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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

FRANCO-SWISS CONVENTION.

A commercial convention between France and Switzerland has been signed and entered provisionally into operation on April 1, pending formal ratification. The convention is for six months, but it is provided that if it has not been denounced by either party two months before expiry, it will be continued, each party reserving the right to denounce it at three months' notice. An interesting feature of the agreement is the stipulation with regard to most-favoured-nation treatment.

The first clause provides that Swiss products entering France, with the exception of goods specified in a short list, shall not be subjected to duties less favourable than those applied to products of the same nature imported from any other country; while French goods entering Switzerland — again with a few specified exceptions — are to be admitted with the benefit of the lowest duties accorded to any other country. It will be noted that the French objection in principle to an unconditional and unlimited most-favoured-nation clause is thus formally respected, but the list of excepted goods is comparatively unimportant and contains such products as oysters and elephants' tusks, which can hardly be regarded as characteristic Swiss products.

In addition to the convention, it is understood that agreement has been reached on practical questions concerning tariffs and quotas. According to information from Swiss sources, duties are not to be raised on goods subject to quotas. In the case of other goods, any proposed increase in duties is to be the subject of negotiation. The delay thus imposed appears to be welcomed on the Swiss side as a guarantee against sudden changes.

SUCCESS OF THE BASLE FAIR.

The 18th Basle Fair has been a great success. There were altogether 1,228 exhibitors (1933, 1,157). The number of visitors amounted to 110,714 (1933, 90,297). These figures do not include season ticket holders and free passes. Foreign visitors numbered 1,499 (1933, 1,164), representing 35 countries, not including the 1,000 Frenchmen who attended the "Elsässertag."

STRANGE TRAVELLING COMPANIONS.

Two bears from the famous bear pit in Berne and a couple of St. Bernard dogs have left Switzerland for Chicago, where they will be exhibited at the Swiss village at the Centenary Exhibition.

THE SWISS GRAND PRIX.

An interesting fixture on the international calendar is the Swiss Grand Prix, organised by the Automobile Club of Switzerland. The date is August 26, the place the new Bremgarten track near Berne, which is under course of construction, having a minimum width of 8 metres. There are to be two races — for cars under 1,500 c.c. and for international formula cars, the one 14 laps (102 kilometres), the other 70 laps (510 kilometres). The cash prizes amount to 36,000 francs. Entries close on June 15.

EXPULSION OF FRANZ BURRI.

M. F. Burri, formerly editor of the "Ausschweizer," who has been expelled from Austria, has asked for publication of the following explanation:—

"Die Mitteilung der Schweizerischen Deputation über meine Ausweisung aus Oesterreich entspricht nicht den Tatsachen. Ich habe mich während meines 15 jährigen Aufenthaltes in Oesterreich nie parteipolitisch betätigt, somit auch keine regierungsfeindliche Betätigung an den Tag gelegt. Die Regierung

hat mich wegen meiner Tatsachen-Berichterstattung über Oesterreich an die Schweizerpresse verhaftet und ausgewiesen. Im Ausweisungsbeschluss ist von einer "regierungsfeindlichen Betätigung im nationalsozialistischen Sinne" auch gar keine Rede. Der Hauptzweck der Ausweisung liegt darin, mich vom einflussreichen Posten eines Generalsekretärs des Hauptverbandes der Zeitungsverleger Oesterreichs zu entfernen. Da man keine strafrechtliche oder sonstige Ursache fand, griff man zum "Polizeiadministrativweg." Irgend eine Rechtfertigung und Verteidigung konnte ich nicht erbringen, da es in Oesterreich kein Recht und keine Gerechtigkeit mehr gibt."

SWISS AVIATION.

From May 1st the "Swissair" Company will use Curtiss-Condor machines which are fitted with two motors, can seat 15 passengers comfortably, and travel at 144 miles per hour.

The St. Gall Aero-Company has decided to introduce De Havilland machines of the 'Dragon' type, with two motors and a capacity of six passengers, the speed being 135 miles per hour.

SWISS AIR SHOW.

The Aero Club of Switzerland is making a great effort to bring together a large number of private aeroplane owners and amateur flyers from all countries on the occasion of its Salon International d'Aviation de Sport et de Tourisme, which opens on Friday and continues until May 6.

All pilots landing at Cointrin Aerodrome during the period of the show will be exempt from landing and housing fees; motor-cars will convey them to their hotels and bring them back to the aerodrome when they leave. For two days and one night they will be the guests of the Aero Club of Switzerland, which will entertain them in the best hotels in the town. They will enjoy free entrance to the show during their stay in Geneva.

Every pilot will be entitled to bring with him one passenger, who will enjoy the same privileges as the pilot.

In the show itself the preponderance of exhibits is German, there being 24 German companies represented. Ten Swiss companies are exhibiting, six French, five British, three Italian, and three American.

The object of the show is to encourage amateur flying and civil flying in general, and to establish a centre at which light aeroplanes, commercial transport machines, and their engines and accessories may be exhibited, away from all military air equipment.

ALPINE ACCIDENTS IN 1933.

There were 89 fatal climbing accidents in 1933 in the Swiss, French, Italian and Austrian Alps, as against 84 the previous year. This total is the second highest for the past 10 years, the highest being 95 in 1931. The accidents in 1933 involved the death of 112 persons, of whom 101 were men and 11 women. Of these victims 48 were Swiss, 21 German, 13 French, 10 British — among them the four Eton masters killed on Piz Palu in August — 10 Italian, six Austrian, and four of other nationalities. On account possibly of the lack of snow during several weeks in the winter, only 17 persons were killed in skiing accidents, compared with 27 in 1932.

Examination of the chief causes of the accidents shows that 57 were due to falls on rock, 10 to falls on ice or snow, five to falls in crevasses, four to falling stones. In 36 cases the accidents may be ascribed to imprudence, lack of experience, or defective equipment, and might have been avoided.

With a view to reducing the number of Alpine accidents, the Swiss Alpine Club is continuing its course of lectures and training in the mountains, and during the past winter about 1,400 persons under 25 have attended the lectures and taken part in skiing and climbing practice.

GLACIERS MOVING BACKWARDS.

No fewer than 81 of 100 glaciers in Switzerland which have been under observation by the Society of Natural Sciences are reported to be moving backwards. Of the remainder, 15 are moving forward and four are standing still.

The scientists say that the 81 glaciers are moving backwards because they are melting more quickly at their "ends" than they are being pushed forward.

ZURICH.

The town council of Zurich has informed the "Nationale Front" that no demonstrations must be held on May 1st.

BERNE.

Prof. Dr. Ernesto Quesada, the celebrated sociologist and historian of South America, died at the age of 76, after a short illness, at Spiez. Prof. Quesada prepared himself originally for a diplomatic career, but became in due course Attorney General at Buenos Aires. He taught at the same time at the Universities of Buenos Aires and La Plata, and was in recent years also an honorary professor at the University of Berlin. Spiez has been his adopted home for a number of years.

Berne has recently moved the interesting displays featured in its old Museum of Natural History on the Ferdinand Hodler Strasse to the magnificent new structure which is erected for this purpose on the Bernastrasse. The building of this modern home for the zoological and botanical treasures of the Federal capital necessitated an outlay of half a million francs.

LUCERNE.

M. A. Bühler-Huss, head of the firm Scherer & Bühler, wine merchants in Lucerne, has celebrated his fiftieth wedding anniversary.

ZUG.

A farewell dinner to Federal Councillor Etter took place last Sunday at the Casino in Zug. Various speakers expressed their thanks to M. Etter for the great services which he had rendered to his native canton.

BASLE.

Traffic in the Rhine harbour of Switzerland has, in spite of the depression, increased 20 per cent. in the year 1933. The total tonnage for that period amounted to 1,695,600, compared to 1,410,900 in 1932. Navigation on the Rhine in Switzerland, as far as Rheinfelden, was inaugurated a year ago.

Professor Oppikofer, head of the university clinic for ear, nose and throat diseases, has celebrated his sixtieth birthday anniversary.

M. S. Schatz-Hochstrasser, proprietor of the Hotel Stadthof at Basle, has died at the age of 61.

GENEVA.

The death is reported from Geneva of Lieut.-Colonel J. Roussillon, at the age of 62.

AARGAU.

The Egyptian Government has entrusted the firm of Rothpletz & Lienhard, at Aarau, with the reconstruction of the famous Mohammed-Ali Mosque at Cairo. With the exception of the two minarets and surrounding walls, the entire structure will be razed and rebuilt in reinforced concrete.

Mme. Elisabeth Siegrist-Müller, in Aarau, has celebrated her hundredth birthday anniversary.

OBWALDEN.

Landammann Karl Stockmann, head of the cantonal finance department, has tendered his resignation for reasons of health.

GRISONS.

The largest international physicians' league has decided to hold part of its 1934 conference at St. Moritz in July. Some 1,500 medical men and university professors from leading countries all over the world will consequently gather in this popular Upper Engadine resort, while the summer season with its many opportunities for sports and diversions is in full swing.

VALAIS.

The government of the canton of Valais has informed M. Nicole, head of the Geneva Government, that his presence at a Socialist demonstration which took place last Sunday at Martigny was not desirable, and that he would be prevented from crossing the cantonal borders.

VAUD.

The population of the town of Lausanne at the end of March, 1934, numbered 82,735, of which 9,785 were foreigners.

TIGINO.

Gandria, Morcote, Campione, the bridge of Melide and other choice spots on the Lake of Lugano will be artistically illuminated from May 9 to 21, when Lugano expects to celebrate a "week of light." In the town itself there will be an electrical show, also a series of festivities and parades.