmed. He fell between the lines, and the train passed over him without touching him.

The tramways of Basle, covering 67½ km, realised an excess of receipts of Fr. 2,300,000 for the year 1929. After payments for interest and amortisation the net profit amounts to over Fr. 560,000, an increase of Fr. 200,000 over the preceding year.

#### SCHAFFHAUSEN.

Pro-Rector Professor Gustav Kugler was elected rector of the Kantonschule in place of Dr. Ed. Haug, who retired.

Low water during winter usually exposes part of the right side of the Rhine bed immediately above the falls and seems to attract foolhardy people to show their prowess as climbers. A few days ago, two strangers were climbing about the rocks, when one suddenly slipped and fell into the water which carried him into the depth. By a miracle he escaped serious injury and, being a strong swimmer, he managed to reach safety.

#### ST. GALL.

Entertainment Tax in the town of St. Gall has added 96,061 Frs. to the Town's revenue in 1929.

"Migros Ltd." has opened a branch at the Burggraben in St. Gall and has also organised sales in the streets by means of a fleet of lorries. Customers rolled up in masses, even country people came to the "cheap shop" and carried their purchases away with them. But the interesting point is not the instant success of the new shop; that this venture would force their competitors to reduce their prices was foreseen, but not to the extent to which it amounts. Not only 10 or 20 per cent., no even bigger reductions have taken place, and the Co-operative Society (Konsumverein) is flooding the households with leaflets showing that their prices and the dividend at the end of the year enable our housewives to buy as cheaply from them, if not cheaper.

#### VAUD.

A visitor to the "Musée cantonal des beaux-arts" at Lausanne discovered that a painting, dating from the 18th century, was missing. The canvas by the French painter Largillière (1656-1746), represents the sculptor Coysevox in grey attire, holding in his hands hammer and chisel and standing in front of a bust. The picture was the property of the Baron Pierre de Coubertin who had loaned it to the museum.

#### NEUCHÂTEL.

According to information from the Chilean Legation at Berne that country has now decided to establish a Consulate at Neuchâtel.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

Did I? Oh yes, I did! Did what? Why, hit them down the middle! And so, after all, I shall again look at those "very helpful" bits of advice in my Golfing Almanack! Yes, laddie, such is Golf!

We are getting nearer the time when our friends in some parts of Switzerland think of Carnival and all that it means. Winter-storms and other cares are forgotten and put on one side and busy minds are trying to find out how best to achieve a complete change from our usual self for a few hours.

It may therefore be somewhat appropriate if we select a few gleanings in a lighter mood this week and, although I have stated before that I will not publish too many winter-sports articles, I will now make an exception to that rule by putting before you a few articles, which are, to my mind, worth reading because they are delightfully light.

First of all we will make our flesh creep a bit—this in order to make the "light-reading" all the lighter afterwards—and take the following from *The Daily News*:

### My Greatest Half Minute Thrill

By WILLIAM J. MAKINS.

Which sport gives the greatest half-minute thrill? It is not easy to decide. I have stretched myself in sun and spray on a surf-board and raced with a roller towards the beach at Waikiki, in Honolulu. There was that glorious half-minute in a racing-car on Verneuk Pan in South Africa, when I roared into a mirage at 100 miles an hour. And there was the thrill, lasting more than half a minute, when in an aeroplane flight across India at night, our pilot swooped down to what he thought was the glitter of a big city, and found it to be the jungle ablaze.

Those thrills were memorable. Yet they were all swept away in the half-minute thrill I experienced when bob-sleighing at St. Moritz. On the Cresta run, with a skeleton sleigh, you travel at 80 miles an hour; on the bob-sleigh run in a crew of five you travel at a mere 40 miles an hour. But lying down with one's face near the blue ice that 40 miles an hour seems terrific.

It all began so casually. For two hours at St. Moritz I had been a looker-on at Sunny Corner, that semi-circular curve of the wall around which the bob-sleighs swirl in dizzy fashion, then hang at a terrifying horizontal before dashing into the narrow slope that leads to Horse Shoe Bend. Motor-racing at Brooklands seemed tame in comparison.

I saw one bob-sleigh with its five riders stretched swirl up that wall of ice to the height of 15-ft., hang for one breathless moment, and then fall abruptly to the bottom, throwing its riders into the air. Steel discs on elbows and knees saved them from serious injury, and they rose feeling their limbs and brushing snow and ice from their clothes.

When, later, a friend suggested I might care to join a bob-sleigh crew, I tried not to show any hesitation. I only realised after a few seconds that I had accepted. I was taken to the pavilion and there introduced to the steerer of the bob-sleigh with a daring name. He was not prepared to accept me as one of the crew with any enthusiasm. I found I was the amateur among a group of men who year after year took their chances in this modern Suicide Club. I had not even the experience of a village toboggan to my credit. Finally he mumbled that I might be placed as number four

### Home News—(Continued)

#### VALAIS.

The following subventions have been granted by the Federal Council: Fr. 72,500 or a quarter of the total cost, for the construction of a forest road in the "Val des Dix" in the commune of Hérémence and Fr. 31,032 for afforestation purposes estimated to cost Fr. 50,000.

#### GENEVA.

A cantonal committee, composed of members of various political parties and representatives of the medical profession, has been formed for the purpose of organising a campaign in favour of a reform in connection with alcohol legislation.