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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

New Official Language.

By 573,958 votes to 51,643, the Swiss electorate accepted the Government's proposal to make Romansch the fourth national language. The decision has been received with much rejoicing in the Canton of Grisons, where the language is spoken by nearly 45,000 persons. The figures (not complete) are as follows:—

Zürich	112,571	8,342
Bern	56,535	7,036
Luzern	19,526	1,138
Uri	3,002	464
Schwyz	7,132	1,402
Nidwalden	1,471	134
Obwalden	1,671	146
Glarus	5,647	320
Zug	3,159	116
Freiburg	14,801	1,152
Solothurn	16,733	583
Basel-Stadt	35,151	2,501
Basel-Land	11,395	659
Schaffhausen	10,864	543
Appenzell A.-Rh.	8,056	805
Appenzell L.-Rh.	1,739	275
St. Gallen	47,138	4,396
Graubünden	21,568	1,692
Aargau	51,755	6,940
Thurgau	24,887	2,121
Tessin	11,725	677
Waadt	72,071	8,422
Wallis	13,680	1,848
Neuchâtel	8,602	438
Genève	11,437	117

Total . . . 572,129 52,267

New Swiss Minister in Berlin.

The Federal Council has appointed Dr. Hans Frölicher, Counsellor of Legation, to the post of Swiss Minister in Berlin, in succession to Minister Paul Dinichert.

Minister Frölicher is at the present at the Foreign Office in Bern; he has occupied various posts at Swiss Legations abroad. The new Minister hails from the canton of Solothurn and is nearing the age of 50.

Minister Dinichert will shortly be appointed to the post of Swiss Minister to Sweden, Norway and Denmark, with residence at Stockholm; this post is at present occupied by Minister Charles Louis Lardy, a brother of M. Etienne Lardy, Swiss Minister in Turkey.

Swiss National Costume Festival at the French Embassy.

The French Ambassador in Bern gave a reception at his Embassy; the guests were asked to appear in national dress. A large number of guests attended in Swiss national costumes, so did a number of foreign diplomats. M. Baumann, president of the Swiss Confederation, was amongst the numerous guests. (But not in "Appenzellertracht."—Ed.)

Swiss Arms Control.

As the result of a referendum in Switzerland, a proposal for Federal control of private armament undertakings was accepted by 392,731 votes against 149,440.

Anglo-Swiss Convention.

H.M. Stationery Department has published the text of the Anglo-Swiss Convention in regard to Legal Proceedings, which was signed in London on December 3rd, 1937. (Cmd. 5658, price 2d.)

International Ice-Hockey Match.

The Swiss National Ice-Hockey Team, which is competing at the International Ice-Hockey Tournament in Budapest, has been beaten by Czechoslovakia (1:2), after extra time having been played.

LOCAL.

ZÜRICH.

M. K. E. Hilgard, a well-known consulting engineer and a former Professor at the Technical University in Zürich, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary.

BASEL.

All the four Socialist candidates for the cantonal government were elected in the first ballot, a second ballot will have to be held for the three members of the Bourgeois party; the Socialists, therefore, are still in the majority. The elections for the Grand Council (Grosse Rat) show the following result:—Radicals, 22 (22); Liberals, 17 (16); Cath. Popular Party, 14 (13); Nat. Popular Party, 6 (11); Socialists, 51 (46); Communists, 15 (16); Evangelical Party, 1 (3); "Freiwirtschaft" Party, 0 (3); Landesring (Duttweiler), 4 (0). The Socialists and Communists have, therefore, the majority in the cantonal Parliament.

Doctor Hans Iselin, Professor of Medicine at the University in Basle, has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary. Professor Iselin enjoys an international reputation as a surgeon.

Dr. Paul Häberlin, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Basle, has reached the age of 70. He is the author of a large number of books on philosophy.

FRIBOURG.

M. Jules Glasson, from 1911 until 1938 manager of the "Greyerzer" Volksbank, has died at the age of 66. The deceased was for a number of years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Fribourg.

GRISONS.

Four lives were lost in an avalanche disaster on the slopes of the "Muttlers" in the Engadine. The names of the victims are: Miss Kappeler, Bülach; Miss Büchel, St. Gall; Miss Hottinger, Herliberg; Miss Lewin, Harrogate (England). Two members of the party, a Miss Schmid from Zürich, and a gentleman from Czecho-Slovakia, were saved.

AARGAU.

The late Albert Meyer, Manager of the "Freiämter Bank," in Wohlen, has left an amount of 27,000 frs. to charitable institutions.

Mme Sophie Hämmerli-Marti, the well-known dialect writer, has celebrated her 70th birthday anniversary.

VAUD.

The late Pastor Albert Lagier, the doyen of the Pastors of the canton of Vaud, has died at the Castle of Perroy, where he had lived in retirement since 1914.

Pastor Lagier, who had reached the age of 90, was for 21 years officiating in Commugny, near Coppet. He launched in 1910 a campaign against the sale of absinthe, with the result that a few years later the sale of this beverage was prohibited.

TICINO.

The death is reported of Dr. Sebastiano Martinioli from Dongio at the age of 65; the deceased was at one time a member of the government of the canton of Ticino.

"NON-STOP" FLIGHT LONDON-SAMADEN.

A non-stop flight between London and Samaden (Engadine) was made on Saturday last, by a liner of the Swissair, to which members of the English Press, the B.B.C. and Tourist Agencies were invited.

Through the courtesy of the Swissair, the Editor of the SWISS OBSERVER was invited to take part in this flight that has since made history.

A full report of the flight and the official reception in St. Moritz will appear in subsequent issues of the SWISS OBSERVER.

LA POLITIQUE.

La votation fédérale.

Des trois questions (nous disons trois, car l'une, bien quelle comportât deux réponses, visait un seul et unique objet) que le peuple suisse était appelé à trancher dimanche, la première avait une importance surtout sentimentale. L'admission du romanche au rang de langue nationale n'aura pas des effets considérables, puisqu'il ne s'agit pas d'en faire une langue officielle. Mais c'est une satisfaction légitime que l'on accorde à une minorité. Et l'empressement apporté par les votants à accepter ce projet, par 572,192 voix contre 52,267, soit à une écrasante majorité, ne laisse pas d'avoir un sens politique. Il est permis d'y voir, en effet, une intention clairement manifestée de défense spirituelle, de maintien des traditions régionales et du particularisme, devant l'insolente propagande des régimes totalitaires et les prétentions à l'hégémonie raciale des dictatures. A cet égard, les récents événements d'Autriche montrent bien, qu'un danger d'absorption n'est pas inexistant et qu'une protection vigilante de toute ce qui constitue la Suisse et diverse est devenue nécessaire.

Du point de vue intérieur aussi, il n'est pas indifférent d'enregistrer une décision qui — pour une fois — n'équivaut pas à une nouvelle conquête centralisatrice, mais traduit au contraire le respect de l'autonomie cantonale. Les résultats sont significatifs, puisque, dans la plupart des Etats, les majorités acceptantes sont aussi fortes que dans les Grisons mêmes. Notons avec plaisir que Genève, a témoigné remarquablement de son esprit confédéral, dans cette occurrence, puisque le nouveau texte constitutionnel y a été adopté par 11,437 voix contre 117.

Les prévisions généralement faites sur les deux autres verdicts populaires se sont réalisées. L'initiative communiste, relative à la clause d'urgence et au referendum, est rejetée par 485,835 voix contre 87,247. Les socialistes ne la soutenaient pas, et la rédaction absurde et logomachique de son texte ne pouvait que lui nuire. Mais il ne faudrait certes pas conclure du vote de dimanche que le peuple juge tout naturel l'abus — trop fréquent, ces dernières années — de la clause d'urgence, qui, si elle est prévue par la constitution, doit permettre uniquement de prendre des mesures rapides, en cas de nécessité réelle, et non servir de prétexte pour éviter de consulter le peuple. Celui-ci n'a pas voulu d'un projet mal conçu et visiblement inspiré par les doctrines moscouitaires. En revanche, le problème de la clause d'urgence reste posé; et le parlement ne devra pas ignorer que sa méthode — celle de la facilité et de la frousse tout ensemble — rencontre dans l'esprit public une croissante opposition.

Pour ce qui touche à la fabrication des armes, c'est la solution moyenne, du bon sens, qui a été admise. Toutefois, là, il suffit de jeter un regard sur les résultats par cantons pour s'apercevoir que le contre-projet du Conseil fédéral n'a pas été approuvé sans quelques résistances: la majorité acceptante n'est que de 392,101 voix, et les "non" sont au nombre de 148,504.

Quant à la participation, elle a été très faible, de 53% en moyenne, pour l'ensemble du pays. Il ne faut certes pas s'en étonner. Les projets en discussion n'avaient pas le don de passionner l'opinion. Et nous aurons sans doute, au cours de l'année, des votations fédérales beaucoup plus courues.

Léon Savary.

(Tribune de Genève.)

PROF. MAURICE LUGEON AT THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

February 18th, 1938.

The Geological Society of London is the oldest Geological Society of the world. She is a kind of mother with many children in all parts of the world. But like a good mother, she looks for merit in all her children and where it is present in an exceptional way, she rewards the gifted investigator with the Wollaston Medal.

The first Wollaston Medal in 1831 went to William Smith, the founder of British Geology, but in the course of time the following Swiss geologists were honoured in this way:—

1836 Louis Agassiz; 1874 Oswald Heer; 1879 Bernhard Studer; 1904 Albert Heim; and now in 1938 Maurice Lugeon. The Medal was presented to him by the President, Prof. O. T. Jones, F.R.S.,

CITY SWISS CLUB.

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SATURDAY, MARCH 12th, 1938.

for the

DINNER AND DANCE

at the

MAYFAIR HOTEL, Berkeley Square, W.1.