

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: 436

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: FPREINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 10—No. 436

LONDON, MARCH 1, 1930.

PRICE 3d.

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	3 Months (13 issues, post free)	6 Months (26 issues, post free)	12 Months (52 issues, post free)
UNITED KINGDOM AND COLONIES	6s.	12s.	24s.
SWITZERLAND	6s.	12s.	24s.
<i>(Swiss subscriptions may be paid into Postcheck-Konto Basle V 6718).</i>			



HOME NEWS

FEDERAL.

THE SPIES IN THE TICINO.

The investigations regarding the activities of the three spies recently arrested in the Ticino are still in the hands of the Cantonal authorities. When all the facts have been ascertained the question will arise whether a trial under the Federal Assizes is indicated. It seems that the prisoners were acting under orders from Italy, while the Italian consulates in Switzerland were probably not involved, as the *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* states. If inimical acts against Switzerland which are contrary to international law are proved the trial will be by Federal Assizes, probably in the Ticino. Twelve members of the jury would be selected from the French and Italian parts of Switzerland.

FALSE SWISS PASSPORTS.

The Federal Authorities are engaged on investigations regarding the origin of the false Swiss passports which were found in the possession of Italians. Some of them are said to be in the hands of the Rome Government and Swiss officials will probably proceed to the Italian capital in order to examine the spurious documents.

THE FREE ZONES.

Since the interruption of the direct diplomatic negotiations regarding the future of the Free Zones near Geneva no further progress has been achieved. Federal Councillor Motta has had a discussion with the French Ambassador in Berne without, apparently, gaining the hope that matters may yet be settled amicably. Strengthened by the preliminary decision of the Hague Court our authorities will only negotiate on the basis of the maintenance of the Free Zones in some form, while the French insist on moving the customs line to the political frontier. The period allowed by the International Court of Justice for negotiations will lapse at the end of April.

NEW JAPANESE MINISTER.

The Berne Government received the new Japanese Minister Yada last Wednesday who presented his credentials. He was formerly General Consul in Shanghai.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

A lodger in a house "im Winkel" near Meilen had a dispute with his landlady. To revenge himself, he set fire to the loft. The roof was destroyed, and the lodger's body was found among the debris. Evidently he was suffocated by the smoke. N.Z.Z.

BERNE.

A taxi skidded on the Kirchenfeldbrücke and collided with the parapet. The car came to a stop hanging partly over the bridge; fortunately the chauffeur managed to jump to safety. St. G.T.

The Socialist party of the Jura district held a meeting at Moutier and decided to nominate a candidate for the forthcoming elections to the Berne States Council.

LUCERNE.

A novel kind of theft is reported from Lucerne, where a black swan was stolen from the swan colony near the Seebrücke. The missing bird is valued at 500 Fs. N.Z.Z.

SCHWYZ

On the Axenstrasse, between Brunnen and Sisikon, where the drop is sheer, traces of a skidding car were found. Apparently the car was being turned round, when it must have fallen over the precipice. The lake is very deep in that part, and endeavours are to be made to find the car. A few days before the discovery a car was stolen at Brunnen, and people are wondering if the same car is involved. So far nothing has been found, which allows any conclusion as to whether the car contained passengers or not, when it fell into the lake. N.

Dr. Busch, unmarried and aged about 30, from Baden and employed by a Zurich Insurance company, went on a ski-ing excursion from

Glarus towards the Wäggitäl. Sunday evening Dr. Busch suddenly disappeared at a sharp turning in the Sliggenbachschlucht. His companion searched for him; all he could find was a spoor leading straight into the precipice. Evidently Dr. Busch had missed the turning in the road without noticing it owing to nightfall. He fell over the rocks into the Wäggitäl-Stausee. His body has been recovered. N.Z.Z.

The management of the Südost railway company is studying the question of electrifying the line. So far, this was impossible, as the supply of current was too costly. The Etzelwerk will remove this obstacle. The Bodensee-Toggenburg railway is giving attention to the same problem and would welcome the electrification of the Südost, as the latter line is the direct continuation of the former to the central parts of Switzerland. St. G.T.

GLARUS.

During blasting operations at the site of the Sernft-Niedererbach power station, near Schwanden, a miner was struck by a stone and killed. The unfortunate victim is a man named Tresch, aged 27 years, from Uri. N.Z.Z.

BASLE.

A motion for the separation of State and Church has been tabled in the Basle Grand Council by National Councillor F. Schneider in the name of the Social-Democrat Party. This move follows the recent celebration of the 400th anniversary of the Basle Reformed Church, when the Government spokesmen presented their wishes and congratulations to the Church. The impression created by this fact is a very painful one, and is considered the beginning of an attack on religion itself, not only as the political move which the motion would seem to indicate. N.Z.Z.

During the excavations for the new railway bridge across the Birs near St. Jakob, four mammoth tusks, each one about two yards long, have been found. Further discoveries were made in a gravel pit nearby, where some molars were found, each one having a circumference of about twelve inches. Digging is continued with the greatest care and under expert guidance. N.

ST. GALL.

Melanie Wagner, who died in Lucerne, left her fortune amounting to 520,000 Fcs. to her home canton. She came from Wattwil. Her will leaves her money in equal parts to the following institutions and authorities: Wattwil hospital, for the care of mentally afflicted persons in the canton, to the Bürgergemeinde Lichtensteig for poor invalids, and a like amount to the same authority for free disposal. St. G.T.

SOLEURE.

Tobogganing through the village of Egerkingen, a 14 years old son and a 15 years old daughter of the widow Rosa von Arx-Peyer ran into a wall. The boy broke a leg; his sister smashed her skull against the wall and was killed instantly. The two children were the youngest of a family of seven. N.

FRIBOURG.

Two foresters who were hunting foxes in the mountain district above Planfayon were caught by an avalanche. One of them was able to fetch assistance. After many hours search in darkness they managed to dig the unfortunate man out of the snow just before midnight, but he died half an hour later. T.G.

VAUD.

A well-known and highly respected person in the canton, Mr. Jules Glardon, member of the Cantonal Tribunal and President from 1915 to 1925, has died at Lausanne, aged 73. ***

A serious accident occurred at Sainte-Croix when a bob-sleigh with eight passengers collided with another bob. Three young ladies had to be transported to the Infirmary at Sainte-Croix. T.G.

VALAIS.

The hotel Gruben has been completely destroyed by fire. A party of five, amongst them the son of the proprietor, called at the hotel after a ski-ing expedition. They managed to light a fire in the kitchen to prepare some supper. Less than an hour later flames were emerging from the roof, probably due to some congestion in the chimney. Unfortunately the "föhn" was in full force at the time so that practically nothing could be saved. T.G.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

Did the Ancient Britons Come from Switzerland?

Southend Standard, 30th Jan.

On Monday, under the auspices of the Southend and District Antiquarian and Historical Society, a lantern lecture, entitled "The Thames Estuary as the gateway to Ancient Britain," was delivered at the High School for Boys, Southend, by Dr. R. E. Mortimer Wheeler, M.C., D.Litt., F.S.A., Keeper and Secretary of the London Museum.

Speaking of the early lake-dwellers who came west, the lecturer said these had a special interest in Southend at the present time and went on to remark upon the traces of the famous lake villages discovered in Switzerland. The reconstruction of these lake dwellings revealed much of interest, for their submergence had enabled not only material objects, but even corn and other grain to be preserved. This helped the reconstruction of the early history of agriculture in Europe and more was known about these lake-dwellers than about most of other ancient peoples on the Continent.

Soon after 2000 B.C. much of our country was conquered by Germany, whose bands landed on our coasts and occupied them. Their traces were identified by their pottery, of which beakers were well-known examples; some found at Thorpe Bay were in the Museum at Prittlewell. But those Germans were not only known by their pottery; they brought a distinct type of skull with them on their own shoulders. Those German invaders had been described by a distinguished scientist as the prototypes of Bil Sikes!

In the course of the next 1,000 years the metal became very widely spread and many specimens had been found at Leigh. Other hoards were noted at Shoebury, and yet others at Colchester. Bronze, indeed, was largely used in East Essex and the local making of bronze objects by roving craftsmen made the district a sort of itinerant Sheffield. Each of such hoards represented the work of some pre-historic tinker. Up to about 1000 B.C. the ordinary "soldier" was content to use a kind of rapier as his sword; these were quite good for thrusting, but not so good for cutting. But about the period named great quantities of heavier cutting swords found their way into the Thames Valley.

The lecturer showed a slide depicting the edge of a Swiss lake, revealing the tops of buried piles, which had supported a lake village at that spot until the inhabitants were driven out of their homes. They came west, and one of his (the lecturer's) slides showed a typical lake village, dating from some time before Caesar. This was known as the Glastonbury Lake Village. Attempts had been made to trace the tracks of the Swiss lake-dwellers in this country. Here and there implements were found in the Thames Valley which resembled those seen in Switzerland. Among other discoveries were razors of some 3,000 years ago and tweezers for pulling out the beard if the razor would not cut; knives and sickles were also found, all of Swiss rather than British type.

So that if one of your friends calls you a "foreigner" again, you just inform him who really were the first ones to live here!

A very Sensible Idea:

Daily Express, 6th Feb.

Dr. Frida Imboden, of St. Gall, has founded a society to aid poor brides.

It is the custom in Switzerland for the bride, even among the working classes, to purchase her own trousseau and, if possible, household linen. Dr. Imboden counts chiefly on wealthy brides to come to the aid of their poorer sisters not only by contributing money, but by giving the many useless and expensive

Drink delicious "Ovaltine" at every meal—for Health!